Otherness in Literary and Intercultural Communication

Crossing Borders, Crossing Cultures

Edited by
Cândido Oliveira Martins
Carmen Ramos Villar · Michela Graziani

Palgrave Studies in Otherness and Communication

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Palgrave Studies in Otherness and Communication features edited volumes that examine topics related to experiences of exclusion in communication and socio-cultural interaction. Focused on problems of inequality in communication in European environments and beyond, volumes in this series study topics including media environments, formal and informal education, politics, technology, identities, segregation, bullying and language acquisition. Putting communication studies in conversation with a range of disciplines in the arts and humanities, volumes in this series examine the effects of othering in communication and culture. Books in the series will appeal to scholars interested in an innovative and justice-oriented approach to identity, alterity, and inequality in human communication. This is a closed series and does not accept outside submissions.

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Introduction

Cândido Oliveira Martins, Carmen Ramos Villar,
and Michela Graziani

What is, or what has to be, the meaning of 'otherness' in the present century? This question is one often posed in volumes concerned with the theme of 'otherness', revealing the atemporality of this topic; it is always current, and a source of cross-reflexions, involving different cultures. In the Collins and Cambridge dictionaries we read as follows:

> Otherness is the quality that someone or something has which is different from yourself or from the things that you have experienced. (Collins Dictionary online)
>
> Being or feeling different in appearance or character from what is familiar, expected, or generally accepted. (Cambridge Dictionary online)

The two definitions above still suggest 'the other' as someone or something exterior, outside, distant, different from something or someone else; and once more propose the contraposition 'them' and 'us'. These two definitions do not consider the possibility of a new concept of otherness, one that concerns the

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interiority of each person, as simultaneously a self and an other. In literature, we have many examples in this regard. Male and female Western writers of modern and contemporary age (Robert Browning, Pirandello, Lope de Vega, Luísa Sigea, Vittoria Colonna, to name just a few) have used literary masks or pseudonyms either to hide their identity or for the pleasure of feeling themselves as 'other', someone else different from their self (see Cox 2011; Andrade 1999; Fernandes 2003; Graziani 2021). The case of Fernando Pessoa is an example of the concept of self and other at the same time, through his heteronyms, for the multiplicity/plurality of his interiority. As Manuel Gusmão argues:

> De facto, *pseudónimo* é no fundamental um nome falso inventado por um autor para esconder o seu nome próprio, a sua identidade civil. Objecto de um jogo e de determinadas intenções, o pseudónimo implica uma operação de ocultação ou de substituição do nome próprio. Por seu turno, *heterónimo* é um nome outro, um nome diferente. E no quadro de uma heteronímia plural, como a de Pessoa, implica não a operação de ocultação do nome próprio, mas uma operação de repetida diferenciação, de continuado estranhamento ou alterização que, no limite, em Pessoa, é simultaneamente um processo de transformação em outro e de perda do nome próprio. Como estes nomes próprios são nomes de autor, os heterónimos não apenas representam o devir outro autor, mas implicam a alteridade do nome próprio enquanto nome de autor. […] Por este caminho Pessoa leva-nos não propriamente ao "anonimato transcendental", mas ao singular ponto de encontro entre a tradição moderna da "impessoalidade" e uma outra tradição, a da alterização autoral, a do "Je suis un autre". (Gusmão *apud* Martins 2008, 41)
>
> [In fact, a *pseudonym* is, at heart, a false name made up by the author to hide their own name, their registered identity. As the object of a game and of specific intentions, the pseudonym suggests a move towards obscuring or substituting the given name. On the other hand, a *heteronym* is the name of an other, a different name. Within the presence of plural heteronyms, as with Pessoa, it is not a case of hiding the given name; rather there is a move towards repeated differentiation, of continued strangeness or alteration which, at its limit, within Pessoa, is simultaneously a process of transforming the self into an other and of a loss of the given name. As all the given names are the author's name, the heteronyms are not only the transformation into another author, but also imply the alterity of the given name whilst also being the name of the author. […] Pessoa does not just lead us down the path of "transcendental anonymity", but also towards the singular point of convergence between the modern tradition of "impersonality" and another tradition, that of the altering of the concept of the author, of the "Je suis un autre"].

