

(In)visible Borders: Ideologies of Sameness and Otherness in a Portuguese Context

Cristiana Bastos

Geography is a good site for embedded metaphors. We are so accustomed to them we tend to ignore that there are mediation processes in language and in the graphic representation of places. We relate to maps, distances, territories, shapes, adjacencies, proximities, routes, as if they were experienced directly by the senses. They become a part of daily life, whether or not they are coherent with the rest of our empirical perceptions. In this article, which is dedicated to exploring issues of borders, identity and representations in Portuguese culture, maps will be constantly mentioned.

I will suggest that maps have a prominent role in what is often referred to as “Portuguese culture.” The statement involves some problems, since a generalization such as “*a Portuguese culture*” risks erasing the relevant social variables that reveal the heterogeneity of social processes, perceptions, and representations. Not all of us relate to metaphors in the same way, and what we see and understand depends largely on who we are, not only as unique human beings but as members of social groups, either defined by class, generation, gender, education, race, or site of origin. These different social variables interact in unique combinations that broaden the diversity and heterogeneity within each “culture”; there is no stereotypical Portuguese whose behaviors, perceptions and expectations can be taken to represent our particular “culture.” The evidence of that diversity challenges the excessive claims of an embracing overall “culture” that might account for the specificities of our shared lives. This being said, it is by choice, not by omission, that this article is not after heterogeneities. It is rather after what we share, and maps are one of those things.

I will attempt to explore two areas in which maps and spatial representations were the support to peculiar forms of collective identity in Portuguese culture. One of the cases corresponds to the identity of Portugal vis-à-vis

Europe, having Spain as the closest expression of otherness. The other one corresponds to the Luso-tropical colonial empire and its aftermath. Both of these expressions suffered a radical reversal in the last twenty-five years - the foreignness of Spain becoming submerged in the making of a European Union, and the empire giving way to new, post-colonial nations.

The fact that those two processes occurred in less than one generation suggests that adults of today, who eyewitnessed the changes, and whose minds and worldviews were developed in settings quite incongruous with contemporary reality, may still be adjusting to the present. Memories are often in conflict with the evidence of today; and understanding contemporary Portuguese culture requires an exploration of the reminiscences that linger from the previous generation. One of them is the colonial mind that viewed the world according to Luso-tropicalist doctrine; another one is the perception of a fractured Iberia where Portugal and Spain constituted opposing entities.

Both reminiscences can be recalled in a vivid, graphic manner, since both were contained in the maps hanging on the walls of our childhood classrooms. Maps were fundamental in a territory-obsessed colonial culture. There were always maps in the classrooms of the many public schools Salazar's regime had built to spread a unified knowledge and reality throughout the nation. Private schools followed the rule. Maps also happened to be more attractive than the portraits of Salazar and Thomaz that hung at each side of the classroom crucifix. Those sepia-tone prints were quite boring: Salazar as a unchangeable profile, like an immortal leader; and an aging Americo Thomaz, portrayed in full admiral regalia, who provided a face for the main character in dull jokes of the time.

Maps were also ideal for the demands of wild imaginations. Not only for the imagination of school children, though; the regime's imaginative propaganda developed some extraordinary maps to furnish elementary school classrooms in the 1960s. There was one in particular that most perfectly embodied the regime's discourse of grandiosity. In that map the Portuguese colonies of the time were superimposed upon the surface of Europe. Mozambique occupied Spain and France, Angola spread out of Germany, and the smaller territories filled the remaining spaces. The message in the picture was that Portugal by itself, in its imperial, colonial self, could be considered larger than the continent of which it was geographically a part. This statement was quite confusing for children who were supposed to have

achieved an understanding of the relationship between “parts” and “whole.” As if there was also a message about the mysteries of *territory*: secret and sacred, similar to matters of religion. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the regime portrayed the grandeur of the empire using a mystical component. It was not just the church, the inheritance of the crusades, or the role given to faith and Christianity that explained the persistence of the empire. The very isolation of Portugal and its colonies after the Second World War, and the incomprehension and condemnation of the international community, contributed to the profile of a collective experience of mystical and untranslatable character.

