3 Darwinism, Freemasonry and print culture

The construction of identity of the Macanese colonial elites in the late nineteenth century

Isabel Morais

Introduction

In his most quoted study Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson argues that the invention of the printing press and the rise of print media contributed to a textual representation of the concept of the nation and nationalism. He states that 'popular' print culture was also crucial in its contribution to a global exchange that would have reinforced the idea of an 'imagined community'.¹ Anderson further explains that before the eighteenth century, the concept of nation was extensive, as Latin was the language of a broad, vast, imagined community called 'Christendom', but as there were changes in the religious communities, such a concept began to be replaced by French and English as vernacular languages of administrative centralization.² Thus, print capitalism allied to the book market supported by the improvement of communications and the emergence of new and diverse forms of national languages, originated the creation of clusters of small creole 'imagined political communities' that were eager to promote new forms of national and cultural consciousness, aimed at widespread literacy through liens of kinship, ethnicity, fraternity, and power loyalties.³ This chapter posits that Anderson's arguments regarding creole nationalism in the new world, fit the particular case of the emergence of the printing, publishing and book-selling culture among a Euro-creole bourgeoisie from Macao with solid kinship, ethnic, commercial and social connections in Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai and other littoral spaces in the treaty ports in East Asia, and takes these developments as a necessary point of departure. I argue that they used the widespread nature of print media to empower themselves and other community members with the progressive eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideas on rational scientific knowledge. They embraced atheism and anti-clericalism as important elements of enlightenment, thus promoting scientific culture, constitutional monarchy or republican forms of government, social mobility for ethnic minorities, and religious and intellectual tolerance that to a certain extent challenged the Catholic Church and conservative circles.

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These people (many of them leaders of their community), were more favourably situated, and also possessed the means and motives to contribute to forging one 'imagined community' of Portuguese in the East within a regional kinship network and other dispersed vernacular readers. Newspapers, journals, essays, pamphlets and books on variety of subjects (either in Portuguese or English), printed and circulated widely – facilitated by an efficient postal system in the latter part of the nineteenth century – provided the technical and cultural means to link together not only readers of common origin and ancestry in Macao and Hong Kong but also those who had migrated to the China's treaty ports and other Southeast and East Asian settlements. This aspect strongly testifies to the intentions of these men to empower a new sense of community and cohesion through a shared national print media valuing social and linguistic culture. The relevance of this extensive kinship and ethnic network is exemplified by the fact that in Hong Kong as well as throughout other treaty ports in Canton, Shanghai, Kobe and Singapore, the cluster of family-run printing companies and the staff of the major printing companies and newspaper offices were Portuguese Eurasian originally from Macao, as were their succeeding generations.⁴ After the maritime trade lost its significance in Macao following the Opium Wars and the foundation of Hong Kong, facilitated by the publication of foreign newspapers in China, many Macanese youngsters who received training classes as composite or printers at the St. Joseph College in Macao sought better employment opportunities in China's treaty ports and in Hong Kong.

However, my argument tries to extend beyond the importance of printing and publishing, since these pioneer creoles used other important modes in which their idea of a more liberal and civilized nation was constantly reimagined, shared and reinforced. Believing that science, reason and education would invariably lead to more advance and autonomy, they absorbed progressive ideas of influential European thinkers deeply influenced by European agnosticism in the age of Darwinism. They also established contacts and affiliated with important academies of modern scientific thought, embracing an ideal quest for the Enlightenment's rational scientific knowledge and diffusion. Besides the development of a national print culture that was crucial to their interests, these men who owned (or had connections to) the most prominent of Macao and Hong Kong's trade book publishers and entrepreneurs, also created and integrated local, metropolitan and international circles of scientific investigation aimed at disseminating and promoting the most advanced scientific information and higher education. Through their participation in institutions of print and society (medical and scientific societies, universities, social clubs, spaces of recreation and congregation from social clubs to Freemasonry lodges) many of which they founded and made more dynamic, they became involved in the organization of a wide range of related events such as historical commemorations, cultural festivities, performances, sporting and horticulture events, which would help communities imagine themselves united to a transnational community, as well as committed to

perpetuating its historical origins. They contributed to the development of sworn brotherhoods of Freemasonry in Asia, promoted Masonic values of individual liberty, equality and fraternity among all men, including religious tolerance, separation of Church and state, freedom of the press and of speech mediated by a complex set of symbols and initiation rituals, and also exerted a strong appeal on these multifaceted men.

The aims and scope of this chapter is twofold. First, an attempt will be made to approach the printing culture in Macao and Hong Kong by returning to a transnational framework of space and time in an attempt to assemble scattered pieces of the history of the two colonies in the hope of unveiling a new global perspective of the late nineteenth century, which has so far remained relatively disregarded. I will also address questions of discourse and readership in an attempt to reassert the importance of a thriving print culture to the rise of the Macanese identity. Second, this chapter addresses the production of printed material around the debate on Darwinism through a study that includes analysing the interrelationship between the life trajectories and works of two members from the expatriate community of the Portuguese Eurasian community (Lourenco Pereira Margues and Polycarpo da Costa) within the historical context of both Portuguese Macao and British colonial Hong Kong. Finally, this study also focuses on how the emergence of printing or a capitalist printing trade in Macao with its ramifications to Hong Kong from 1871 onwards, provided a critical means for constructing an 'imaginary identity' enabled by writing, distribution and circulation of print products through a transnational communications network of scattered communities of subscribers and collaborators involved in participatory politics.