The complex concept of 'otherness' has always been related to identity. Each European[1] country has been a melting pot of cultures since very ancient times: migrations, cultural and ethnic mixtures have created what we conceive

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[1] The examples and reflections offered here start from a European context because of the European identity of the three editors of the present volume, but they could be perhaps extended to countries outside Europe.

as European culture, founded on the concept of unity into diversity, as recorded at the Lusitanian level by the Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço, and in the European context by Zygmunt Baumann and the former president of the European Parliament, David Sassoli, in one of his last conferences (Lourenço 1999; Bauman 2004; Sassoli 2021). Our ancestors have included both Indo-European and non-Indo-European people (Basques, Saxon, Celts, Iberians, Arab, Romans, Etruscan, Sunnis, etc.). Thus, our current European identity is the result of a process of the mixing of different cultures over the centuries. But is this a strong identity? Is this a real unity despite the several regionalism and migrations? Who is the 'other' in this European context? Perhaps, in the present century, we should be able to review the meaning of 'other' and 'otherness' as well as the use of the word 'other', limiting ourselves to use the term 'person' instead of migrants or non-migrants, all belonging to different cultures that choose our European continent as a new home. This definition actually acknowledges the 'other' as the different parts in us, as Julia Kristeva indicated in her famous volume *Etranger à nous-mêmes* (1988), and the concept of unity into the diversity, as attributed by Jacinto do Prado Coelho in respect of Pessoa (Coelho 2007). This 'other' is inside us.

The ancient literary example of Odysseus' violent contention with the Cyclops is apposite here. This example is well described by the editors of the volume *Otherness. A Multiculture Perspective*, as "an early and exemplary account on the process of forging otherness, sameness and their precarious interdependence and interpenetration; a figuration which anticipates the problematic of our contemporary world" (Sencindiver et al. 2011, 17).

Inside his study, Irigaray's essay offers some useful questions to reflect on the complex concept and meaning of 'otherness' in present time. Starting from the assumption that "a post-colonial lens alerts us to the othering of vast numbers of the world's population by colonial thought" (Irigaray *apud* Sencindiver 2011, 21), Irigaray questions:

> How can we ethically relate to and represent the inaudible voices of the subaltern, marginalised others? […] Is it possible to narrate Otherness *qua* ontological category as opposed to otherness *qua* construct? […] The other. Have you already encountered the other? If so, what does this other look like? Godot? A barbarian? God? The snark? Perhaps a terrorist? Or a poor person dying of hunger in a country very far from mine? How can we recognise the other? Do they have any idea of what or who the other is? What is the content of the word when you say: *the other*? What place might this other have for you? A space of waiting for other things or other people? A space of fear about what could be happen to you? How can we meet the Other? (Irigaray *apud* Sencindiver 2011, 21, 107)

Throughout history, and up to the present day, from various dominant cultural ideologies, the hierarchical and cultural alterization of the Other—which is deeply rooted in our society and education—has often led to countless forms of marginalization and violence, expulsion and even extermination (see

Khrebtan-Hörhager 2023). Maybe it should be necessary to stop thinking that "the other does not belong to my world", reflecting on "how to open a threshold between two worlds" (Irigaray *apud* Sencindiver 2011, 108, 112).

In accordance with Eriksen, our contemporary age is "an accelerated world, where everything from communication to warfare and industrial production takes place faster than ever before. […] All these narratives, and their relations, depict the contemporary world as one *out of control.* […]" (Eriksen *apud* Sencindiver 2011, 245). In this kind of world, according to Eriksen and almost resuming the thought of Kristeva mentioned above, "we are all strangers in a strange land. And at the same time, we [us and the 'others'] are all in the same boat, divided by a shared destiny" (Eriksen *apud* Sencindiver 2011, 244, 258).

