

Parts of Asia, Today: Beyond Lusotopic Nostalgia

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This volume began with a call for contributions on the broad topic of Portuguese-Asian connections, open to all latitudes in the humanities and the social sciences. We took the risk of mentioning the former Asian-Portuguese, or Pacific-Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Macau, and East Timor as a starting point. Until recently, this alone would have generated a flood of colonial nostalgia, anti-colonial manifestos, lusotropical orientalism, or lusotopic post-imperial narcissism—when we only wanted research articles and essays. But times have changed. The responses came aplenty, diverse, innovative, and anything but nostalgic.

Articles arrived in all formats and styles—long, short, poetic, analytical, reflexive, critical, based on empirical research, on literary texts, on theoretical discussions, on testimony, on interviews—very much along the inclusive lines of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies*. They made it to this volume without having been previously gathered in the rituals of a conference; they arrived one by one from different parts of the world, different frames of thinking and different languages. And yet they fit together, dialogue, and mingle into a synergy that will be prolonged by the active engagement of the reader. There are historical, sociological, and anthropological interpretations, ethnographic depictions, political analysis, literary and film criticism; there is poetry, literature, memoirs, and introspective essays; there is an ubiquitous quest for cultural identity in which distinctiveness involves something “Portuguese”—be

it people, history, places, governments, names, fictions, fondness, rejection, the past, the future.

To head the sections as *Goa*, *Macau*, *Timor*, and *Beyond* may sound provocative in times when translocalism, connectedness, circulation, and globalism have become the standard requirement in most disciplines. And yet they proved to be good catalysts for generating and gathering new knowledge—whether because they resist our cognitive adventures or just for providing some appeasing realism to our busy, buzzed, and sometimes confused academic minds.

Do not expect, however, to find under the sections a guide for the territories, a shared frame of analysis, or an evocation of encyclopaedic knowledge, as each of them is a singular combination of narratives, perspectives, and voices where new topics emerge and old topics appear in a different light. In the end, rather than minuscule remains of empire good to be forgotten, the Luso-Asian enclaves prove to be dense, intense, and unique historical situations with a potential for analysis that can only expand the current debates on colonialism, postcolonialism, displacement, connections, global histories, and, necessarily, the always prevailing older concepts of class, race, gender, power, and agency.

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We start with a set of original articles that introduces new analytical tools into the interpretation of the colonial society of Goa. Ângela Barreto Xavier's "Power, Religion and Violence in Sixteenth-Century Goa" is a dense description of a sixteenth-century event after which the author, evoking anthropology in the writing of history, approaches the complexity that holds Goa together from above and from below, from inside and outside, in ways that are at once synchronic and diachronic, multiple-voiced, and multi-layered. Her text is a long way from the linear, apologetic, or apologizing modes of making history, and a long way from the monolithic view of empire and rule. The tensions at the local level reveal a constant negotiation of roles and agencies that revise in more than one way the traditional icons of Goan colonial history—Christianity, conversion, the Jesuits, the *ganvkars*, the cities, and the villages.

In "Género, mecenato e arte: a criação das *casas de mulheres* em Goa," Carla Alferes Pinto uses contemporary tools of social analysis like gender, class, status, marriage markets, endowments, and individual agency in order to address the institutions created in Goa for the purpose of hosting the young European women (the *órfãs del rei*) brought in to marry the resident Portuguese men—and, may we add, guarantee the reproduction of an enclave of Europea-

ness/whiteness/Christianity. The author's analysis about female patronage and artistic production reveals that while the *casas de mulheres* (both the *recolhimentos* and the convent of Santa Mónica) were meant to frame the behaviour of those women and moderate their ambitions, new arrangements developed from within—contributing thus to an understanding of the intersections of gender, class, and art in colonial societies.

Timothy Walker's "The Early Modern Globalization of Indian Medicine: Portuguese Dissemination of Drugs and Healing Techniques from South Asia on Four Continents, 1670-1830" shows us the materialization of the Portuguese-Asian encounters in the fields of pharmacy and medicine. Leaving aside the conventional narrative of a European medicine—depicted either as a means to enlighten the natives and improve their lives or as a tool to annihilate local knowledge, practices, and resources—the author shows us the pragmatic arrangements made around specific plants and compounds with healing properties, and moves into the four corners of the world via the plants and preparations that emerge from those encounters. Plants and remedies travel far and remain settled in new lands in ways that eventually get to be more permanent than those of the sailors who carried them. Or, bringing in a very contemporary notion, humans and non-humans go together in the making of history, society—and colonialism.