Unveiling untold stories of the Macanese in Macao and elsewhere

In the main alley cemetery of Macao's Catholic Cemitério de S. Miguel (Cemetery of St. Michael), the grandiosity of the old gravestones belonging to the family Pereira Marques still attracts attention. In particular, the human size statue of Lourenço Pereira Marques resembles no other funerary memorials in the cemetery, due to a total absence of any overtly Christian symbols and to its provocative epitaph. Indeed the base of the statue bears an epitaph, composed by his brother, praising the deceased's atheism, together with verses from *Odes et Ballades* by French atheist poet Victor Hugo, engraved on its northern side.⁵

L.P. Marques, like Victor Hugo, was raised as a Catholic, but both became atheists and republican supporters in adulthood. Marques (1852–1911) was born in Macao into a prestigious Macanese family who owned the property where one of Macao's legendary landmarks was located – the Camões grotto.⁶ Marques studied in the Seminary of St. Joseph in Macao and later pursued his studies in Lisbon and in Dublin where he graduated in medicine in 1877. In the same year, he acquired British nationality, which would allow him to access positions in the civil service of Hong Kong, where he became

acting director of the Government Civil Hospital and director of the Lock Hospital while he also worked for the British colony's Victory Gaol.⁷ Marques befriended the Filipino revolutionary and notorious Freemason José Rizal and helped him settle down in Hong Kong and benefited from his connections with Freemason circles, especially with the Masons on the medical board who helped him get the medical licence to open an eye clinic.⁸

Marques was an acting member of the Lusitano Club, some of whose members were prominent Portuguese Eurasian figures in Hong Kong and Macao and, like Polycarpo da Costa, were Masons or had strong connections to Freemasonry, which persisted until the late twentieth century.⁹ A writer, polyglot, collector and bibliophile, Marques donated part of his private 'transnational library' to the Club of Macau, but this library later disappeared. The surviving catalogue of the library confirms that he was acquainted with the most influential thinkers and currents of thought of his time, including representative works on Darwinism and Freemasonry, such as *A Concise History of Freemasonry*, dated 1903.¹⁰ He also donated part of his private art collection on the Far East to the Sociedade de Geografia (Royal Geographical Society) in Lisbon, where he was also a fellow with his friend Polycarpo da Costa.

Although so far, there is no concrete proof that Marques was affiliated with Freemasonry, he might have been initiated when he was a medical student in Ireland, where exists the oldest grand lodge in world, or he might even have had contacts with the Irish Provincial Grande Lodge of Portugal created in 1872, which joined the United Grand Orient of Portugal formed in 1869.11 He, his family and closest friends were not only friends or relatives of the founders of printers and progressive newspapers, but they were also close to the Freemasonry circles. He also had professional contacts and associated with senior medical and government health officers who were renowned Freemasons. As professor of medical jurisprudence at the Hong Kong College of Medicine, Marques worked and became friendly with other prominent doctors and Freemasons such as Dr Gregory Paul Jordan (an Armenian nephew of Sir Paul Chater, who was himself a Freemason), Sir Dr Kai Hoi Kai and Dr James Cantlie.¹² Like them, Marques was a member of the Hong Kong Medical Society created in 1886, which was part of the Medical Society Committee that established the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese, the first Western medicine college in Hong Kong in 1887 where Sun Yat-sen studied.¹³ Thus, a connection between Marques and Sun Yat-sen seems likely to have existed. Margues was a polyglot who wrote in English with the objective of promoting Camões' poetry, as in his family there was a cult of the Portuguese poet. His writings on Darwinism are full of quotations in French, Spanish and German, attesting to his cosmopolitan culture.¹⁴ In 1890 he retired and returned to Macao in 1895, where he dedicated himself to pro bono medicine until his death in 1911 and he graciously continued to assist the Hong Kong government when necessary, such as during the 1898 bubonic plague epidemic.15

Unfortunately, unlike the case of Margues, regarding his friend Polycarpo da Costa (1837–1884) there is scarce bibliographical information available although there is concrete proof about his Freemason affiliation. In fact, the 1884 edition of China Overland Trade described in detail Polycarpo da Costa's Masonic funeral service held in the cemetery, which also became known as the Protestant Cemetery in Hong Kong.¹⁶ According to the description, as part of his burial service, a procession was formed and the coffin, covered with his badge of the office as past district grand secretary and other Masonic regalia of the deceased, was conveyed to the cemetery.¹⁷ Da Costa, then secretary of the Hong Kong & Macao Steamboat Company, died together with other Freemasons, including the captain, officers and some passengers of the company's steamer Yotsai, in a tragic accident on 24 February 1884 caused by a boiler explosion onboard during a voyage between Hong Kong and Macao. A funerary monument was built in their honour and their graves are among around 80 others adorned with the Freemason symbols found in the cemetery.

Such a significant number of Masonic graveyards attests to the fact that the Freemasonry brotherhood was not only becoming an increasingly important social network in Southern China in the late nineteenth century, but also that Masonic lodges were welcoming ethnic minorities such as the Portuguese Eurasians as well as Armenians, Parsees and Jews into their ranks, a fact that might have contributed to their social ascension and promotion to higher positions in business and civil service jobs in the British colony.

Yet, an earlier controversy was related to da Costa's burial, as the Catholic Church refused permission for him to be buried at the nearby Hong Kong Roman Catholic Cemetery – which was reserved for the Portuguese, Chinese and British Catholics – on the grounds that he was a Freemason. Protests and strong objections were raised in the local legislative council to the point of it being alleged by some of the legislators that the Roman Catholic schools in the British colony did not deserve to continue to receive government subsidies.¹⁸

Although there are no written records of its activities to show that Freemasonry existed in Macao before the first registered formation in 1906, it seems likely that Freemasons should have conducted their secret activities in the Portuguese colony, as the Chinese restriction to the presence of Europeans in China at this time forced them to stay in Macao for long periods of time. The first recorded activities of Freemasons in the Far East can also be drawn from the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisition records dating back to the eighteenth century. In fact, the earliest information about Freemasonry in the Far East can be traced back to 1756 when two Irish Masons were released after the Inquisition's trial in Manila because they enjoyed British protection.¹⁹ Although sparse, there is also valuable information on the Goa Inquisition records revealing that Freemasonry under the charters granted by Portuguese lodges might have been secretly introduced earlier under the auspices of members of the armed or naval forces and mercantile elite in the Portuguese settlements, despite the prohibition.