In this complex and multicultural European context, how can we regard the 'other'? The reply to this question could develop from other questions posed by Talal Asad, who comes from an anthropological angle:

> How can contemporary European practices and discourses represent a culturally diverse society of which Muslim migrants are now part? How is Europe represented by those who define themselves as authentic Europeans? Can Muslims be represented in Europe? How can minorities be represented in European liberal democracy? What are the possibilities of representing Muslim minorities in modern European states? (Talal Asad *apud* Hallam and Street 2000, chapter 1 [s.p.]).

Here, Hallam and Street highlight that "understanding cross-cultural representation entails not only a self-reflexive and historical awareness of academic modes of production, but also an analysis of the ways in which others have themselves translated and subverted Western discourses" (Hallam and Street 2000, introduction [s.p.]). Continuing the thought of Hallam and Street, if it is true that "the complex process of othering is crucial in the formation of identities in Europe and beyond", it is likewise true that "the problematising of cross-cultural representation is reinforced through critical cultural histories of colonialism and is related to decolonisation" (Hallam and Street 2000, introduction [s.p.]). This problematizing is visible, outside Europe, most of all in the USA, Brazil, in other Latin American countries and in countries in Africa, where 'otherness' is also a complex theme and a *work in progress*, as in Europe.

The USA, for example, considers itself a melting pot country formulated from the presence of Native Americans, Europeans, African Americans and Hispanic Americans. But is this melting pot a real sign of self-identity or cultural inclusion? Despite an African American president, the recent movement called *Black Lives Matter* is a clear case of a feeling of 'otherness'. African American people are still 'others' when compared to the white American society, and Native American people still live in designated reserves. In Brazil and other Latin American countries, the 'others' could be indigenous people or persons living in the *favelas*; in countries within Africa, the concept of 'otherness' depends most of all, but not solely, on the several ethnic groups living in North African and sub-Saharan countries. In China, this concept is not related

to Western colonialism; rather, the 'others' are the several ethnic distinct minorities that live within its borders. In Middle East and South-East Asia, 'otherness' is still a very complicated concept (Barfield 2002; Dimitrova 2014; Nooshin 2019; Wali 2004).

In this regard, the establishment of the academic subject of Iranian Studies in Western countries after the Islamic revolution in Iran (1979) is particularly significant for a better Western knowledge of the Iranian concept of 'otherness' (Venetis 2010). In Europe, the establishment of the Centre for Studies in Otherness as a collaborative project between Aarhus University (Denmark) and Mary Immaculate College in Limerick (Ireland) is a further confirmation of the importance of this theme in the present century, both at the scholarly level and beyond.

The present volume, *Otherness in literary and intercultural communication: crossing borders, crossing cultures,* addresses representations of the 'other' in different contexts. The volume examines discursive pathways, searching for representations of the 'other' within various contexts. At its core, the contributions examine intercultural negotiations and experiences in literary, observing how the multicultural debate is reflected upon. The volume specifically explores an array of research contexts, from colonial and postcolonial to feminist, political, artistic, technological ones, and it relates these directly to communicative contexts. The aim is to discuss the position and attitudes of reaction to 'othering' by the individuals assumed as *inferior/out-group*, assuming a process that is rooted upon the exercise of power, by the imposing and persuasive individuals from the *superior/in-group.*

Contemporary society has changed radically in terms of the relations between the various cultures that compose it, including within a given country or space where cultures interact. The deep changes in contemporary society, in both the cultural and the geographical landscapes, involve various engaged interactions among different settings and ethnographic areas. The circulation of people, commodities and ideas, together with the interaction among various political, sociological and anthropological factors, promotes inevitable exchanges between cultures, generating a hybrid conceptual space. This is the reality that Intercultural Literature focuses on, overcoming political borders and nationalities and creating an interpretative movement that inspires this volume.

The changing conditions of work, business, leisure, travel or study also enlarge and develop permanent contact between countries, albeit in or out of each country, as an increasingly frequent reality. Forced migration or exile also creates a perception of divergences and similarities between cultures, implying an understanding of *Otherness* that this volume aims to reflect upon, together with how these points of contact between cultures are discussed within the topic of Intercultural Literature. The nineteen articles included in this volume were selected from a special call for contributions, because of how each consider the phenomenon that results in the perception of divergences and similarities inherent in this contact between cultures, focusing on Lusitanian,

Western and Eastern literary texts, ethnography, media studies and philosophy of culture, and addressing transcultural contexts, texts and authors with an interdisciplinary, geographical and/or chronological approach.