Compared to the map of displaced colonies, the one representing the Iberian Peninsula was much easier to relate to. Iberia was simply Portugal and Spain: Portugal in colors, Spain uncolored. As children we used to think of them as having the shape of a human head. Portugal’s coast was the profile of a face and Spain was its hair, with a hair piece to accommodate Galicia. To the south of Galicia was Minho: the Portuguese forehead. Douro was the eyebrow, with the city of Porto nested on it. An eye looking outwards at the dendritic bay of Aveiro. A big nose started in Cabo Carvoeiro, in Peniche, continuing all the way into Cascais; Lisbon stood at the nostril. The upper lip was the whole south side of Tejo - Caparica, Espichel, Sesimbra, Setúbal, as if biting the lower lip at the Sado bay. The chin extended all the way to the Algarve, jutting out at the cape of São Vicente. The neck was Spain again.

There we were, a human face looking out at the ocean. Spain was in the back, and so was Europe. According to the ruling ideology, Europe was not really something one should care about, except when affirming that the empire was bigger than the continent. As the celebrated “heróis do mar,” we pertained not to Europe, but to the oceans. History books were filled with stories of warriors who fought the Moors and the Spaniards, and ocean explorers that opened up the world to the multi-racial-pluri-continental-luso-empire.

Our fate toward the ocean and our back to Spain: these were the two pillars of the sustained ideology. Spain was not just the country next door, it was also the *other* against whom our own nationality had been built, the enemy that we might have left once we took the direction of the oceans. One that, however, would still dispute the territorial implications of the expansion across the ocean, dividing the world in two with the treaty of Tordesilhas; and one that would haunt national independence at every dynastic or succes-

sion crisis - moreover, one that would reappear in anachronistic territorial claims, like that of Olivença, which we will examine later on this paper.

Portugal and Spain were *other* to each other, as if irreducible enemies. In Portuguese schoolbooks, Spain - often *Castela* - was learned about along the lines of opposition and animosity. *Spain* was the main reference against which our collective identity was built. Never mind that most Portuguese lived by the coast and were physically removed from Spain, with hardly any empirical knowledge of what Spain and the Spanish people were like; they were imaginary stances that composed the narratives of oppositional identity. Spain was the enemy.

That Spain played such a demonized role in the shaping of our own identity seems to be explainable only in terms of the psychology of nationalism. To grasp the concept, we need to go no further than the recurrent issues in Eastern Europe and its agonistic caricature of nationalist fights. By demonizing the “other” and the stranger and essentializing the differences, a protective envelope made of iron and anger guaranteed the strength of nationalistic feelings - and those could always be conveniently used in case of war. War, however, was a historical reminiscence rather than a fact. It was like an internalized war between Portugal and Spain, one that we lived with, in spite of its unlikelihood.

There was a bold otherness assigned to Spain, one that obfuscated the otherness of Europe for the Portuguese of a generation ago. For people who grew up in Portugal, Spain was there as the one and only country next door. But it was also the long haul to be made if one wanted to go anywhere in Europe. Portugal’s position vis-à-vis Europe is expressed in that sentence: “anywhere in Europe,” not the geographically correct “anywhere *else* in Europe.” Up to our days, Portuguese adults refer to Europe as a category that does not include the speaker; there is an embedded us-and-them opposition. As the one neighbor and space before Europe, Spain was in between the *us* and *them*. Spain neither *us*, nor was it as “other” as *them*, that is, the core Europeans from the other side of the Pyrenees.

