

PRESENTATION

The stereotyped and negative view of non-Europeans, consolidated by orientalist narratives, is still going strong today, despite almost 40 years of intellectual and academic counter hegemonic efforts. Representations of Arabs, Muslims, Chinese, Africans as the other (menacing barbarians) have justified, for centuries, the domination of these peoples by Europeans – and more recently by the United States of America (USA).

It is within the context of academic questionings of the power structures that sanction the marginalization of peoples that the Dossier **Cultural History and Western Imaginary about the East – InterAção Journal** proposes to make a contribution. With the inclusion of articles by Brazilian and foreign authors, in Portuguese and English, the present edition offers an attentive look of the main contemporary issues related to the Western imaginary on the East. Thus, topics such as European right-wing populism, Islamophobia, the Palestinian issue, Post-colonial Feminism, tensions between Iran and the West, and US narratives regarding China, are debated.

In addition, in line with the premises of post-positivist approaches in International Relations, the relevance of the geographical, identity and gender-related spaces of the authors is highlighted. In this sense, breaking with the traditional neocolonial structures, we have Muslim women authors from the Middle East addressing Islamophobia in Europe, Brazilian women researchers debating the experience of the emancipatory struggle of Palestinian namesakes, as well as Brazilian scholars investigating the representation of US narratives speaking of emerging countries such as China and Iran.

The title of the first article in the present dossier is **“The construction of ‘the other’: right-wing populism in Europe and its functional other image”**, written by Nurcan Ceyhan. This paper argues that a part of the current electoral success of right-wing European populist parties is founded on the effective use of images of the other. Ceyhan demonstrates how these parties were able to establish European immigrants (especially of Muslim origin) as other, different from the European *I*.

The article **“Stereotypes and Invisibilities: cinema and the construction of Imagery about China in the West”**, by Paulo Menechelli Filho, investigates the evolution of the representation of China by Hollywood. The author emphasizes and questions the change in the profile of Chinese representation in movies: the traditional invisibility and stereotypification of Chinese characters have been replaced by a more positive construction in the last decades. Thus, Menechelli’s paper draws us to relevant questions regarding the relations of power, identity, and culture between what is currently seen as the two greatest international powers: the USA and China.

The article **“Sobre mulheres e lutas: uma análise pós-colonial dos movimentos de mulheres palestinas”** (Regarding women and struggles: a postcolonial analysis of the Palestinian women’s movements) was written by Natália Moraci Ochôa. The author defends the hypothesis that, because it takes into consideration not only gender but the variables race, class, religion and nationalism, postcolonial feminism is the most suitable feminist approach to understand the resistance struggles of Palestinian women. Her article also introduces new views about the theoretical debate of the postpositivist branch of International Relations by providing an empirical case to test alternative theoretical views.

In **“Política Internacional e o “Outro” Religioso: a Inerência do Laicismo no Orientalismo e o Caso do Irã”**, (International Politics and the Religious “Other”: The Inherence of Secularism in Orientalism and the Case of Iran”) Rafael de Oliveira Wachholz and Eduardo Lopes Cabral Maia present thought-provoking insights concerning the role of religion in Orientalist discourse. Founded on a solid bibliographic review, the article expands the theme by focusing on Orientalist narratives in regard to the post-revolutionary Iran of 1979. Awareness of the variability of relationships that each society develops with religion is an important state-of-the-art contribution of the abovementioned article.


In the section called **“Entrevista”** (Interview), the Turkish researcher Nurcan Ceyhan of Istanbul University addresses her academic and personal experiences regarding Islamophobia and right-wing European populism. In an interesting conversation with editor Bruno Mendelski, Ceyhan also talks about a topic that is rarely investigated in Brazil: the Muslim imaginary concerning the so-called West.

In the section of articles not included in this dossier, we have two instigating academic productions: the article **“O que é diplomacia cultural”** (What is Cultural Diplomacy) by Bruno do Vale Novais, and the article **“Educação infantil: dissertações realizadas em um programa de mestrado profissional (2013-2019)”** (Childhood education: theses produced in a professional master’s program – 2013-2019) by Lígia de Carvalho Abões Vercelli.

Lastly, our hope is that this number may contribute to the critical discussions concerning the importance of language and narratives in the context of peoples’ identity representations. Or, in the words of Edward Said, written a short time before his death in 2003: “history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and rewritten, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated, so that “our” East, “our” Orient become “ours” to possess and direct.”

Enjoy your reading!

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