The ways of unmaking colonialism, history, and society—or at least the ways and tools for resisting and counteracting some of their effects—can be dreamed and fixed in fiction, as writers from all around the world have done and as literary critics have analysed. In "Resistência e assimilação colonial na prosa goesa do século XIX," Joana Passos approaches, discusses, and analyses two nineteenth-century Goan novels remarkable for their anti-colonial contents. *Os Brâmanes*, by Francisco Luís Gomes, and *Jacob e Dulce*, by Francisco João Costa, reveal in different ways the human, social, philosophical, and historical condition of a colonial society as peculiar as Goa, in which the age-old Lusification of culture and society co-existed with the no less disturbing constraints of tradition, symbolized in the evils of the caste system.

Victor Rangel-Ribeiro is himself a known literary author—as well as a musician, and a critic of many credits—who generously wrote an original for *Parts of Asia*. Victor is also a living memory of a Goan society that extends beyond his own time and into several generations of his ancestors. In "Oral History and a Memoir Shed Light on Goa's Tangled Past: Romeo and Juliet in the Shadow of Empire" he brings alive memories of the different branches of his family and, through them, leads us to the wider tensions, subtleties, con-

tingencies, and actual events that shaped Goan political history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

While “Romeo” allows us to grasp the dissensions experienced in the upper strata of Goan society, the next article, “Negociações identidárias dos Gaudde de Goa: políticas de classificação de ‘tribos,’” focused on the lower-ranking group of the Gauddes, brings us to the opposite spectrum of society. Anthropologist Cláudia Pereira shows us how the classificatory categories used by the administration in different moments, during and after colonial rule, play an important role in the labour of identity-making of a group that has lived in and out of the fringe zones of the Christianized colonial society. The Gaudde themselves converted and de-converted down the years, assumed the identity of prime inhabitants created during colonial rule, and re-invented themselves as other backward classes and scheduled tribes in more recent periods.

The following articles—by Teotónio R. de Souza, Paul Melo e Castro, Jayesh Needham, and Christopher Larkosh—address contemporary representations of Goa in memoir, film, and literature. In “Goa in Retrospect: Colonial Memories Published Recently in Goa and in Portugal,” Teotónio R. de Souza explores recently published memoirs and reminiscences, documentary and somehow analytical, all based on the actual lived experience of events, transitions, and historical periods. They include the testimonies of Portuguese officers and physicians who served in, observed, and reflected upon Goa in the later moments of colonial rule or during the actual political transition, of freedom fighters, or of those who participated in more recent political administrations or who lived through several changes. There are points of view as diverse as from behind the bars of prisons and camps, from the balcony of colonial mansions, from the inner core of bureaucracy, and from the composite and dense historical experience of being part of multiple belongings and owing identity to all and to none.

Paul Melo e Castro’s analysis of Catarina Mourão’s film *A Dama de Chandor*, first released in 1998, enriches with the tools of film studies our understanding of Goa and of representations of Goa. More than a mere reference or an aesthetic product centered around interesting characters in beautiful settings, this film—here referred to as “reactive observationalism”—becomes a key with which to reflect upon the intricate layers of Goan society and its multiple groups and ideologies.

While *A Dama* concentrates the weight of an old society where caste, class, race, religion, place, belongings, property, and life-trajectories all

enhance one another in quasi-unbearable experiences of being and living, Margaret Mascarenhas's novel *Skin* introduces a very different experience, that of a playful, distanced, imagined world of magical realism expressed in Goan motives, Goan names, and Goan material culture, in fragmented traces of a fictionalized Goan history. Jayesh Needham briefly reviews the book and interviews the author, who currently is part of an expanding community of international writers who spend some of their time in Goa.

This section ends with "Passages to Our Selves: Translating Out of Portuguese in Asia," Christopher Larkosh's suggestive attempt to de-lusify Goan studies via work in translation. Larkosh avoids the residual risks of making unintentional new contributions to lusotropicalism or colonial nostalgia by approaching Luso-Asian studies with a broad comparative literary and cultural studies mindset—and in so doing, maps out a number of possible other directions for this kind of work, either alternating or suspending the "Luso" dimension out of the frame of reference. Bringing into the conversation non-Portuguese authors, whether European or Asian—or, as in this case, North American—and submitting them to the added meanings and suppressions of translations and re-translations, is one way to go.