Freemasonry was introduced in Canton in 1759 through the auspices of Swedish Freemason naval officers of the Swedish East India Company who created the 'Prince Carl's Lodge' after the name of their ship.²⁰ The first British Lodge of Amity no. 407 created in 1767 was warranted by the Grand Lodge of England and may well have met in the buildings housing the Swedish company.²¹ Senior officers of army regiments or naval ships were granted 'travelling warrants', which allowed them to hold lodge meetings wherever the unit or ship might be during their overseas voyages.²² During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the British and the Dutch East India Companies' members and army officers created a complex transnational web of Masonic jurisdictions that became prominent in a myriad of settlements in India, Ceylon, Straits Settlements, the Indonesian archipelago and, ultimately, China.

The Lodge Royal Sussex was the first Masonic lodge created in Hong Kong in 1844, followed by the Lodge Zetland in 1846.²³ The former moved to Guangzhou and then to Shanghai in 1846. Masonic lodges were less numerous in China than in India, and subsequently there was a significant expansion of the fraternal order to the littoral areas of Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Tianjin, as well as to the inland cities of Nanjing, Beijing, Harbin and Chengdu, together with Macao, the Philippines and Batavia, with close connections to their counterparts in Portugal, England, Scotland, Ireland, Massachusetts and the Philippines in the 1880s. For instance, the first Masonic lodges created in the Philippines in 1856 were affiliated to the Lodge Grand Oriente founded in Portugal in 1804 due to its prohibition in Spain.²⁴

The establishment of foreign concessions in the main port cities of Canton, Amoy, Fuchou, Ningpo and Shanghai in China after the Opium Wars (1842), led to the recruitment of European staff for Western commercial institutions and companies. Many of them were members of the Portuguese and Eurasian communities from Macao who had studied in Macao or overseas and settled with their families in China's treaty ports, and in the new British free port of Hong Kong since its foundation in 1841.²⁵ Over the succeeding years and decades, subsequent events – such as the abolition of the coolie trade in 1873 and consequent new economic crises allied to natural disasters such as typhoons and fires, which seriously damaged many properties of Macanese elite communities in Macao – originated several dispersions of the Macanese.

On the other hand, one of the contributions of the Liberal Revolution in Portugal in 1820 was the abolition of censorship, so that newspapers reappeared in every overseas Portuguese possession.²⁶ People of Portuguese origin, mostly Macanese, published the first newspapers in Macao, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Japan and Singapore and they even wrote works on the history of the publishing industry and on the Portuguese presence in the East.²⁷ Consequently, Macao's Portuguese periodicals and books flourished and expanded their circulation to subscribers of other Macanese diasporic communities in Southeast Asia. Many of them were aiming to serve a polemical cause and were highly critical, thus contributing to a sustained democratic debate.

'Indigenous cosmopolitanism' and Darwinism

In the last guarter of the nineteenth century, some influential Macanese men such as L. P. Margues and Polycarpo da Costa were sympathetic to the idea of evolution, and enlisted Darwin's sociological theory in their plight against conservatism and traditional forces, taking advantage of Hong Kong's open and free intellectual climate and of the wide availability of the means for all printed matter. The appeal that Charles Darwin's theories exerted in certain intellectual and academic circles in Hong Kong might be viewed in the light of being considered a universally applicable explanation to the social phenomena. Darwin's works were among those that were studied as part of the Western science curriculum taught at the college that influenced Sun Yatsen's thoughts while he was a medical student in Hong Kong. During the same period (1887–1892) he was probably inspired by his direct mentor, the British specialist Dr James Cantlie (1851–1926) who precisely evoked Darwin in his speech at Sun Yat-sen's graduation ceremony in 1892.²⁸ The writings of these two Macanese may be considered unique among pro-Darwinism published works in the 1880s in the region, as they were the first attempt to analyse in detail and disseminate the theory of evolution. One of the reasons that they did not receive wider recognition might be that they were written in Portuguese. Another interesting aspect is that for the very first time there was also an attempt to relate evolutionism to Chinese philosophy. This aspect is even more impressive when bearing in mind that Darwinism was the first Western sociological theory to make an impact on China.²⁹ In fact, their writings anticipated the interest and influence that Darwinism would have more than a decade later from 1895 onwards, on the most famous intellectuals and revolutionaries of modern Chinese history in the late Qing and early republican periods in China, including Sun Yat-sen, when was introduced by Yen Fu.³⁰ Recent studies reveal that, in fact, Darwinism influenced the modern history of China and its great changes were attributed to acceptance of Western social theories, in particular Marxism, until the advent of Maoism.³¹ Therefore, it is relevant to note that two pioneers' works dedicated to the theory of evolution were written in Portuguese and published in Hong Kong in the 1880s for diffusion among the Macanese and Portuguese communities in southern China – a fact that it has been neglected in the commemorative events and works dedicated to the impact of Darwinism in Portugal or in the region.

Marques and da Costa are true representatives of those individuals that, according to Frank Karpiel, shared a sort of 'indigenous cosmopolitanism', as they possessed a distinctly global but also regional perspective in their understanding of different cultures as they were deeply interested in the world beyond their community.³² Marques' friendship with da Costa, a deeply committed Freemason, was especially productive as they were outspoken advocates of evolutionary ideas. Their works in defence of Darwin's modern theory caused quite a scandal among the Portuguese-speaking communities in Macao and Hong Kong, as they stirred up unprecedented rage in the most conservative and Roman Catholic dominated circles. Margues produced his first study titled A Validade do Darwinism (The Validity of Darwinism) in 1882, in an obvious homage to Darwin, whose death occurred that same year. In this work, relying on his professional expertise as a doctor, Margues gave a succinct summary of the principles of Darwinism and joined in the debate over On the Origin of Species.³³ He also co-authored the essay 'Defeza do Darwinism' ('Defence of Darwinism') with da Costa.³⁴ These and other works were the highlight of the reaction to Darwin's theory in Macao and Hong Kong as they sparked almost a decade of increasingly polarized debate between 1881 and 1889, through the publication of a sermon delivered at Macao Cathedral, as well as books, pamphlets and newspaper articles either supporting or contesting Darwin's theory of evolution. The debate was between conservative clergymen and laymen, and those liberal-minded Macanese for whom an absolute monarchy had become obsolete and who wanted science to be secular and independent from religious constraints. They admired Darwin and simultaneously aimed to be active in educating their fellow countrymen through their publications on modern Western science.

