

Ilse (Lieblich) Losa and the Portuguese Literary Establishment: Finding the Nomad a Home?

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This dissertation examines Portuguese literature's reception of the German-born Portuguese writer, Ilse Losa (1913-2006). It primarily examines the question of Losa's rare position as a foreigner in the Portuguese literary sphere and how this determined the ambiguous place she appears to hold there. The linguistic and cultural difference or "novelty" that Losa represents for Portuguese literature sees her firstly discussed in terms of Harold Bloom's notion of "canonical strangeness." Rosi Braidotti's theory of the "nomadic subject" then provides the basis for an alternative discussion of Losa's role, owing to the more flexible and democratic discursive framework it offers. In exploring the unprecedented nature of Losa's writing in Portuguese as a non-native speaker, the emerging concept of "exophony" is also examined and proposed as an area to be inaugurated in Portuguese literary studies. The objective behind this approach is to encourage an opening up of the Portuguese literary establishment. In doing so, it argues in favor of creating a space for writers such as Losa, whose atypical personal and professional trajectory has seen her, thus far, afforded a marginal and isolated place, limiting the appreciation of her work. The last part of the study points to the potential of Ilse Losa's writing to cultivate a nomadic subjectivity and consciousness in those who read her, broadening the horizons of the literary/cultural arena in which she based herself, and at the same time, lessening the distance between her and her Portuguese audience.