In this regard, the most important value of the present volume is that it differs from previous works in the field in three significant ways. Firstly, the intercultural aspect. The volume deals with the 'otherness' theme from an intercultural point of view, concerning different cultures (Lusitanian, Polish, Ukrainian, Moroccan, North American, Latin-American, Vietnamese and Chinese). Secondly, the interdisciplinary aspect. The volume examines the theme of 'otherness' through chapters that focus on different fields (Literature, Philosophy, Arts, Media). Thirdly, the chronological aspect. The essays presented in the volume range from the Middle Ages to our contemporary age.

The first section, titled *Crossing towards the Other*, considers multimodal understandings and constructions of the self through the 'other' as it is conceptualized in our contemporary age, through fiction, travel literature and artistic examples regarding some Luso-Brazilian contexts, with a short excursion also in the medieval age.

Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins' essay proposes an examination of the concept of alterity, starting with the symbolic image of the mirror and some intercultural references (ancient times, Dante, Levinas) and then moving on with the ethical and moral concept of taking care of the 'other' and with deontological principles because, as the author underlines, the dialogue between people and cultures requires mutual respect for convictions. This is fundamental, since it means non-indifference. We must adopt an attitude that allows us to treat the other and the different one with justice and equity. We are thus led to refuse discrimination—hence why we have to be objective. In fact, we cannot devalue our convictions; rather, we must temper them with a balanced attitude. Hence the importance of prudency.

Philosophical questions are the focal point of Carlos Nogueira's work which analyses the fictional reconstruction of three historical personalities, Freud, Thomas Mann and Júlia Mann, in *O Regresso de Júlia Mann a Paraty* (2021) by the Portuguese writer Teolinda Gersão. The author argues that, in the three parts that constitute this novel, the reconstruction of the three historical personalities is supported by biographical facts. 'Freud thinking of Thomas Mann in December 1938' and 'Thomas Mann thinking of Freud in December 1930' can be read as psychoanalytic dialogues conducted by Teolinda Gersão, whereby Freud is the psychoanalyst of Thomas Mann and the latter is the psychoanalyst of the former, but in a relationship in which each one, in the same act, performs their own psychoanalysis, creating a dialogue of otherness.

André Corrêa de Sá explores some facets of the Transatlantic Neighbourhood between two Portuguese-speaking authors. In order to understand Gilberto Freyre's ideas about the history of Brazilian intimate relationships, we need to look at the interpretations of Portuguese history by the nineteenth-century Portuguese historian Joaquim Pedro Oliveira Martins. Oliveira Martins popularized a well-known account of Portuguese history that addressed the

importance of its transatlantic endeavors. In this chapter, I will examine how this idea can be used to better understand the cultural connections between Brazil and Portugal and their relationship with the coasts, seas and oceans on both sides of the Atlantic. I will explore how Freyre used the cultural arrangements described by Oliveira Martins in his works, *História de Portugal* (1879) and *O Brasil e as Colónias Portuguesas* (1880), to explain the human–environment relationship that led to the formation of Brazil in the South Atlantic.

The reflection on the concept of 'the other is us', previously mentioned, is reviewed in Luís Cunha's work from the past to the future through two dystopian projections, which, despite coming from authors with little in common, converge in some aspects that the author considers relevant. In *Submission*, by Michel Houellbecq, a future is projected in which the other becomes dominant, producing an effect of inversion of what we might call the order of conversion and assimilation proposed by modernity. On the other hand, in Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale*, the dystopian narrative is built around the collapse of modernity caused by the exponentiation of the claim to identity. In both cases, religion imposes itself in these dystopias, proposing a transcendent understanding of the social order that (re)emerges to negate the modern (rational) grounding of that same order.