What is clear is that studies on Darwinian evolution that Marques wrote and co-authored with da Costa were associated with a controversy, which originated in an event held at the Clube Lusitano in Hong Kong in 1880. These works deserve careful scholarly attention because they echo the polemical debate between supporters of Darwinian science and religious fundamentalism in the main European literary and scientific circles during that same period, which continued into the twentieth century. Contextually, the works were written during the reign of King Luís I (1861–1889) in Portugal, and at the time of European imperial expansion into Africa, the Far East and Oceania. Macao, together with other undeveloped colonies in Africa, was all that was left of the once-vast Portuguese empire in the 1880s, after Brazil gained its independence in 1822, and the scramble for Africa by the imperial powers in 1878 was determined in Berlin, and thus in a way determined Portugal's political and cultural decay. After decades of ostracism, the Portuguese Catholic Church, especially the Patronage of the East, re-emerged, paying the way for the government's authorization of the return of religious congregations to every Portuguese possession.³⁵ In the same period, in the neglected colony of Macao, many clerics felt largely empowered. Far from the metropole and through their religious orders in Asia, they were persistently opposed to the spread of new European ideas originating from those Macanese who experienced the British and Portuguese liberalism, especially those who had embraced Freemasonry, republicanism and other new intellectual trends. The religious orders, in particular the Jesuits, through their control of seminaries and schools since the sixteenth century, possessed what Benedict Anderson calls the 'monopoly on linguistic access.'36 For centuries, they controlled the knowledge and educational system and thus played a

primordial role in the exclusive diffusion of culture among the natives and upbringing of local well-off elites in the colonies.

Despite the 1759 and 1834 decrees that successively expelled and extinguished the Jesuit congregation, the enormous power of the Church was not totally undermined in Macao. On the contrary, in 1862, the Jesuit orders returned to Macao to pursue their mission and even reacquired the Seminary of St. Joseph. In Portugal, the Freemasons opposed the reintroduction of the religious orders, such as at the Lodge Perseverance in Coimbra (1873– 1876) which curiously had the same name as one of the long-lasting lodges in Hong Kong.³⁷ In 1884, as a consequence of the promulgation of the encyclical *Humamun Genus*, the Jesuits made an appeal to prevent the spread of Freemasonry, mainly among the young.³⁸ Some Macanese became involved with several initiatives aimed at lay teaching through free schools, for the instruction of their unprivileged fellow citizens' children, like the creation of the 'Associação para a Promoção da Instrução dos Macaenses' ('Association for the Promotion of the Instruction of Macanese') in 1871.³⁹

However, for the purpose of this chapter, the most significant event occurred at the commemoration of tercentenary of the death of the Portuguese poet Luís Camões, a literary and musical event organized by an 'ad hoc' commission comprising L. P. Marques, Polycarpo da Costa, and other members from the Clube Lusitano at its headquarters in Hong Kong in 1880.⁴⁰ On the festive occasion, Margues, following his family's long-standing admiration for Camões (there was an authentic shrine to the poet in the grotto in the garden of their property in Macao) offered and unveiled a statue of Camões which stood by a silver statue of Pedro IV (1798-1834), the emperor of Brazil (1822–1831) and king of Portugal (1826), offered by another Macanese.⁴¹ The choice of these statues of prominent Portuguese figures was a symbolic sign of national pride and exaltation of enlightenment as Camões is the most famous Portuguese poet and Pedro IV was associated with Freemasonry and freedom ideals.⁴² On the other hand, it became customary to attribute the name of Camões to Portuguese lodges, as the two lodges named after the poet were established in Macao, respectively in 1909 and 1915.43 As a matter of fact, both the statues of Camões in the grotto of the Margues' family property and the one offered to the Clube Lusitano had been commissioned to Bordalo Pinheiro, a famous sculptor and close friend of the Margues family, and a Freemason himself.44

As both L.P. Marques and Polycarpo da Costa were sympathizers of the republican cause in Portugal, they emulated similar Camões commemorations held in Portugal, in particular the one organized by members of the Republican Party in 1880, in order to gain popularity and to pave the way for the establishment of the Portuguese Republic, which was established in 1910. Besides the musical and literary program held at the Clube Lusitano, the group's promoters – which included Marques and da Costa – published an apparently innocuous pamphlet, the so-called *Memória das Festividades (Memory of the Festivities)*, a bilingual literary publication (Portuguese

and English) in 1880.⁴⁵ According to the organizer's intentions, that type of commemorative printed material was expected to have a great diffusion and was intended to be widely distributed, fulfilling the function of the absent public libraries and public schools in Macao.

One of the Memória's literary contributions - written in Spanish and signed by an admirer who in subsequent writings was identified as Father Joaquin Fonseca, the rector of the University of Saint Thomas in Manila – was a polemic that propagated from Hong Kong to Macao. Indeed, the Spanish cleric criticized Darwinism in his literary contribution, considering it an 'affront' to God.⁴⁶ Notwithstanding this, the compilers of the Memoria published the cleric's opinion, together with a note signed by the compiler asserting their total discordance and their unequivocal support of Darwin's theory.⁴⁷ In the British colony it inspired enraged editorials in the English weekly The Hong Kong Catholic Register, the first Catholic publication published under the direction of A. Machado between 1878 and 1880, and Polycarpo da Costa's letters were published in the China Mail.48 In Macao, António Joaquim Bastos (1848-1912), a lawyer and journalist at the newspaper O Macaense wrote a pamphlet criticizing the promoters, not only for the organization of the event but also for implicitly advocating Darwinism and emphasizing that the defence of such ideas was due to the wealth and social differences between the Macanese from Hong Kong and Macao.49

