

**David Brookshaw. *Perceptions of China in Modern Portuguese Literature: Border Gates*.  
Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.**

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The tiny enclave of Macau has, for four and a half centuries, been a conduit for commercial and cultural encounters between China and Europe. A prosperous and strategically placed marketplace on the distant fringes of the empire and a multicultural melting pot where East and West blend, it came to represent the ultimate colonial fantasy for the Portuguese. Yet Brookshaw's illuminating study is the first attempt to consider modern literature in Portuguese about Macau (as a gateway to China). It focuses on themes of "exile, memory, adaptation, hybridity and identity" (x) in texts ranging from the last decades of the nineteenth century (Pessanha and Eça de Queirós's *O Mandarim*), to the flurry of "Livros do Oriente" publications that came out between 1987 and the handing back of the colony to China in 1999.

The author refers to theoretical concepts put forward in a number of key texts of contemporary postcolonial theory (by Bill Ashcroft, Nestor García Canclini, Doris Sommer, and Robert Young) that were originally used to chart developments in cultures elsewhere in the world, illustrating the global applications of postcolonialism. He explains just how the case of Macau differs from that of Portugal's other ex-colonies, largely because of the enclave's fierce and continual loyalty to the homeland. Brookshaw's study might be seen as a microcosm of the colonial experience and the literary reactions inspired by it, varying between fear, fascination, superiority, empathy, nostalgia and celebration.

The choice of texts (novels, essays, articles, short stories and poems) enables the author to explore these reactions and consider the motivations of the writers: the perpetuation of Orientalist myths, colonialist agendas, fascination with an ancient foreign culture, nostalgia for a bygone age, and the idea of the exotic country as Edenic refuge or mystery to be solved. Among the cast of writers discussed are the Portuguese who has "gone native" (Pessanha), the naval officer (Jaime do Inso), the foreign language teacher (Maria Ondina Braga), the journalist (Deolinda da Conceição), the backpacker (Cláudia Ribeiro), the Chinese academic (Yao Jingming), and the authentic,

nostalgic Macanese (Henrique Senna Fernandes); including both insiders and outsiders to compare and contrast their views.

Brookshaw raises the question of Macanese identity and how it has been represented by these writers, through the differing approaches to issues of hybridity and miscegenation; the rejection of roots by some characters as opposed to the “re-ethnification” of others; the interweaving of symbols and allusions to Chinese and Portuguese cultures; and the reference to or avoidance of the actual political situation.

Particularly interesting is the significant presence of women writers in the literature of Macau, from the tragic tales of Deolinda da Conceição (1950s), to the insistent curiosity of Maria Ondina Braga’s narratives (1960s), Fernanda Dias’s poetry (1990s) and the travel literature of Cláudia Ribeiro (2001).

David Brookshaw has published major contributions to the critical material available on literature from Brazil and Lusophone Africa and this study is another important work in the field of Portuguese Studies: a fitting start to the new Edwin Mellen Press series “Studies in Portuguese Literature.”

Claire Williams lectures in Lusophone language, literatures and cultures at the University of Liverpool. Her research has focussed largely on the narratives of Lusophone women writers, in particular Clarice Lispector and Maria Gabriela Llansol. Recent publications include a co-edited volume of essays on Lispector, *Close to the Wild Heart* (Oxford: Legenda/ European Humanities Research Council, 2002) and the forthcoming *The Encounter Between Opposites in the Works of Clarice Lispector* (Bristol: HiPLA Monographs, 2003). Email: cleliwel@liv.ac.uk