

## Regina Rheda's Humanimals: *Humana festa* and the Postslavery Novel

By Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond (Associate Professor of Luso-Brazilian Literature at U.C. San Diego. She is author of *White Negritude: Race, Writing and Brazilian Cultural Identity*).

Professor Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond's talk investigates Regina Rheda's *Humana festa* (2008), a pioneer comedy of manners about the postslavery, neoliberal agribusiness interior of São Paulo that delineates the premises of the abolition of animal exploitation in relation to postcolonial structures of domination. She situates Rheda's novel in the context of postslavery Brazilian discussions of race, nation and human/animal dialectics, from Oswald's antropofagia to the activities of animal rights advocates.

This discussion of Regina Rheda will be revised into a chapter of Isfahani-Hammond's current book project, "Animal Bodies: Race, Species and Brazilian Cultural Theory." From Machado de Assis's human-cum-canine protagonist in *Quincas Borba* (1891) to the farm animals for slaughter in Cláudio Assis's *Amarelo Manga* (2002), non-humans are intrinsic to Brazilian imaginaries of postcolonial conflict and racialization. Through readings of texts ranging from Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928) to Regina Rheda's *Humana festa* (2008), she interrogates topics such as nature, animals and the indigenous; the body as machine; plantation violence and cannibalization; sexuality and animality; and the question of meat. How have animal figures sustained or undermined colonial and slavocratic systems of domination?