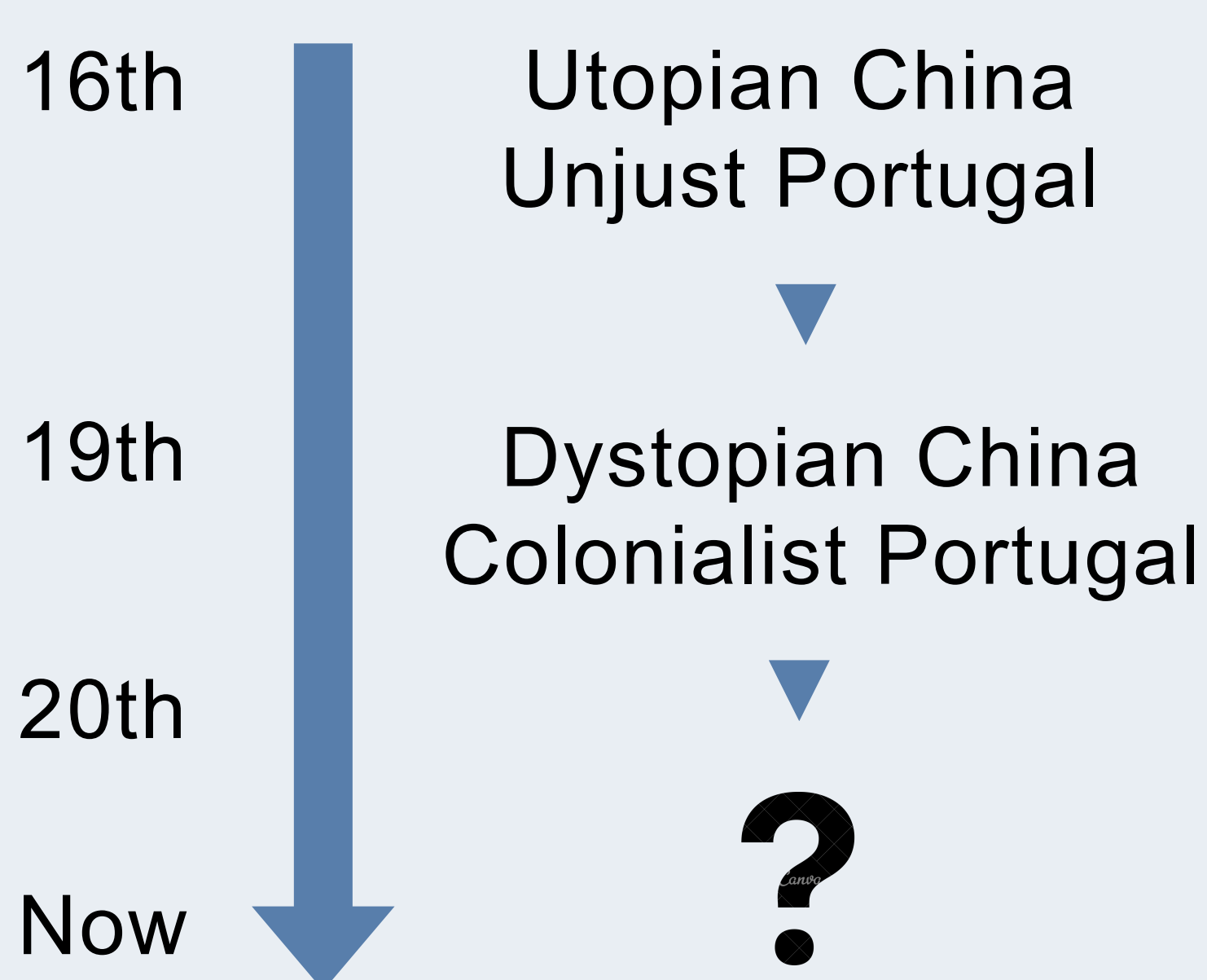




Constructing the Other to Serve the Self China(s) Translated in Portugal (1890-1999)

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Introduction: The Far East as a Mirror



Aims:

1. To explore the representations of China emphasized by Portuguese agents;
2. To analyze how these representations reflect the self-construction of these translation agents;
3. To examine how the self-other construction process evolves **across different political contexts**.

Object of Study

Portuguese translations of Chinese literature published in book form

> Building on previous research into the history of translation in Portugal

Intercultural literature in Portugal 1930-2000:
a critical bibliography

Between 1890 and 1999

> From the first translation to the handover of Macao to China

Methodology

External history

1. Compilation of a catalog
2. Analysis of epitextual information

Internal history

1. Case studies
2. Peritextual and textual analysis

Theoretical Framework

Polysystem theory (Even-Zohar 1979)

Diachronic and synchronic changes between dominant and dominated

Agents (Hermans 1999; Milton and Bandia 2009)

Individuals as both constrained by and generative within the system

Imagology (Leerssen 2016; Doorslaer et al 2015)

Discursive conventions constructing ethnotypes of the Other and Self

Orientalism (Said 2003; Chittiphalangsri 2014)

Power inequalities between sinophiles and sinophobes

1890-1932: Contradictory Sentiments?

