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HOMENAGEM A
IRENE RAMALHO SANTOS

THE EDGE OF ONE OF MANY CIRCLES

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**NEW ANGLES: AMERICAN STUDIES,
MODERNIST STUDIES, FEMINIST STUDIES,
AND POETICS**

Susan Stanford Friedman

Irene Ramalho Santos forged new angles of vision on American Studies, Modernist Studies, Feminist Studies, and Poetics over a lifetime of work as a deep reader, thinker, and writer and as a visionary and tireless institutional leader. The conventional plot of international-student-making-trek-to-Yale University-to-be-taught-what-knowledge-to-bring-home is *not* Santos's story. No, what she was exposed to in the U.S., she insisted on seeing through her own lenses, ones built out of the experience of Portugal, of being a European from Europe's semi-periphery, of being a woman in the academy, and of being a lover of poetry and poetics. Santos's story is one of transaction, relationality, networks, contrapuntal engagement – all of which have been fueled by a special warmth and brilliance of her own that has influenced generations of students and scholars in Portugal and abroad.

I first met Irene in Madison, Wisconsin, where she has come for many years to spend half the year based in the Department of Comparative Literature, teaching courses mostly in poetics and poetry. In 2002, she arranged for me to lecture first in Coimbra at the Center for Social Studies, and then, under the aegis of her

former students and colleagues, in Porto, Braga, and Lisbon. She subsequently brought me back to Coimbra for the conference she co-organized on Translocal Modernisms: International Perspectives, now a fine collection of essays based on the wide-ranging conference papers. One thing that impressed me in particular was her efforts to bring poets and critics together in the annual poetics conferences she organized in Portugal for years. I heard repeatedly about these events, especially from noted American poet and critic Rachel Blau DuPlessis, who described to me the amazing experience she had working with a translator in Portugal, arranged through Irene's network.

The opportunities that Irene created for me to meet so many scholars and students in Portugal have likewise been transformative for my own work, helping me to understand what it means to develop what I have called a planetary consciousness, one outside the parochialism of one's own culture, nation, history, and conventional modes of thought. Angles of vision: indeed, it was the many angles of Pessoa's vision that fascinated Irene, but she has also brought transatlantic and international angles of vision into American Studies through such books as *America Where? Transatlantic Views of the United States in the Twenty-First Century* (2012) and *The American Columbiad: Discovering America, Inventing the United States* (1997). Her service on the American Studies Association's Task Force for International Women's American Studies contributed greatly to bringing transnational feminist perspectives into U.S. women's studies. Above all, her pathbreaking book *Atlantic Poets: Fernando Pessoa's Turn in Anglo-American Modernism* (2002) was a harbinger of the transnational turn in modernist studies.

Multiply Irene's impact on me by hundreds and you will begin to get a feel for how influential she has been for generations of students and faculty, particularly for the formation of a sophisticated and probing American Studies in Portugal and for an internationalized American Studies elsewhere, including in the U.S. Not as a disciple of

American leaders in the field, but as a thinker in her own right, Irene has nurtured those who themselves became leaders in American Studies in their own institutions, both in Portugal and abroad. I am not alone in treasuring her friendship and the generosity of her many intellectual and administrative gifts.