For those living in Portugal, the symbolic border of the Pyrenees was less relevant than the one separating Spain and Portugal. Yet, for a long time, it was the Pyrenees that marked the difference between a civilized Europe on one side and a backward, “orientalized” Iberia on the other side - paradoxically, to the occident, or west, of “Western Europe.” Such “orientalization” persisted throughout the twentieth century, since Iberian countries were

actually ruled by anachronistic dictatorships long after the Second World War. They were different.

The notion of a stable Pyrenean border would eventually change. And so was its inner Iberian counterpart, the policed, built, and psychologically reinforced border between Portugal and Spain. Within the last quarter of this century there were major changes in Europe: a re-arrangement of boundaries, definitions, identities, and physical borders. As for Portugal and Spain, both are now full members of what might have been a theme of science fiction not too long ago: the *European Union*. Common passports, no fences or walls, and a forthcoming single currency for all countries. The borders that matter moved elsewhere - to customs in airports and seaports, to the slums and sidewalks and construction sites of European cities where migrants live on the margins of citizenship.

These changes are recent; our minds and worldviews were shaped in a different world, one that still lingers in our memory and that certainly needs further examination if we are to understand the ever-changing social issues of today's Europe. The argument can be extended to the understanding of the complexities of the contemporary Portuguese-speaking world, caught between the aftermath of rapid de-colonization and a radical shift in the politics and status of the former imperial core - itself transformed from a marginal periphery at the borders of Europe into a full member of the European Union.

To enter the wider discussion on the recent transformations and their impact we can briefly examine the question of the Portuguese-Spanish border. What difference is there now? How was it actually? Spain used to be the one and only neighbor, and it certainly still is. Yet, Spain is no longer the wholesome and homogeneous country we grew up thinking it was. Rather than a "country," Spain is increasingly seen as a "state" - a political unit where different nationalities, languages and cultures co-exist. Galicia, Catalonia, the Basque country, Andalusia, Castile, plus a few regions that do not fully qualify as nationalities, are entitled to autonomy and political rights. Their languages are no longer repressed: they are spoken freely, taught in schools, used for official purposes. Spain is no longer what we used to see when it was just the country next door.

Nor are we: Portugal is different, too, yet for other reasons. Not for the virtual splitting into regions praised by politicians in recent years: those regions have no nationalities or languages to thicken the definition of admin-

istrative units. The actual internal contrasts are mostly expressed in a north-south opposition, which may also be interpreted as an extension of wider Iberian contrasts: roughly, there would be a continuation of Galicia in the north of Portugal and a continuation of Andalucía in the south, to which should be added the local originalities developed during centuries of independent national history.

What is different in post-union Portugal is not about regions, but about a general reversal of identity. As we discussed earlier, both the colonial axis and the Iberian axis went through major transformations. Those transformations precipitated a drastic identity reversal in Portugal - as if there was a complete inversion in the definition of *otherness*. The transcontinental *sameness* that characterized Salazar's ideology about Portuguese culture and politics was fractured; the Iberian fracture was bridged. While some borders eroded, others were erected: the *others* of yesterday became the *same* of today, and the *same* of yesterday are now the *others*.

The Portuguese population is still adjusting to this sudden reversal of identity, one that is experienced but not yet theorized. Looking back at the processes related to ideological formation may help in understanding the complexity that still persists today - the memory of a fractured Iberia clashing with a siblinghood with Spain; the memory of a transcontinental nation clashing with the problems faced by African migrants in today's Lisbon, for instance. The fiction of a humane luso-tropical empire was overwhelmed by the African nationalist movements and gave way to a set of new nations that seem more realistically adjusted to geography than Salazar's regime. However, today's trends are far more complex than the simple coincidence between peoples and territories. Overlapping diasporic movements intertwine populations attached to differing levels of access to citizenship, resources, ability to travel, to work, to own, to spend. The celebration of Portuguese transcontinentality remains in other forms, for there are Portuguese-speaking communities or vestiges of these communities virtually throughout the globe. The celebration of a lusophone community also re-enacts imperial nostalgia. Understanding these interactions and complexities should be a priority for the social sciences working in Portugal today.