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The articles on Macau stand elsewhere among our efforts to grasp and tell of human societies and cultures. If Goa called for conceptual developments about colonialism, its social intricacies and the literary expressions of the colonial and postcolonial conditions, Macau is not merely a different place in a different land that attracted different scholars; its society, politics, and structural relationship with Portugal are entirely different from those analysed for Goa. In "Macau in Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1968," Moisés Silva Fernandes argues that Macau hardly corresponds to a "colony," or its administration to "colonialism." It should better be depicted as the outcome of the contrasting yet contingently convergent interests of China and of Portugal, to put it lightly, or, more frankly, to socialist China's strategy for having an open door to capitalism without losing face.

But that is analytical realism; historically, another world of beliefs, symbols, and emotions was produced on the Portuguese side of history, particularly between the 1930-40s period of Portuguese colonial pride, exhibits, and fairs, and the 1970s-90s period of transition from Portuguese rule. Macau was

presented as the long-lived possession in the Orient, a place for the encounter of cultures, a token of Portuguese grandeur, openness, multiracialism of the lusotropical kind, and, lately, a lusified version of multiculturalism, adding a tone of exoticism to a collective identity that had been much forged in the juxtaposition of nation and empire.

The effects of those feelings are well depicted in “Macau’s Handover—A Personal Account,” by anthropologist João de Pina Cabral, who witnessed the catharsis of the transition ceremony with the physical proximity of a participant and the emotional distance of an observer. The author, who worked on Macanese ethnicity for about a decade, had gone far in the experience of the insider-outsider dialectics that are central to the production of anthropological knowledge.

Another take on nation, colony, belonging, and identity is presented by Monica Kitieng Chan, who addresses the layers of meaning associated with a question so seemingly innocent as “where are you from?” when the place you come from is Macau. In “Memory Plaza: Encounter and Missed Encounter,” she shares with us a personal memoir of what it was like to grow up in Macau as Chinese, telling us about the parallel school system, the co-existing and interacting communities, the odd discordance of street names in Chinese and Portuguese, the urban landmarks, and the reconfigurations of identity and belonging brought about by the reintegration of Macau with China.

David Brookshaw’s “Between Southern Portugal and Southern China: The Poetry of Fernanda Dias” is not solely a superb translation and a contextualized presentation of an author unknown to and unacknowledged by most readers. It is also an excellent pretext to reflect and theorize about the condition of Macau, one that Brookshaw rightfully depicts as a “type of postcolonial colony” ever since the events of 1967. It was in that setting that Dias experienced Macau—not in the old times of Camilo Pessanha or in the provincial atmosphere of Maria Ondina Braga—but in the increasingly cosmopolitan, modern, and Chinese Macau of the 1980s and 90s, one in which her artistry and the imagery of her native Alentejo turned out to be a good match with the Chinese literary tradition. Furthermore, Dias’s literature provides a good counter-example against the tendency of turning Macanese encounters—whether in the traditional form of Portuguese groom-Chinese bride or the postcolonial enactment of a Portuguese bride for a Chinese sailor—as the epitome of Asian lusotropicalism.

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East Timor appears here as another shift in this volume. This is one of the youngest nations of today's world and one that, after years of struggle for independence from Indonesia—with its massacres, occupations, revolts, resistance, the UN, the NGOs, international solidarity, the Nobel Peace Prize, the Catholic religion, the proximity to Australia, and the promise of wealth through oil—ended up choosing Portuguese as its official language. While this puzzled many around the world, it was applauded by many Lusophones from different sites, which read it as a sign of vitality of their imagined community, whether using the idiom of empire or of postcolonial embraces.

This fact alone is a promise that exploring Portuguese-Timorese connections will expand the variety and complexity of questions and analytical developments about the intricacies of power, agency, and representation in the context of colonialism. And that is what most articles do, be it in the form of historical, anthropological, or sociological analysis of distinct issues, be it in the form of poetry, prose, or literary criticism.

The first set of articles leads us to complex relational identities that bring together the Portuguese and the Timorese in actual encounters of symbolic oppositions, and which in the process shape one another's identities. In "Metaphors of Slavery in East Timor," Douglas Kammen discusses the pervasiveness of master/slave imagery in the representation of the past, "be it Portuguese colonialism, Timorese kingdoms, the heyday of the coffee economy, the aborted process of decolonization, or the dark days of the Indonesian occupation." This pervasiveness contrasts with the absence of reflection about the actual involvement of Timor in the global slave-trade or about the historical existence of forced labor on the island, and yet reveals it to be a crucial symbolic tool for the reinforcement of a collective national identity. Less than factual history, what matters for contemporary purposes—which include nation-building and the fulfilling of political agendas—is the sort of portrait that strengthens the boundaries of a singular people shaped by a common experience.

