

**TOWARDS BRAZIL AND CHINA CROSS-CULTURAL
UNDERSTANDING AND TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION**

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This special issue of the Journal of ABRALIC, *Cultural and Literary Ties Between Brazil and China*, was made possible by the collaborative effort of two institutions: State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) and Hunan Normal University (HNU). It is not the first outcome of this emerging partnership, and certainly will not be the last. Rather, other projects will soon be developed and announced. Indeed, in a globalized world nothing is more urgent than building cultural bridges between countries in order to foster cross-cultural understanding as well as to promote transnational cooperation.

Cultural and Literary Ties Between Brazil and China is divided into two sections.

The first section starts with Professor Bethania Mariani's important essay, and it comprises texts whose main aim is to introduce relevant aspects of Brazilian culture to a foreigner readership. This is a key point in our common endeavor undertaken by UERJ and HNU: we are fully aware that cross-cultural understanding implies an openness toward the other's culture. We decided to commit ourselves to the creation of a fruitful and harmonious long-term collaboration between Brazilian and Chinese cultures. As a further step in this road, the second section proposes an ambitious and at the same time an indispensable aim, namely, introducing contemporary Chinese literary theory and cultural criticism to a wide Latin American audience. Cross-cultural understanding has to be a two-way street: one must give and take, teach and learn, talk and listen as inextricable parts of the gesture of transnational dialogue. This section starts with Professor Jiang Hongxin's insightful essay. This special issue also introduces to Brazilian readers some of the finest and most distinguished scholars of Chinese contemporary academia.

We are already planning new projects in order to deepen this most needed initiative: rendering Brazilian and Chinese philosophical, literary and critical traditions known in both countries. We are determined to challenge the "fallacy of cultural incommensurability", following the lead offered by Zhang Longxi, for "the fact is that similarities and differences exist everywhere, within one culture as well as between or among cultures" (Longxi, 2007, p. 17). Moreover, if, in Shi Er's words, "the universe is composed of twin worlds" (Er, 2019, p. 1), then, an ethics of cross-cultural dialogue implies privileging difference instead of repetition. Antonio Candido, a leading Brazilian literary critic, once observed that "studying Brazilian literature means studying comparative literature" (Candido, 2004, p. 230). In the same vein, José Luís Jobim has suggested that "in Brazil comparative literature was not developed as something alien to national literatures" (Jobim, 2019, p. 39). It seems that the theoretical ground for our endeavor has already been established. Indeed, there is no better way to bring countries

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together than establishing cultural ties and organizing common research projects; for producing knowledge in one breath is the strongest way of creating long-term relationships.

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