In this article I will be more modest, and my discussion on the reversals of identity will focus on the other side of transformation: the relationship and attitudes toward Spain. I will bring here some observations collected years ago, when I was about to graduate as an anthropologist. Having no

tools to address the reminiscences of colonialism that permeate not only our culture but also my own discipline, I thought I might do my share of the mandatory national obsession with identity by conducting ethnographic research in the Portuguese-Spanish border. That might suffice as the professional rite-of-passage, fieldwork. And the bizarre issue of Olivença became the starting point.

What was Olivença about? Apparently, a town located in Spanish Extremadura, close to the Alentejo, that, according to some military treaties, should be a part of the Portuguese territory. This dispute became a passionate agenda for some, like the “League of the Friends of Olivença,” who struggled to make their cause known to everybody. As late as the 1980s, Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo waved the banner of Olivença during his presidential campaign. The military rhetoric, the territorial assumptions and obsessions, the anachronistic tone of the entire issue could not help but recall - as caricature - the motive of Alcácer Quibir, that a few centuries earlier brought Portuguese knights to a slaughter in Morocco. It was the same motive of obsessing about some piece of “ours” being occupied by “theirs,” and the motivation to re-achieve it by means of war.

At that point in the twentieth century, crusades and faith were no longer fuel for territorial wars - at least, not in Portugal and certainly not about some town engulfed in Spain. The advocates of Olivença used more modern arguments: besides the issues of territorial rights, they raised a discussion on *cultural identity*. Trapped within Spanish territory, the town might be deprived of the political and military administration of Portugal; but its more elusive “culture” was described as being authentically Portuguese. What was this claim about? Advocates invoked the fact that the inhabitants of Olivença spoke Portuguese, that there were Portuguese monuments and architecture, and that visitors could feel like they were in Portugal. Even Mr. Pinheiro de Azevedo, a military man, passionately adopted the argument of cultural belonging in the context of his presidential campaign.

The Olivença phenomenon seemed to be an ideal topic for the ramblings of a beginner anthropologist. In a few days I was on the road with the first of a series of research partners that shared different moments of what would become a larger project - one that ultimately led me to another site and approach.

Our initial research question was quite simple and direct. We were at the peak of the winter festivities cycle and we asked whether Olivença was more

inclined to celebrate Reyes, following the Spanish tradition, or Christmas, following the Portuguese one. That might be a starting point, albeit naive, to go after other identifiers of “cultural belonging.” In the end, that did not matter. Whether Olivença was more prone to celebrate the Reyes (January 5-6) or Christmas (December 24-25) became irrelevant. We never made it to the Reyes in Olivença. A conversation in the village of Monsaraz, Alentejo, which we visited in a little detour from the primary route, would change our plans drastically.

The stop in Monsaraz was due to a kind of reality check in which we, as anthropology students, were very eager to engage. Monsaraz had been described under the pseudonym Vila Velha in one of the few monographs on Portugal: Cutileiro's *A Portuguese Rural Society*, (Oxford University Press, 1971), later translated as *Ricos e Pobres no Alentejo*. The use of pseudonyms for anthropological field sites was then required, following the norm of most disciplines that engage in describing people's lives. Also, Vila Velha was somehow presented as a standard Alentejo town in Cutileiro's ethnography - one that, in spite of the Portuguese nationality of the author, was a typical British social monograph. It emphasized social structure, defined the social groups, accounted for the historical dimension, the conflicts, the tensions, the values, the life-cycles, and described how the whole is held together, and yet missed the more effervescent aspects of social life, the denser description or intimate approach adopted in other anthropological trends.