In "*Kabita-Kaburai, de cada dia*: Indigenous Hierarchies and the Portuguese in Timor," Janet Gunter provides a dense ethnographic account of the ways in which Portuguese rule was experienced in the Timorese hinterland, a place with remote chances of ever having been frequented by a Portuguese person. The picture that emerges matches the notion of an "indirect rule" exercised through local leaders. The author analyses the ways local elites per-

formed their association to colonial power, such as the adoption of the rulers' icons and instruments—the sceptre, the musket, the prayer—and suggests that in the end the processes of strengthening local notoriety and dominance also increased the fragility of their social insertion.

An identical sense of the fragility of power is reported for the colonizers' side by Ricardo Roque in “The Unruly Island: Colonialism's Predicament in Late Nineteenth-Century East Timor.” Very different from the idealized experience of submitting exotic peoples to the single rule (or “embrace,” or “entanglement,” in some of the current terminologies) of a multi-sited empire with a mission, what appears from the reports of colonial officers on the Timorese front resembles the unbearable thinness of an elusive power with an impossible mission over an untameable people—the sense of failure being therefore transferred from the agents to the subjects of the colonial endeavour. Roque's suggestion is that instead of reading this as evidence of “incompetent colonialism,” an epithet often attributed to Portuguese rule in the nineteenth century, it should be interpreted as a creative way of organizing local colonial interactions, one that emerges, in his words, as “tactical pragmatism.”

“Women Writing the Exotic: Cultural Representations in a Portuguese Travel Journal,” by Clara Sarmiento, shifts the analysis from multiple bureaucratic memos and government reports to the single-handed diary of a young female Portuguese traveller in the East, Isabel Tamagnini's *Diário de uma Viagem a Timor (1882-1883)*. Perhaps more spontaneously than her countrymen writing from inside official places, she expressed the feelings, stereotypes, representations, and learning that appear in the intersections of colonial encounters and the wanderings of the journeys through exotic places.

“Ruy Cinatti's Timor,” a set of poems selected, translated, and commented upon by Nuno Batalha and Janet Gunter, is a high point of this volume. Cinatti (1915-1986) is one of those characters that combine multiple human qualities and social roles in a rare creative manner; a colonial delegate by circumstance, a humanist by vocation, an agronomist by training, and also an anthropologist, he left in his poems a key with which to decipher, think, unthink, comprehend, feel, uncomprehend, go along with, and live through the interrogations, variations, and constancies of Timor.

In spite of the long tradition of oral literature that Timor shares with other peoples in the Pacific region, the written literary expression of the East Timorese experience has only recently emerged. Isabel Moutinho points this out in “The Fractured Affair of Timorese Ident/ities” as a way of introduc-

ing two postcolonial, diasporic Timorese writers—Luís Cardoso and Ponte Pedrinha—whose work the author analyses in the light of contemporary developments in postcolonial theory and literary criticism.

“Na montanha,” by Jorge Lobo Mesquita, brings in the experience of Tuola through the means of a fictional narrative embedded in realism. The vignette leads us to the lived density of East Timorese political resistance across the years, into the mountains of the island, and through the chains of acknowledgement, adventure, exposure, and erasure that constituted it.

The internationalization of East Timorese politics expanded in the 1990s, involving in the process progressive activism on university campuses worldwide—including Brown University, which took a leading role. In “Western Solidarity with East Timor: An Interview with David Targan,” Hilary Kaplan provides us with an excellent piece of oral history. She contextualizes the situation of East Timor within global politics, follows the development of ETAN (East Timor Action Network) after the notorious massacre of Santa Cruz, and analyses the dynamics of international solidarity within US social movements and Portuguese-American communities. All those topics are brought to the interview with David Targan, a Brown administrator and a central player in the solidarity work that made visible to the entire world East Timor’s struggle against oblivion, genocide, and erasure from history. This type of activism helped turn what might have been one more episode of an obscure colonial encounter with a tragic aftermath into a cosmopolitan issue and, finally, a new independent nation.