Criticism and defence of Darwinism

At that time, there was another related event that is worth discussing. Darwinism was also the topic of a condemnation in the sermon of Canon António Vaconcellos, which he delivered at the Cathedral of Macao during Easter on 6 March 1881, and which came to be published in Macao under a title that expressly stated that the '[sermon] refuted some of the arguments of the Darwinian system with reference to the man and to the Catholic religion'.⁵⁰ Above all, this publication criticized what the author called 'impious press' for its heresy in propagating anti-Catholic doctrines and besmirching Portuguese history and culture.⁵¹ Polycarpo da Costa immediately published a response to the sermon in Hong Kong in the same year entitled Análise do Sermão (Analysis of Sermon) and dedicated it to the 'lovers of progress' who agreed that no change of the political order could be achieved unless religious beliefs were first totally transformed.⁵² It was a blistering attack on clerical obscurantism and an aggressive defence of press freedom, claiming that printing could be an important tool not only for contributing to the advancement of the sciences, but also for the dissemination of anti-scientific sciences and the 'slavery of mind' comparable to the Inquisition's persecution against Galileo's scientific contributions.53

Polycarpo da Costa and L.P. Marques then went on to again defend Darwinism, and in response to their detractors they authored *Defeza do*

Darwinismo (Defence of Darwinism) published after da Costa's death in Hong Kong and on a date timed to coincide with the commemoration of Darwin's birth in 1889. In the preambles of both *A Validade* and *Defeza*, they purposefully introduced the main ideas of Darwinism, presented a theoretical basis and ideological content to their concept of progress, and assumed the mission of carrying out the debates over Darwin's theories in the public sphere. After recalling the incident related to Father Fonseca, the rector of the University of Manila, whom they refer to as 'orador sagrado' ('sacred orator'), both authors courageously identified themselves as 'liberal republicans', at a time when Portugal was still governed by the Portuguese Crown. Above all, they intended to de-emphasize the role of religion in favour of the primacy of reason, science and technology in society.

In the preface Margues wrote for A Validade, he announced a didactic and scientific intention in accordance with the growth in importance of public libraries and the spread of encyclopaedias aimed at the general public in Europe in the nineteenth century, as part of the ideals of Enlightenment thought.⁵⁴ He began by lamenting the lack of a public library in Macao and comparing the situation to that in Goa, which he considered the 'Athena of the Portuguese colonies', where he said inhabitants were happier than in Macao because, unlike in Macao, its citizens could benefit from the existence in that city of scientific and literary institutions.⁵⁵ He said that he also regretted that Portugal and Spain were the only European countries where there was not a single translation of Darwin's seminal work.⁵⁶ In fact, comparative to other European countries, the impact of Darwinism came much later in Portugal, bearing in mind that On the Origin of Species was published in England in 1859 and was immediately translated into several languages, while its Portuguese version was published more than five decades later in 1913.⁵⁷ Evolutionism was instrumental for Margues and da Costa's criticism of Portugal and Macao as profoundly backward in terms of science, education and culture, a situation that they were determined to remedy. Their solution to the problems of political inefficiency and social decadence was a general overhaul of the quality of education of Macanese society.

In fact, during the celebrations held at the Clube Lusitano, in his inaugural and opening address, da Costa had already made a speech on the importance of the study of the mother-tongue, and on that same occasion he even made an appeal to the governor of Hong Kong, Sir John Pope Hennessy who was the guest of honour. He asked for the governor's support in creating Portuguese schools for Macanese annexed to the existing educational establishments in Hong Kong.⁵⁸ Focusing on the total absence of a single Portuguese educational establishment in Hong Kong and the change of the Royal College of Saint Joseph in Macao into an ecclesiastical seminary, he blamed the Portuguese government for the omission and expressed regret that only those children from wealthy families could be sent to Europe to pursue their studies.⁵⁹ Da Costa also spoke of the creation of the commercial school

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in Macao where there was only one teacher unable to teach in both colonies.⁶⁰ He acknowledged the relevance of the acquisition of English:

[F]ar from depreciating the acquisition of English, that language is indispensable to you for earning a living – to this supreme reason is added another important one, namely that it is the vehicle through which the scientific and industrial discoveries and the agitations of the political world reach us more quickly.⁶¹

In the nineteenth century, this liberal class of Macanese was well-aware of the real status of their compatriots' educational background. In fact, during that period, it is estimated that only a minority of the population of Macao had any command of the metropolitan language. He appealed to the young generation not to rely on the nation's past glories: 'I recommend ... to you, because people do not progress by the contemplation of what they have been, but by force of will, by enlightenment and by industry'.⁶²

In the work Defeza, Margues elaborated on the theory of evolution and used Darwinism to engage in a dialogue about science, faith and history. He also argued that, although he was not a Christian believer, he wrote his study not merely to contest the Catholic Church, but to support the thesis of natural sciences and advocate that 'work and knowledge of one's work are Christian as well those of the Sciences'.63 Trying to articulate Christianity and Darwinism, Marques neither rejected the Christian religion nor disowned scientific theories. He stated that his purpose was to support a thesis of natural science following the English philosopher and Franciscan friar Roger Bacon: 'The saints would not condemn many opinions that the modern people think should be condemned.'64 He compared important theorists (Kepler, Descartes and Aristotle, among others) whose theories were also condemned and were targets of persecution, to modern thinkers of the various European schools, which he studied in defence of complete liberty of discussion and impartiality.65 Following da Costa's earlier arguments in the same work, Margues considered Charles Darwin much more fortunate than his predecessors, who had been condemned by the Inquisition, emphasizing the importance of the new forms of communication of his time, and reaffirming that the promotion of education in the nineteenth century contributed to the tolerance of all doctrines.66

Both da Costa and Marques reveal profound erudition and knowledge not only of all the works on Darwinism, that had been written at this time in English, French, Spanish and German or translated into Portuguese, but also of other relevant authors and their scientific theories. Marques went further to comment on the anti-Darwin Christians who defended the incompatibility of Christianity and Darwinism, and the scientists and theologians who demonstrated that evolution was in concordance with Church principles.⁶⁷ He questioned why religion feared science and he concluded that those who fight against science were damaging society's well-being and prosperity, as society's interests are intimately linked to science.⁶⁸ In essence, these studies on the different dimensions of Darwinism were concerned with social change as they viewed it as a truth.