Considerations on ethics and politics in the context of the arts are argued by Filipe Martins, which proposes an interpretation of ethics and politics based on an intersection of the notions of difference and otherness. Assuming that the subject is always constituted intersubjectively—that is, through the other—, authors such as Sartre and Levinas established a necessary relationship between subjectivity, responsibility and ethics. On the other hand, the subject is also, by definition, a performative agent, an actor, and this phenomenological dimension tends to emancipate the subject from the seriousness of the real, as well as from the wide (ethical) contracts of social reality.

The aim of Daniel Tavares' essay is to explore the reconstructive processes of the other through poetic composition. In *Nox*, Carson engenders the other—her brother Michael—by constituting a book that reveals a vision (as a hypothesis) possible to be recovered from fragments. This figure establishes itself not only as a *phásma*, but also as a portrait that is drawn with the coordinates inscribed in the book—through the verb or the image, or even through the very spatiality of the object itself and the reading process, seeking to answer the question that guides the work: who were you?

The second section, titled *Postcolonial and Contemporary Considerations on Otherness*, explores 'otherness', be it in the postcolonial context or as a result of intercultural migration contact, through Afro-Portuguese modern and contemporary literary works.

Nazir Can's work focuses on the novel *As duas sombras do rio* [*The Two Shadows of the River*] (2003), by the Mozambican writer and historian João Paulo Borges Coelho. The aim of the author is to analyse the regimes of 'otherness' of the character Leónidas Ntsato with the theoretical support of Ruy Duarte de Carvalho (2011), which identifies the plurality of positions that

African citizens can currently experience in different parts of the world, the different levels of otherness rethought by Baudrillard and Guillaume (1994) and Mbembe's highlighted multiplicity of identifications and politics of enmity (2016).

As Ada Milani notes in her essay, between 1979 and 1989, about 20,000 Mozambicans were sent to study and work in East German factories under the aegis of cooperation agreements between FRELIMO and the GDR. 'Madgermanes' or 'Madgermans' is the title given to these 'Made in Germany' men and women. Milani focuses on the historical aspects regarding the figure of the Madgermanes and its reinterpretation between narrative and comics. Historically, the author underlines that hastily repatriated after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the failure of FRELIMO's socialist project, many of the Madgermans were unable to reintegrate into the changed economic and social landscape. Three decades ago, the Madgermans began marching in Wednesday protests, an almost unique case of political contestation in the post-independence period, turning the streets of Maputo into a stage for demanding recognition for the pensions and benefits accrued during their stay in the GDR. These demonstrations contributed to a strengthening of the perception of a common identity, in a movement somewhat comparable to that of the *Mothers of Plaza de Mayo*, particularly in terms of the protest against oblivion.

The analysis of the short story *Bruma* by Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida is the central aspect of Pedro Schacht Pereira's study to reflect on the 'specters' of nineteenth-century Portuguese realism. This short story, as the author illustrates, can be read as a literary *séance* of the specters of slavery and race in the realist fiction of Eça de Queirós (1845–1900). In this context the author argues that in her short story, Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida sheds light on how slavery and race cast a deep shadow over the social reformism inherent to Eça de Queirós' cultivation of literary realism, at a time when Portugal attempted to develop a modern colonial project for its territories in Africa.

The case of 'othering' and belonging to the Moroccan soccer team is the object of study of Sanae Elmoudden's essay, which examines the influence of the Moroccan soccer team's performance in the 2022 World Cup in Qatar on the self-identity of Moroccans. Using memes and reels from social media as data, the analysis explores four themes of 'othering' in the team's story: Siir (geographizing othering), Reda (nationalizing othering), Neya (culturalizing othering) and Sajada (Islamizing othering), leading to a strengthened sense of Dima Maghreb (Moroccan identity). The findings suggest that the formation of a strong Moroccan identity is an example of 'empowered othering', overcoming the damaging effects of postcolonial experiences such as exclusion, invisibility, and hypervisibility.