For us, Vila Velha was the anthropological site that was closer to home. There were not many chances of visiting Malinowski's Trobriand Islands in Melanesia or Mead's Polynesian villages. Vila Velha was there for the experience of life behind social structure. And Monsaraz was awesome. Its beauty was also, in a way, the vehicle for its current ghostly predicament: too beautiful to change, the preservation of its architecture and beautiful looks became somehow more important than the reproduction of human life.

At that time, in the early 1980s, life in Monsaraz was still happening. Houses were white, so were the monuments, streets had people, dogs were around. People talked; one of them talked to us about something of which I had never heard. We mentioned our destination to Olivença. He told us a story that involved Olivença as part of a trade between Portugal and Spain; an unequal trade-off, good for Spain, bad for Portugal. Portugal had lost a splendid big town, with monuments, villages around it, a large territory, a worthwhile piece. It had been taken by Spain. In exchange, Portugal had got-

ten a second-rate village that once was Spanish. Its name was Barrancos, and it stood at the border beyond the Guadiana river, south of Mourão, north of Moura and Serpa.

According to the tale, Barrancos and Olivença were in a mirror situation. A symmetry existed between the two: the same way people in Olivença reportedly spoke Portuguese, people in Barrancos reportedly spoke Spanish. They also spoke a third language, the local *barranquenho*, I learned later; the place had been the subject of a linguistic monograph by Leite de Vasconcelos, a Portuguese ethnographer from the early twentieth century.

The idea of a combination of symmetries involving Portuguese and Spanish identities deserved further exploration. That implied an immediate visit to Barrancos, where we had never been and probably never heard of. For us, the transition of Barrancos from foreign to familiar revealed it as such an interesting subject that it would become the main focus of my research. Even the comparison of symmetries between Barrancos and Olivença became less important.

Not that I never made it to Olivença at a later moment. We went there, too, and there were the Portuguese-style monuments, with the characteristic late-baroque decoration known as *Manuelino*. There were people speaking Portuguese here and there. There were three villages in the county where people spoke Portuguese, too. And yet they also spoke Spanish and were actually Spanish citizens. Nobody seemed eager to be rescued by a Portuguese column in arms. I kept the photos, but I never went back there.

Barrancos was another story, and a quite fascinating one. The name evoked slopes, intense hills, ups and downs. It was there in the map, like an enclave entering into Spain. It was the last stop before Spain, and there wasn't even a permanent official entrance to the other country. An iron fence, metaphorically speaking, with a gate, literally speaking, that was closed for most part of the year. There was a physical expression of the border. Was it the "protective envelope of iron and anger" referred to earlier? What was it like to live closer to that physical expression of separation? Besides the fence there was another country - and not just any, but the country we were taught in schools to dread and think of as opposed to us.

Barrancos was the last stop in an almost empty road with hardly any village - Amareleja, Santo Aleixo, Pias. Flat and mildly undulating plains, a typical Alentejo landscape: wheat, cork, oaks, pigs, sheep, cows. Here and there a *monte* - either of the modest rural housing variety or of the wealthy type, a

center for a *herdade*, or a hangout for urban weekenders looking for hunting grounds.

At the end of the road there was the town, whitewashed houses and streets spreading down from a rounded hilltop, like a Moroccan village or a spot in Sierra Morena. Barrancos was not a typically flat Alentejo town; it was different, and in more than one sense. The main road enters the town and leads to the top of the hill, ending in a square that forms an elevated "downtown." Barrancos has a sort of ascending center of gravity; social life, administration, rituals, and leisure converge at the square. There is a church at one end, a public building at the other, towers with storks' nests in both of them, the town hall nearby, and the two main *sociedades* in each of the other sides of the square.

Like in the Vila Velha of the sixties depicted by Cutileiro, *sociedades* were leisure spaces that predictably mirrored social stratification. In the eighties, they may better be described as reminders, rather than as mirrors, of social stratification. The seventies changed the way class was experienced and exhibited in the Alentejo. Once an intense physical experience - marked by a number of elements that included access to space, money, use of language, clothing, body language, housing, and others - the exhibition of class markers in the Alentejo tended to soften after the re-arrangements in property and land ownership that happened with the *Reforma Agrária*.