Finally, one of the extremely interesting features of *Defeza* is the fact that Margues dedicated several pages of his study to trying to discuss the relationship between classic Chinese philosophy and evolutionary theory. He quotes Ernst Teil's 1873 classic work Feng-shui: A Branch of Natural Science in China on Feng-shui and its philosophical roots, to support two conclusions.⁶⁹ First, he used specific ideas such as the dual notions of female and male in the Chinese philosophy, to show similarities with the old Egyptian belief of female principle and the interruption or imperfection in the development of the male principle.⁷⁰ Then, Margues evoked the resurgence of Confucianism in China, which came to be called New Confucianism, in particular the Chinese thinker Chu Hsi (1130–1200),⁷¹ He claimed that these Chinese 'literati' defended a humanist vision in which the cultivation of the self was integrated with social ethics and moral metaphysics adapted to their contemporaneity. Chu Hsi claimed that the there was a fixed cosmic order in the world (ch'i) from which man originated and that this consisted of two realms: the realm of the principle or concept of essence (Li) (or 'natural law'), permanent and eternally changeless, which did not exist either in space nor time, comparable to the platonic 'good'; and the realm of material force (ch'i).72

However, for the School of Principle, this immaterial and immutable principle law was innate in all created things in the universe, attributing to them form, motion and change. They assumed that the human mind was in its essence identical to the universe's vital energy, thus, the human mind could achieve perfection through meditation. This notion led to the belief that the study of the heavens or even of animals, would lead to the same principle common to the human mind and the universal mind called the Great Ultimate (taoch'i), which emanates from heaven. As the new-Confucian thinkers valued inwardness, the 'study of things' and empirical investigation was undertaken as they aimed to search for the principle of any material process, in order to ultimately find the principle innate in both material and intellectual processes. Despite certain inconsistencies in his interpretation of Chinese philosophy, Margues contended that the ideas of universal evolution, change and pantheism are important elements present in Chinese philosophy and these aspects would be precisely the starting points of discussions of the theory held by Chinese intellectuals over the following decades.73

Another important key factor to Marques' intellectual and humanist vision is undoubtedly found on the *Defeza*'s final page. The work concludes with a quote from Goethe's poem 'Epirrhema' without explicitly naming the author: 'You must, in studying Nature, /Always consider both each single thing and the whole; nothing is inside and nothing is outside, for what is within is without.'⁷⁴

Like Goethe and Darwin, who had discovered the law of evolution in nature, throughout his work, Marques emphasized the study of natural science and the analysis of phenomena of nature applicable to heaven, earth and humankind. In the poem, the sublime idea of nature as a supreme being, a cosmic force and the interdependence of what is 'Innen' ('inside') and 'Aussen' ('outside') in the contemplation of nature, allows one to discover the harmony of the 'whole', the so-called 'open secret' of the Masonic initiation. This inclusion of Goethe's poem published in 1819 leads ultimately to the mystery religion of Freemasonry, a truth that is only available to the senses, a sort of nameless god, which is a concept common in many writings of notorious Freemasons such as Goethe himself.⁷⁵ This idea of a 'nameless one' appeared frequently in literary and musical works, and it was associated with the concept of 'translatability of religion' or 'cosmotheism', or worship of the world as the God of old Egyptian traditions, which flourished in the discourse of Enlightenment and in eighteenth-century Freemasonry circles.⁷⁶ This idea was also closely connected to Goethe's interest in the sciences and his own conception of evolution was achieved through the adaptation to the environment that anticipated Darwin's theory decades later.

In fact, the defence of Darwin's theory of evolution would have been a great challenge to the Catholic Church and community in both Macao and Hong Kong, with their close religious and political connections to the Philippines. In one of the rare references to Margues, Monsignor Manuel Teixeira, the famous author of the History of Macau, in one of his works accused L.P. Margues and his brother of deviating from the 'teachings of the Church' in a clear allusion to their open atheism.⁷⁶ Marques and da Costa dared to expose the intransigence of the Catholic Church and proclaim Darwin's indisputable contribution, as the concepts of struggle and survival were crucial for the Macanese community on the verge of extinction due to the neglected politics towards the colony of Macao and an unfair Portuguese educational system rooted in Church indoctrination. Without cutting across their admiration for the Portuguese historical legacy in its overseas colonies, where they were born and would eventually end their days, at times they criticized missionary works on religious dogma through the exposition of Darwinism, a theory that encouraged agnosticism and atheism. In fact, through the promotion and publication of works on the history of Portugal and Darwinism, they sought to awaken in their compatriots a consciousness of their past but also an interest in the progress for modern science and change.

Conclusion

This study analyses the works of two men, L.P. Marques and Polycarpo da Costa, who highlighted some significant aspects of the impact that Freemasonry and Darwinism, allied to the use of printing, exerted on many aspects of thought. It also reveals the active mode with which they used novel ideas of progress to justify social reforms. They fulfilled their pioneer function in anticipating and paving the way for the reception of Darwinism as the first Western social theory ever to have an impact on the political and intellectual development of twentieth-century China.