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Portuguese-Asian connections go far beyond the experiences of the three little enclaves of Goa, Macau, and Timor. The history of encounters, entanglements, misunderstandings, conflicts, accommodation, resistance, assimilation, transmission, co-creation, annihilation, and invention that evokes some combination of “Asia” and “Portugal”—be it of people or representations—is vast in number, variety, and scope. Again, those examples can be, and have been, used for celebratory purposes, either in the older idiom of empire, refashioned as lusotropicalism, or lusotopic narcissism, as much as they may turn into precious case-studies for contemporary discussions and theoretical developments, from which the hyphenized Portuguese experiences have largely been absent.

With “Two Portuguese in Japan: Essays on Japanese Culture from João Rodrigues Tçuzzu, S.J. to Wenceslau de Moraes,” K. David Jackson presents the perceptive, quasi-anthropological accounts resulting from the experience

of living in Japan by the Portuguese missionary João Rodrigues, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the diplomat, writer, and aesthete Wenceslau de Moraes, three centuries later—to whom Jackson refers as the most dramatic “of all the examples of orientalism and exoticism in Western literature at the end of the nineteenth century.” While Rodrigues and other missionaries, like Luis Frois, had learned Japanese customs from an instrumental perspective during a time of imperial expansion, Moraes indulges in a radical fascination with the East and produces a sort of literature that expands the understanding of “orientalism.”

Speaking of which, in “Two Versions of Iberian Orientalism: The *Geração de 70* and the *Generación del 98* in Light of Eça de Queirós’ *A Relíquia* and Juan de Valera’s *Morsamor*,” Pedro Schacht Pereira directly addresses some of the limitations, or “historical myopia” in Said’s *Orientalism*, which “allowed for the complete dismissal of Iberian orientalism” from the discussion. Pereira creatively substantiates his point with the comparative analysis of two late nineteenth-century Iberian masterpieces in which the orient, rather than a mere backdrop for a suitable literary plot, plays a central role in structuring the world of values, actions, representations, possibilities, and worldviews—making this article an innovative contribution for a more comprehensive and universal reading of Iberian literatures and for a wider understanding of the configurations of orientalism.

The politics of producing and erasing heroes from national, colonial, and anticolonial histories—and what that tells us of wider historical and cultural processes—underlies Rochelle Pinto’s “Forgetting Pio Gama Pinto.” What made a Goan character turn into the “first martyr” of the new independent African nation of Kenya—and what made him almost disappear from history, including the hall of fame of anti-colonial Goan activists? By contextualizing his life within the confluence of competing colonial flows involving Asia and Africa, connected to different European national frameworks (Anglophone, Lusophone) that produced their own legal and scientific classificatory systems, helping thus to shape the terms of racialized politics at the local, national, and colonial levels, the author provides a sophisticated interpretive key with a potential that outlasts this one case and gives food for further thought on the understanding of colonial processes at large.

Inês Lourenço traces some of the counterflows of Portuguese colonial expansion in “A Partir de Diu: diáspora hindu e género em Portugal.” From the crossroads of experience lived in Gujarat and Diu, she brings us to the

former colonial metropolis of Lisbon, more exactly to a contemporary suburb where a Hindu community has a marked expression. Travelling back and forth between the two references and evoking the history of sea trade and human flows that had a high point in East Africa, the author emphasizes the role of women in the structuring of community life, whether in reference to a territorial place or in the moveable grounds of diaspora.

To close this volume on a high note, Margaret Sarkissian's "'The CM is on the Way': Reflections on Malacca-Portuguese Identity as Malaysia Turns 50" leads us to the contemporary production of Portugueseness in Asia, one that takes place within the context of a postcolonial nation that is yet to produce an unhyphenated citizenship. While the *ranchos* and their costumes, music, dance, and other "ethnic" elements of the Portuguese Settlement have been addressed along the lines of "invented traditions," underneath their colourful surface there are other issues at play. By analysing the tensions of class, the differential access to resources—including government savings bonds—and the racialised profiling of religion and group identities, Sarkissian addresses this singular Luso-Asian formation in order to raise universal contemporary questions of power, identity, and belonging.

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After a cycle of articles that span over five centuries of history and refer to a variety of places where different encounters, social arrangements, cultural expressions, religious formations, political institutions, and other sort of tensions and accommodations developed, the commonality of themes that emerge stands a long way from colonial nostalgia and goes directly to the heart of contemporary theory-making—showing how the study of Portuguese-related historical experiences moved from a specialized niche into a central place in our broader efforts to understand culture, society, and human affairs.

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