For a stranger like me, the two *sociedades* almost looked alike. They were places where men went to hang out, socialize with one another, drink a glass of wine or a beer, eat a *tapa*. *Tapas*, the complementary appetizer given with a glass of wine, were as Spanish as the language I could hear so many times in town. Even the glass of wine tended to be more often described as a *copa*, like in Spain, than as a *copo*, like in Portugal. Also, people seemed to be able to go back and forth between Portuguese and Spanish with no problem or difficulty; also with no pattern that I could determine. Things could be heard and seen that no other site in Portugal would offer. There were signs of the symmetry mentioned by our acquaintance in Monsaraz, who depicted them in spite of having never been in Barrancos himself. What should I, a beginning anthropologist, do about those signs, besides trying to keep the mandatory fieldnotes? How much attention should I pay to all of that? And how to interpret it?

As it turned out, other things would be more important to my work than the fact that the Barranquenhos were eating tapas, or speaking Spanish, or

mixing Portuguese and Spanish with no apparent pattern. Identity was played around other issues, organized around time, myth, history. But the fact that at that moment people were interacting as if they were in Spain while actually in Portugal, and one mile away from a fenced border with guards and prohibitions, is something that deserves to be explored *today*, considering the moment of identity reversal brought about by the shifting of borders and boundaries that occurred with the simultaneous occurrence of de-colonization and European integration.

Officially, for Portuguese folks, Spain was both the “other” and the “enemy.” And there we were: next to the border, and Spain hardly resembled an enemy. No fences prevented people from going to the other country for fun, leisure, play, shopping, for markets, cattle, people. Portugal was there mostly reserved for politics, health care, and achieved rights. There was no contradiction seen here. This was life at the border: while the policed state reinforced the gates and guards, the actual society dissolved them and ignored them. One could always go around the fences.

Not unlike other towns at the border of Portugal and Spain, Barrancos was the site of a lively combination of choices, less of a limbo than a hybrid. People could use the location to better serve their needs and strategies - either in economics, emotions, or leisure. They told me stories about smuggling things back and forth in the recent past. I asked them about what could be worth the risks of trafficking between two places that seemed so similar - in economy, in availability of goods, in life-styles - and they taught me that trafficking was not what I thought it was. Of course there were slight differences in the prices of goods and in their availability - and the slightest difference made the trip worthwhile. They carried coffee bags in a heavy backpack across the border, unseen by the guards, and they carried back home chocolates and perfumes and whatever groceries or canned goods were worth it from Spain. Some of these products had inscribed on them the content contrasts of a colonial history - the taste of coffee and sugar for Portugal, the chocolate for Spain. But that was not even the point.

The point was that they could choose. They had access to the life and markets on the other side of the border, and the ideological work of demonizing the other was absolutely irrelevant in this context. The border was just a marker to another site where things were different and worth going there for. And not *that* different - for some of those were experienced in town, too. When Barrancos opened up its doors and loosened its rules of behavior (like

those affecting gender and generation) for the yearly festivities, in the end of August, it was with Sevillana singers that they would celebrate and enjoy. The bullfights were at the higher point of the festival, and they were proudly enacted in the Spanish way. A Spanish matador was invited, and the climax of the bullfight corresponded, like in Spain, with the killing of the beast by the man and his sword. It was unthinkable, for Barranquenhos, to celebrate in any other way, to adopt the Portuguese standard bullfight rules of not killing the animal in public. Never mind that killing the bull in a bullfight was illegal under Portuguese law; it was just like crossing the border to Spain - an illegality that was not to be in the way of one's free behavior, therefore to be disregarded as some emanation of a state that does not really account for local life.