The cultural activities and published works on Darwinism discussed in this chapter illustrate how in the late nineteenth century, these Macanese educated elites committed themselves to enlightenment, Freemasonry, liberal ideas and philosophies through the printing press. Above all it was concomitant to the idea of achieving the progress and advancement of their compatriots through the promotion of science and education, and the creation of free institutions. Their starting point was the contestation that their dispersed community was threatened in its struggle for survival, and Portugal was unable to fulfil its obligation to help it survive. Moreover, they believed that human evolution was a process of increasing individual and communal liberties with more democratic and representative forms of government. It may not be surprising that these elites, themselves connected by their common European ancestry as well by their own diversity and instability as a social network, were also predominantly interested in a more universal and fraternal sense of community, which shared a common-denominator set of ideational and solidarity ties, rooted to an idealized Enlightenment based on kinship networks and sworn brotherhood institutions. On the other hand, they contributed to the fact that Freemasonry has always been present in the most important historical events of this region, particularly in Macao until the present day, in an intricate and persistent network involving the Portuguese, the British and other colonial subjects through their colonial possessions in India, China, Macao, Hong Kong, the Philippines and elsewhere in Brazil, and other influential Asian business elites such as the Parsees, Armenians and Jews. In fact, worldwide colonial expansion and trade favoured the flourishing of a solid and effective network of Masonic lodges from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries throughout the world. Freemasonry was present in a large spectrum of colonial ports and trading centres as the army and naval regiments as well as mercantile networks spread with from Europe, in particular Portugal, Spain, England, France and Holland, to the farthest places on the globe such as South America, India and China. For the local Eurasian and Asian elites, affiliation with Masonic lodges meant not only diverse forms of socialization but in many cases social and professional promotion that they would not otherwise have had access to. Freemasonic affiliation allowed them to freely interact, for example, with foreign royal visitors, colonial governors, East and Dutch East India Company officials, politicians and other influential Westerners at their clubs as if on an equal basis, taking advantage of their mutual assistance to better their own prospects in business, politics and colonial government positions at all levels, thus ensuring their visibility and respectability. Another worthwhile aspect was the opportunity to share in the prestige and opulence of the public and private Freemasonry ceremonial garb, lore and symbolic rituals ranging from balls, banquets and parades to burial processions in regalia. Moreover, Freemasonry's hierarchical structure and links to Grand Lodges all owed local leaders the rare opportunity to develop relationships with distant government officials and business people within a fraternal and global context. Similarly, Macao and Hong Kong's nineteenth-century Portuguese

Eurasian elites are an excellent illustration of these intertwining themes, and it is believed that a growing number of Portuguese Eurasians expressed an active interest in joining lodges and actively participated in Freemasonry either in the East or in Europe. Masonic lodges in Macao and in Hong Kong, like those in other parts of Asia, reflected the power relations of different sectors of the foreign community as well as the arrangement of social values. In the particular case of the Macanese, they may have found that Freemasonry's egalitarian ideals served to bridge the widening political and racial gap dividing Eurasians and Westerners.

This group of liberal-minded Macanese creoles in Macao and in Hong Kong fell under the sway of some ultra-conservative clerics and laymen. Yet they were men with broader views and more settled opinions than the traditional circle of society in Macao, with whom the Macanese were accustomed to associating.

The Portuguese Eurasians who were well-travelled found a different world in Hong Kong – a place where free thinkers and atheists spoke freely and disparagingly of their beliefs against the Catholic Church and the decadent monarchy. The writings and activities led by L.P. Marques and Polycarpo da Costa highlight three important themes in the late colonial debate among these creoles at the end of the nineteenth century: the progress of the sciences; the rights of the colonized native elites against the conservative and subservient mentality; and Freemasonry egalitarian principles embodied in their activities, writings, interests and alliances.

After the dictatorship was imposed in Portugal in the 1930s, the Macanese Freemasons continued to meet secretly in Macao or at the lodges in Hong Kong. Several of the Hong Kong lodges met informally and under very dangerous conditions in the internment camps. Perseverance Lodge no. 1165 EC, which met in Stanley Prison, even kept a minute book.⁷⁷ Throughout the twentieth century, some continued to play an important role in the Clube Lusitano and in the local lodges.

In summary, in the late nineteenth century these Macanese used printed publications to reach a significant portion of the population and create an avid readership, thus contributing to the development of a strong sense of community among the diverse and scattered Macanese populace in China, Asia and Europe. The emergent common sense of the Macanese community and the identity that started to be forged in that period is still quite significant today. Committed to their ideals, these dilettanti fought obscurantism and discrimination within the colonial and ecclesiastical bureaucracy, and reinforced a sense of difference through the mutual interaction of the Eurasian groups and foreigners in colonial port cities. This in turn was instrumental in forging a modern identity consciousness leading to the creation of self-imagined communities still dominant in modern Macao under the Chinese administration, through the organization of community meetings in Macao and elsewhere in the diaspora through their clubs, newsletters and internet websites of their members.⁷⁸

Notes

- 1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983, p. 28.
- 2 Ibid., p. 41.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 9-68.
- 4 J.P. Braga, *Portuguese Pioneering: A Hundred Years of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Ye Olde Printerie, Ltd., 1941.
- 5 *Odes et Ballades* is a collection of poems written between 1822 and 1828. Victor Hugo, *Odes et Ballades, Les Orientales (Odes and Ballads, The Oriental)*, Paris: Flammarion, n.d.
- 6 Jorge Forjaz, *Famílias Macaenses (Macanese Families)*, Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau/Instituto Portuguese do Oriente, II, 1996, pp. 564–565.
- 7 Ibid., p. 566.
- 8 Reynaldo S. Fajardo, *Dimasalang: The Masonic Life of D. Jose Rizal*, Calasiao, Pangasinan: CMN Printing Co., Inc., 1999, p. 24.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, p. 566.
- 11 Christopher Haffner, *The Craft in the East*, Hong Kong: District Grand Lodge of Hong Kong and the Far East, 1977, p. 52.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Hong Kong Medical Society, 'Minutes of Meetings, 1886–1912', Primary Source Microfilm, Special Collection, University of Hong Kong Library.
- 14 L.P. Marques, 'Louis de Camoens: A Discourse Delivered by Dr L.P. Marques at the *Clube Lusitano* on the Occasion of the Celebration of the Tercentenary of Louis de Camoens, the Prince of Portuguese Poets', *China Review*, ix, China Mail Office Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh/London, Trubner & Co.
- 15 E.V. Lucas, *Who's Who in the Far East, 1906–07*, Hong Kong: China Mail, 1906, p. 215.
- 16 *China Overland Trade Report*, Hong Kong: Y.J. Murrow, Vol. xxviii, no. 5, 4 March 1884, p. 2.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Patricia Lim, *Forgotten Souls, A Social History of the Hong Kong Cemetery*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011, p. 493.
- 19 Haffner, The Craft in the East, p. 5.
- 20 Ibid., p. 18.
- 21 Henry Wilson Coil, *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, New York: Macoy Publishing, 1961, p. 76.
- 22 J.M. McDonald, 'Military Travelling Lodges', The Pentagram, 30, 1940, p. 182.
- 23 Haffner, The Craft in the East, p. 18.
- 24 Ibid., p. 52.
- 25 Eco Macaense (Echo Macanese), Macao, 21 March 1897, p. 2.
- 26 The first law on the freedom of press dates back to 1821. M. Teixeira, A Imprensa, Periódica Portuguese no Extremo-Oriente (Portuguese Periodical Press in the Far East) Macao: Notícias de Macau, 1965, pp. 70–72.
- 27 There were 25 Portuguese newspapers registered in Hong Kong, five in Shanghai and one in Canton as well in Singapore and Japan. The first Chinese newspaper was also published by a Macanese with the title *Jinghai Congbao (Echo Macaense)* in 1893, in Portuguese and Chinese versions and was used as a propaganda vehicle for the revolutionary doctrines of the historic leader Sun Yat-sen. See *Echo Macaense*, p. 2.
- 28 L. Fu, 'From Surgeon-Apothecary to Statesman: Sun Yat-sen at the Hong Kong College of Medicine', *JR Coll Physicians Edinb*, 30, 2009; pp. 166–172, www.rcpe. ac.uk/journal/issue/journal_39_2/fu.pdf (accessed 3 May 2010).