The aim of Ivana Ercegovac and Mirjana Tankosic's work is the concept of 'othering online' which analyses the dichotomy of real and virtual spaces by exploring the motivation of individuals' behavior and the impact of this concept on the perception of others. 'Othering' is a widely inclusive conceptual framework that includes stereotypes, prejudices and notions like atavism and

tribalism, but it also refers to deeper processes, where only some of those patterns are covered by these ideas. Social environments and contexts, which include family, friends and community leaders, indicate which differences are important and which associations, stereotypes and meanings are reflected in those categories. In this way, social media communities encourage certain differences and guide users to what differences are relevant when choosing affiliation. This study demonstrates that ideological segregation on social media is linked to cultural stereotypes, indicating along the way that technological advancements, which facilitate easier social grouping, increase the degree of ideological segregation.

In the wide and complicated field of social media, this section proposes two essays regarding the theme of 'otherness' in this context. Anima McBrown and Lorenzo Dalvit focus their attention on the concept of coloniality, understood as the lingering impact of inequalities and power dynamics resulting from the colonial encounter long after the end of historical colonialism, to investigate xenophobia on Twitter among Black South Africans. The authors argue that findings suggest that the process of 'othering' migrants from other African countries reflects different dimensions of coloniality and that, despite a history of common struggle against White minority rule, Black South African Twitter users seem to embrace apartheid's notions of exceptionalism and attribute to citizens of other African countries an inferior form of humanity. This is evidenced by the use of derogatory language and constant reference to the question of who belongs where, which is a key concern of racial segregationist spatial politics.

The final section, titled *Differences and multiplicities of Otherness*, examines the multiplicities inherent the concept of the 'other', through a curious embassy that emerged in the eighteenth century, some literary texts of our contemporary age, regarding Portugal, Vietnam, China and the example of the Moroccan soccer team and on social media, with the aim to reflect on 'otherness' about how different points of cultural contact are worked out in Intercultural contexts.

Helena Buescu's essay shows how lyrical poetry in Galician-Portuguese, from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, presents a fusional cluster of different traditions, the courtly Provençal and the folklore-oral, with influences of Mozarabic and semitic poetry. Circulation may also give way to crossings, as in the specific case in which Buescu is interested. The two types of love songs ('songs of love', in the Provençal style; and 'songs of boyfriend', in the Iberian and oral tradition in Galician-Portuguese) are two clearly different types of love songs, often written and sung by the same troubadour. As such, they express a clear awareness of poetical, aesthetic and cultural divergences in lyrical poetry, which would pervade Portuguese lyrical poetry throughout its history, from Camões to Fernando Pessoa and beyond.

Valentina Pedone and Federico Picerni's essay deals with the concept of transformation through transculturation in the comics and graphic novels of the cartoonist, writer and illustrator Chen Xi. As the authors explain, through

the extensive use of scripts and images ascribable to a Chinese cultural context (traditional folklore, wuxia martial heroes, mythology and fantasy), combined with European ones (the Italian writers Buzzati, Calvino, Eco, or atmospheres from Britain's Victorian era or London's Swinging Sixties) and in a skilfully crafted paradox, Chen Xi employs commodification, fetishization and self-Orientalization to create a personal neonomadic, transcultural landscape. Interrogating the hybridity of the graphic novel/illustrated fiction as a genre to challenge the univocity of identity, the essay also demonstrates that Chen Xi's work is an act of creative agency to articulate a specific Sinophone chronotope (Shih 2011), in a continued questioning of the center/periphery matrix that reflects the author's transformation through active (trans)culturation empowerment.

Dealing with the complicated concept of 'otherness' in China, Mariagrazia Russo's work summarizes the contact between the Portuguese world and China by examining the various embassies that took place between 1508 and 1725, focusing mainly on the embassy sent in 1725 by King João V, represented by Alexandre Metelo de Souza e Meneses. With the aim of resolving the difficult situation of the Lusitanians in the Orient, Metelo brought in his luggage more than two centuries of Luso–Sino relations. The encounter with the alterity created some cultural mismatches which caused misunderstandings and disagreements, especially with regard to the language, translation and interpretation of cultural systems.