So what I found in Barrancos was more complex and interesting than the interplay of symmetries and elements from reified "Portuguese" and "Spanish" cultures. I found a society that freely adopted what might be of more convenience to them, either in terms of goods, of rituals, of words, of entertainment. They picked from both sides of the border and created their own lifestyles. Way out in the borderline, they were not really a challenge to either Portuguese, or Spanish, territorial identity claims. No "league" like that of Olivença was there to campaign for the rescue of Barrancos, and their stories were actually quite different from each other.

Barrancos's myth of origin was played out on another level: local lore, shared by most inhabitants I interacted with and documented in some local newspaper texts, held that the town descended from the village that once existed in the castle of Noudar. Noudar is a nearby fortress that once lodged a village, now in ruins. It stands on top of a hill and is engulfed by the turns of the rivers Ardila and Murtega. The rivers make a natural, serendipitous border between Portugal and Spain. The fortress was a mark, from the 14th century, of Portuguese military power and presence in that area of potential conflict, when medieval knights ruled territories and their inhabitants and created the spaces in which 19th and 20th century nationalities are lived.

Documental evidence shows that the village of Barrancos already existed before Noudar's decline, and that it co-existed for a long time, and that it is not unlikely that Barrancos was larger and more important than Noudar - except in the military aspect. Yet it is the Noudar connection that is claimed in the local myth of origin, which matches Barranquenhos' constant claims to their "Portugueseness." Noudar is looked upon as the site of their origins.

And Spain is experienced constantly, with no signs of conflict or ambiguity.

As a conclusion, we can consider the experience of Barrancos described above as a paradigmatic case of what life at the border is actually like. The otherness emphasized by the nationalist ideology, and the very *otherness* of Spain for the mainstream history of a generation ago in Portugal, might imply some sort of contradictions, conflicts and ambiguities for those who lived at the border. In fact, life in Barrancos did not seem to have any of those elements. Differences were experienced quite smoothly; they were used well, wisely and in a profitable manner. The conflict was between actual local life and the representation of an animosity between Portugal and Spain - one that had been a pillar of the ideology of the older regime.

Today, freed from nationalistic pressures and living in a federation of European states, it may well be that we learn from what Barranquinhos have long known: that the experience of differences that emanate from different nationalities may be much more pleasurable and profitable than the alienation from it. In a further step, we may finally learn to approach the richness of diversity without the ideological pressures of a presumed sameness. That possibility would also correspond to the ideal aftermath for what was once an imperial project cemented with an ideology of a shared culture and identity transcending the geographic and cultural diversity. Being now a main stop in the contemporary diasporas and the labor migration that seeks in Europe some opportunities, Portugal became the host for a diversity of peoples and cultures. This is happening a couple of decades after the equivalent process in other European and world cities. Will there be a more creative and imaginative response to the new social trends in Portuguese? This is a question that social scientists and critical theorists should give priority to in their agenda for the next few years.

Post-scriptum

After finishing this article (May 1998), the once-neglected Barrancos became a hot topic in the Portuguese media. An animal rights league, based in Lisbon, condemned the public slaughter of the bull during bullfights in Barrancos and lobbied for the implementation of the Portuguese law which forbids it. Barranquinhos rose in protest, arguing that they had the right to keep their traditions; they also argued, with the support of many Portuguese bullfighters, that the public bull slaughter was more compassionate and animal-friendly than the option of leaving the animal to bleed and suffer while

waiting for its turn in the district slaughterhouse, as it happens after the Portuguese-style bullfights. The government, relying on legal arguments, forbade the bullfight that is a central part of the yearly festival of Barrancos (Nossa Senhora da Conceição, in the last week of August). Barranquinhos resisted and persisted, and threatened to raise the Spanish flag in town if the police prevented the course of the bullfight. They would rather be Spanish than to make concessions on that matter. Finally, the bullfight happened as usual, with no intervention from the police. It was overscrutinized by the media and commented upon by every other politician and opinion-maker concerned with the shape of the state.