

Edited by Abbes Maazaoui

Making Strangers

Outsiders, Aliens and Foreigners

SERIES IN SOCIOLOGY

Summary

Studies on foreignness have increased substantially over the last two decades in response to what has been dubbed the migration/refugee crisis. Yet, they have focused on specific areas such as regions, periods, ethnic groups, and authors. Predicated on the belief that this so-called “twenty-first century problem” is in fact as old as humanity itself, this book analyzes cases based on both long-term historical perspectives and current occurrences from around the world. Bringing together an international group of scholars from Australia, Asia, Europe, and North America, it examines a variety of examples and strategies, mostly from world literatures, ranging from Spain’s failed experience with consolidation as a nation-state-type entity during the Golden Age of Castile, to Shakespeare’s rhetorical subversion of the language of fear and hate, to Mario Rigoni Stern’s random status at the unpredictable Italian-Austrian borders, to Lawrence Durrell’s ambivalent approach to noticing the physically visible other, to the French government’s ongoing criminalization of hospitality, to Sandra Cisneros’s attempt at straddling two countries and cultures while belonging to neither one, to the illusive legal limbo of the DREAMers in the United States. We are not born foreigners; we are made. The purpose of the book is to assert, as denoted by the title, this fundamental premise, that is, the making of strangers is the result of a deliberate and purposeful act that has social, political, and linguistic implications. The ultimate expression of this phenomenon is the compulsive labeling of people along artificial categories such as race, gender, religion, birthplace, or nationality. A corollary purpose of the book is to help shed light worldwide on one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: the place of “the other” amid fear-mongering and unabashedly contemptuous acts and rhetoric toward immigrants, refugees and all those excluded within because of race, gender, national origin,

religion and ethnicity. As illustrated by the examples examined in this book, humans have certainly evolved in many areas; dealing with the “other” might not have been one of those. It is hoped that the book encourages reflection on how the arts, and especially world literatures, can help us navigate and think through the ever-present crisis: the place of the “stranger” among us.

About the editor

Abbes Maazaoui is Professor of French and Linguistics at Lincoln University of Pennsylvania. His books include *The Arts of Memory and the Poetics of Remembering* (2016), *Proust et la claustration* and *La Rhétorique du leurre dans Les Gammes d’Alain Robbe-Grillet*. He has also edited special issues on *Us and Them* (2017), *Panopticon: Surveillance, Suspicion, Fear* (2016), *Borders* (2014), and *Follow Your Passion: Representations of Passion in the Humanities* (2013). His essays on literary criticism and twentieth-century French and Francophone literature have appeared in *Romance Notes*, *The French Review*, *Romance Quarterly*, *Etudes francophones*, *L’Esprit créateur*, and in various critical collections. He is the founder and editor of *The Lincoln Humanities Journal*, and a member of the editorial board of the *Revue du Centre d’Etudes des Littératures et des Arts d’Afrique du Nord (CELAAN)*.

Maazaoui’s interest in the experiences of the stranger came naturally to him. Not only has he lived in three countries (Tunisia, France and the United States), his family and brothers and sisters have also been scattered across three continents and nationalities. The theme of border crossings has been present in many of his publications, including two recent special issues for *The Lincoln Humanities Journal*, the first on *Borders* (2014), and the second on *Us and Them* (2017). In the spring of 2017, he taught a course on *Human Diversity in French and Francophone Thought* (“*Nous et les autres dans la pensée française et francophone*”), and coordinated an international conference on “*Making Strangers*.” This book is an extension of both the conference and the course.

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