Against the backdrop of the **declining Portuguese empire**, intellectuals were **fascinated by classical China**, but they were also influenced by the **social Darwinist view of contemporary China**. This dual sentiment is evident in the studies of António Feijó, Wenceslau Moraes, and Camilo Pessanha.

(Pinto 2013a; 2013b; Yao 2021)



Camilo Pessanha (1867-1926)

- Major Portuguese symbolist poet
- Lived in Macao for about 25 years

Extensively Annotated Translations of Eight Classical Poems

“Deformity, monstrosity, rickets, dwarfism, cretinism... [...] Ignorance, boorishness, superstition, disloyalty, cowardice, greed, sensuality [...]”

(Pessanha 1943, 7)

Official vision of Portugal's dictatorship

“[...] China observed and known by a superior Western and Portuguese sensibility of our time.”

(“Nota Explicativa” 1943)

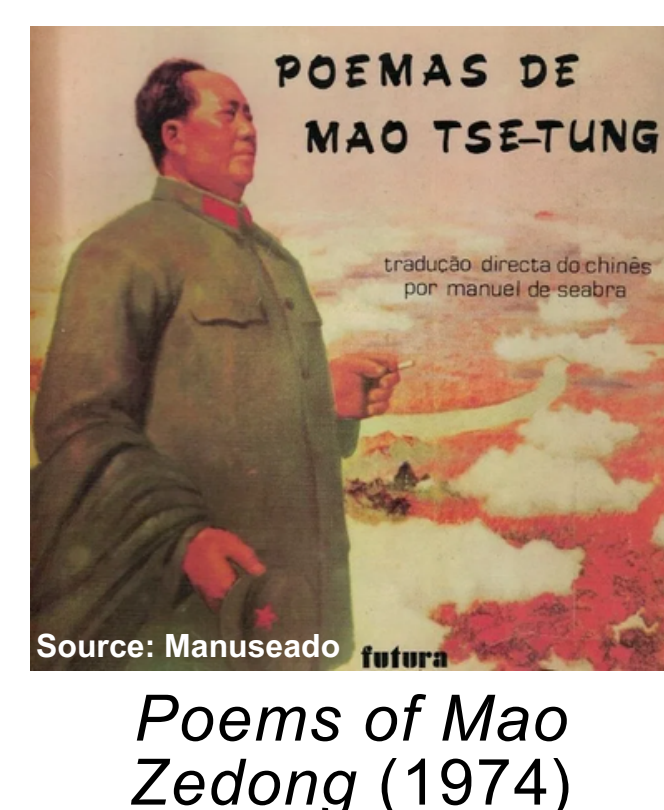
Visions from seemingly dissident translators

“[...] China is still the China of Marco Polo [...]”

(Gomes 1944, 2)

“[...] China [...] master of a 4,000-year-old continuous civilization, and with which our country has always enjoyed the best relations.”

(Seabra 1967, 7)



Source: Manuseado
Poems of Mao Zedong (1974)

1933-74: Between Dictatorship and Dissent

Under the **ensorship of Portugal's anticommunist and colonialist dictatorship**, translators of Chinese literature often subtly expressed their dissident views through their **leftist ideological perspectives**. Their translations included works by leftist writers and explored issues such as women's lives in patriarchal societies and the experiences of the lower class.

1975-99: Finding the Other at the End of the Empire

Between the Carnation Revolution (1974) and the handover of Macao to China (1999), the translation of Chinese literature underwent distinct phases: a focus on works by **leftist writers until the 1979**, a shift toward **classical Chinese literature from 1979**, and the beginning of translations of works that **critically describe the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the mid-1990s**.

1975-79: Leftist

Sparkling Red Star
by Li Xintian

Diary of a Madman
by Lu Xun

The Sun Shines Over Sangkan River
by Ding Ling

1979-: Classical

Classic of Poetry. Shijing

Spring Sleep: Chinese Poems

Poems by Li Bai

1995-97: Critical

Wild Swans by
Chang Jung

Farewell to my concubine by
Lilian Lee

Challenges

1. Broad time frame

Although there may not be many translations, the century-long history requires contextualization.

2. Data limited to translations

For many translators, the only information available seems to be their products – their translations.

3. Simplistic context-text relationship?

Changes in translations can be influenced by factors beyond the political context.

References

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