- 29 Elisabeth Sinn, A Study of the Influence of Social Darwinism on the Ideas of History in China (1895–1906), unpublished thesis, University of Hong Kong, March 1979.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 For a study on the impact of Darwinism in China, see also Benjamin Schwartz, In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West, New York: Harper Torch Books, 1969 (first published 1964); James Reeve Pusey, China and Charles Darwin, Cambridge, MA: Council of East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983.
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- 39 Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses (Association of Promoting Macanese Education), www.apim.org.mo/pt/ (accessed 5 June 2010).
- 40 Other members were José Luís de Selavisa Alves, João Miguel Sebastião Alves, Luciano Fortunato de Carvalho, Marcos António de Carvalho, José Philippe da Costa, Carlos Danenberg, José António dos Remédios, Jerónimo Miguel Dos Remédios, and Marcos Calixto de Rozario. Comisão do Tricentenãrio de Camões, *Memória dos Festejos celebrados em Hong Kong* por ocasião *do tricentenário do Príncipe dos Poetas Portugueses Luís de Camões* (Commission of the Tercentenary Celebrations of Camões, *Memory of the festivities celebrated in Hong Kong for the occasion of the tercentenary celebrations of the prince of Portuguese poets, Luis de Camões*), Hong Kong: Typografia De Souza & Ca., 1880, p. 1.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 His son, Pedro II of Brazil, belonged to the Lodge Grande Oriente do Brasil.
- 43 Lodge Luis de Camões (The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry) no. 309 was installed in Macao in 1909 and was active until 1914. It was followed by Lodge Luís de Camões no. 383 created in 1915 and which lasted until 1930. António de Oliveira Marques, *Dicionário de Maçonaria Portuguesa (Portuguese Freemasonry Dictionary)*, Lisbon: Editorial Delta, Vol. II, 1986, p. 904.
- 44 Oliveira Marques, Dicionário de Maçonaria Portuguesa, p. 1122-1123.
- 45 Comisão do Tricentenãrio de Camões, Memória, p. 1.
- 46 Original in Spanish, Comisão do Tricentenãrio de Camões, *Memória*, p. 84. Father Joaqin Fonseca was a Dominican and the Rector of the University from 1878 to 1880.
- 47 Comisão do Tricentenãrio de Camões, *Memória*, p. 94; Marques, *O Darwinismo*, p. 5.
- 48 Catholic Register, Hong Kong, 14 September 1880; Catholic Register, Hong Kong, 16 October 1880; China Mail, Hong Kong, 13 September 1880.
- 49 António Joaquim Bastos, A inépcia de uma acção ou uma página para a história dos festejos promovidos em Hong Kong pela Comissão do Tricentenário de Camões (The ineptitude of an action or a page in the history of the festivities promoted in Hong Kong by the Commission of Tercentenary Camões), Macao: Tip. Mercantil, 1880. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, pp. 475–476.

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- 52 Polycarpo A. Da Costa, Análise do Sermão pregado pelo Reverendíssimo Senhor António Maria Augusto de Vasconcelos, Bacharel Formado em Theologia pela Universidade de Coimbra,, etc., na Sé Cathedral de Macau em 6 de Março de 1881 (Analysis of the sermon preached by Reverend Mr Antonio Maria Augusto de Vasconcedos, Bachelor degree in Theology from the University of Coimbra, etc. in the Cathedral of Macau, on March 6, 1881), Hong Kong: Typographia de Noronha & Ca, 1881.
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- 54 Marques, A Validade, p. v.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid. p. 24.
- 57 For more detailed information see de Ana Leonor Pereira, *Darwin em Portugal*, Coimbra: Almedina, 2001.
- 58 Comisão do Tricentenãrio de Camões, Memória, p. 89.
- 59 Ibid., p. 90.
- 60 Ibid., p. 91.
- 61 Original in English. Comisão do Tricentenãrio de Camões, Memória, p. 93.
- 62 Ibid., p. 93.
- 63 Author's translation from the original in Portuguese ('O trabalho e o conhecimento são tão cristãos como as ciências'). Marques, *A Defeza*, p. 57.
- 64 Author's translation from the original in Portuguese ('Os santos nao condenariam muitas das opinioes que os modernos julgam que devem ser condenadas'). Marques, *A Defeza*, p. 55.
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- 67 Marques, A Defeza, pp. 5, 57-58.
- 68 Ibid., p. 58.
- 69 Ibid., pp. 61-63.
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- 71 Ibid.
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- 73 Marques, A Defeza, p. 62.
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- 77 Manuel Teixeira, A voz das pedras de Macau (Stone Voice of Macau), Macao: Imprensa Nacional, 1980, p. 192.
- 78 Haffner, The Craft in the East, p. 401.
- 79 In 2004, the government of the MSAR hosted the fifth 'Encontro Macanese', a meeting point in Macao for the Macanese community in the diaspora, in particular those members of the 12 'Casas de Macau' ('Houses of Macao') worldwide.