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Poetry of the Macanese and Other Crossings in Contemporary Macao Poetry

Macao as dot-on-the-map is conceived by its poets as a site for all kinds of portal semiotics, as paradigm for cultural crossing and cultural shift. Contemporary Macao poetry is dominated by a number of key thematic concerns. Witnessing environmental degradation and the sense of nature lost is the flipside of a development and pace-of-change poetics in casino-age Macao. There are persistent critiques of consumer culture. In Macao poetry today, chance and luck loom large as themes, along with their figuration in Macao life through sites such as casinos and temples, through personae such as those of the gambler, the beggar, the prostitute. The new Macao poetry is interested in the paradoxes, ironies and hypocrisies inherent in the present-day culture, politics and international position of Macao; it reveals a place-based poetics deeply concerned with Macao identity, its evolution and potentials. Focusing particularly on works written by the Macanese community, this paper deals with issues of identity and cultural crossing as presented in contemporary Macao poetry.