Starting from Levinas' ethical theory, with its emphasis on the position that the self comes into being only in and through the Other and the self is infinitely responsible and responsive toward the ever-strange and incomprehensible Other, Hatice Bay analyses the concept of 'otherness' in the novel *Listen Slowly* (2015) by the Vietnamese-American writer Thanhhà Lai. In her essay, Bay examines how the young protagonist of the novel deconstructs her self-centered and all-American Laguna Beach identity and emerges as an ethical Vietnamese-American self, who listens to the other person, makes space for the radically strange, and is beholden to the other place, more specifically, Vietnam, and her Vietnamese roots, after she is forced to accompany her grandmother Bà back to Vietnam over the summer. Specifically, the main goal of this work is to trace the workings of interpersonal relations and intercultural communication in *Listen, Slowly*, and to understand what it might mean to depose the ego, listen to the other, welcome the other and engage in a response-able relation with the other place, and with culture in general.

Still in Asia, the multi-faceted identity of Macao (in the south of China) is described by Lola Geraldes Xavier and Yang Nan in their essay through the analysis of some novels and short stories, mainly *Nam Van—Contos de Macau* [*Nam Van—Short Stories from Macao*] (1978) by the Macanese writer Henrique de Senna Fernandes. The authors highlight the identity and multiplicity of the subjects, symbolically reflected in the speeches of the narrator and the characters, as well as the relationship between self and hetero-image, questioning the

identity hybridity of the characters in the stories, in a relationship with history and space, concluding that the various identity and relationships between Self-Other in *Nam Van—Contos de Macau* reflect the collective imagination of a time and society, presenting a pyramidal quaternary structure that exposes a relationship of social and imagery power between (1) Westerners at the top, (2) Macanese, (3) Chinese from Macao and (4) Chinese from Mainland China at the bottom.

In the nineteenth century, as Magdalena Bąk observes, Portugal was regarded by an average Pole as the legendary Oceanid. Located at the far edge of Europe, far from popular travel routes of the period, this location might have caused the feeling of otherness among those who decided to go to Portugal in the nineteenth century. Bąk's study aims to analyse different strategies applied by Polish travellers in order to overcome the feeling of strangeness and otherness of the experienced phenomena. The author intends to reveal such elements of culture, topography or aesthetics that could have been regarded as especially strange to the nineteenth century Poles.

As Mariah Wade notes in her essay, before colonial encounters devised ways to create 'the other' out of Indigenous populations, we were other to them. Indigenous populations of the Americas greeted European newcomers using rites of hospitality perfected through time and enacted for all those who were other to them. Wade argues that the state of Otherness was not exclusionary or related to cognition of a power imbalance but was bracketed by the difference embedded in 'not us, the people'. But Otherness constituted a space of impending danger particularly as the encounter lingered, because time required the incorporation of the Other into the social fabric of the group, albeit in a liminal state. Based on archival and ethnographic evidence, Mariah Wade's essay explores several narratives of first encounters with colonizers and the immediate aftermath of such encounters probing into strategies and tactics of accommodation and social integration of newcomers.

To return to the idea of Intercultural Literature mentioned earlier in this chapter, the choice of *intercultural* is intentional. It is informed by the field of Intercultural Communication, which, among many things, aims to improve communication between people who belong to different cultures (see, for example, Holliday 2011, 2013). Within this field, there is also an examination of how the Arts (including literature, but not limited to it) can be part of how cultural barriers are transcended and intercultural contact can happen (see, for example, Hogan et al. 2014).

Following that approach, the present volume proposes thinking about the *other* not in terms of difference, but in terms of connection, noticing the points of contact that can be developed. Like Intercultural Communication—interdisciplinary in nature, in its great research goal, "cross cultural comparison or understanding intercultural interaction" (Chen 2017, 3)—the aim is to find a common ground that is mindful of difference, respectful of divergences in practice, in which difference is not the defining aspect in a discussion that seeks

connection. In so doing, as Irigaray noted earlier, a space for dialogue that brings the *other* closer to *us* can happen. We hope readers enjoy the contributions to the volume, and that the essays provide a different perspective of thinking about otherness and the other that is also productive.

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