



THE INTEGRATED SHORT STORY COLLECTION: CAUGHT BETWEEN GENRE AND MODE

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: CICLO DE CONTOS, COLECTÂNEA DE CONTOS INTEGRADOS, *PHOTOTYPIAS DO MINHO*.

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SHORT STORY CYCLE/ SHORT STORY SEQUENCE

In Portuguese literary studies the concept of the short story cycle or *colectânea de contos integrados* has not been given due attention. One notable exception is an article by Francisco Cota Fagundes (Fagundes, 1997), attempting to typecast Torga's *Novos Contos da Montanha* as an integrated short story collection following the then fashionable new critical vision on textual coherence and cohesion. Fagundes distinguished two series of features: the centrifugal ones leading to unification of the text pieces and the centripetal ones explaining why the text pieces remain a self-contained entity. In essence the short story cycle as an explanatory concept entered literary criticism after the publication of Forrest Ingram's seminal work *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century: Studies in a Literary Genre* (1971). There, the cycle was defined as: "a book of short stories so linked to each other by their author that the reader's successive experience on various levels of the pattern of the whole significantly modifies his experience of each of its component parts" (Ingram, 1971:19). Ingram attempted to visualize the underlying patterns of recurrence and development in story collections like Kafka's *A Hunger Artist*, Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg Ohio*, James

Joyce's *Dubliners*, Camus' *Exile and the Kingdom* and William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*. The cycle could be defined as either a pre conceived set of related tales, such as Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914), a series of tales that was expanded to elaborate an initial theme, or one that was discovered during the writing process, evident within William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* (1928). Ingram furthermore suggested other strategies: separate tales that were re-assembled so as to form a recognizable pattern like in John Updike's *Olinger Stories* (1964), and short stories that may be unified through the use of a recurring character, a location or community as in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) and in James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914) (*ibid.*: 12). Forrest's work was met with little success. The reasons why are not important in the present study, but curiously enough, in 1989, Susan Garland Mann published *The Short Story Cycle, a Genre Companion and Reference Guide* bringing Ingram Forrest's work back into the center of attention by stripping it to the bare essentials: "There is only one essential characteristic of the short story cycle: the stories are both self-sufficient and interrelated" (Garland, 1989:15). Later critics such as Robert Lusher and Gerald Kennedy have argued that the cycle should instead be regarded as a sequence, in which themes and motifs progressively develop as part of a whole. This means that the stories can be read both individually and as a part of a whole, the act of reading becomes the accumulated perception of the successive ordering of repetitive patterns. Writes Kennedy:

The discovery of connections instead remains the reader's function and enhances the pleasure of the text. Lacking a continuous narratorial presence, the sequence—like the decentered modernist novel—places the reader in a strategic position to draw parallels, to discern whatever totalizing meanings may inhere in the composite scheme. The aggregate text at last yields a global perspective of wholeness or collectivity that some readers would call the defining experience of the story sequence: the vision of unity or community. (Kennedy, 1995:196)

Lusher additionally describes the short story sequence as an open book, where the reader is invited "to construct a network of associations that binds the stories together and lends them cumulative thematic impact" (*apud*, Lohafer and Clary, 1989:149). Later developments by Maggie Dunn and Ann Morris (1995) on the composite novel in addition to James Nagel's *The Contemporary American Short Story Cycle: The Ethnic Resonance of Genre* (2001) show that after the modernist vogues (Joyce, Anderson, Hemingway, Faulkner, O'Connor, etc.) the concept has been further stretched to works of authors such as, Baldwin, Evanier, Gaines, Le Guin, Naylor, Munro etc. and,

[t]hat the cycle format has appealed to writers across ethnic lines has been both an enrichment of the national literature and, in at least one sense, a diversion. It has been a valuable contribution to American fiction because of the quality of the volumes involved and because of its educative function, the distribution to a mass audience of a literature that directly illustrates the sensibilities of people from a given ethnic background, expressing their unique concerns and aspirations as well as their more generalized participation in the human condition. (Dunn, 1995: 256)

However, as mentioned, the short story is accepted as a genre and emerges in the form of collections most especially at the time of Realism and Naturalism. It may be possible that the terms Realism and Naturalism are considered too continental by Anglo-Saxon Criticism and thus seen as less important, hence why these cycles never attracted considerable attention. Therefore, important for the present contribution, is a recently published work: *The Subversive Storyteller The Short Story Cycle and the Politics of Identity in America* by Michelle Pacht (2009), who introduced nineteenth century cycles (Hawthorne, Irving and James) thus indicating that the short story cycle/sequence is not merely a product of Anglo Saxon modernism, or of the postmodern poetics of identity, but that there are good reasons to believe that the origins of the modern short story cycle can be found in the nineteenth century. This thesis is confirmed in a rather recent but unfortunately unpublished doctoral dissertation even though the author has not fully elaborated her statement (Smith, 2011). From the European literary perspective and taking into account theory on genre and mode, it might imply that the literary aesthetics of the nineteenth century (Romanticism but especially Realism and Naturalism) should also be taken into account as they shape and even transform the cycle or sequence of stories at that crucial juncture in Portuguese literary history. It is with the theoretical acquisitions of the short story cycle in Anglo Saxon criticism and the assurance that the short story as such, materially speaking, is always part of a larger whole, an anthology, a collection, a newspaper or a magazine and that this is definitely so in the Portuguese nineteenth century, that *Phototypias do Minho* will be discussed.

THE PORTUGUESE SHORT STORY

A casual glance at the *Dicionário do Romantismo Literário Português* (Buescu, 1997), the most accessible work for the long Portuguese nineteenth century, reveals that other genres besides the *romance* come into being, such as the *conto*, to be postmodified later on by *de autor*, *consagrado*, *literário* e *moderno* (Van Achter, 2010: 21). Simultaneously, and from another perspective, the entries in the *Dicionário* mentioned, show yet another

kind of possible classification, namely one in terms of mode and sub-mode. Labels such as *narrativa histórica*, *narrativa de viagem*, *narrativa passional etc.*, strongly suggest that even though the novel is *incontournable*, other changes took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, affecting prose fiction irrespective of genre and of the prestige belatedly bestowed upon it. Criticism through the lens of hindsight demonstrates how besides the novel, the modern short story acquires a place in the hierarchy of genres. Its entrance in the “Republic of Letters” (Moisés, 1999: 21) is a process of only a few decades and does not appear to have constituted a major event in official literary history. Considering the lack of a significant eighteenth century novel tradition (Buescu, 1997: 344) as was the case in Britain (Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, etc.), short fiction was more readily accepted and, in fact, greatly ignored. Despite the long history of collections of *contos* since the publication of Alexandre Herculano’s *Lendas e Narrativas* (1851), not forgetting an even more astounding number of ephemeral short fictions published *em folhetim* in the newspapers and journals at the time of first and second wave romanticism (Rodrigues, 1999), critics tend to agree with Massaud Moisés that “desde o aparecimento do Realismo o conto ganha estatuto próprio e impõe-se como expressão literária tão digna quanto as demais” (Moisés, 1999: 20). In her discussion of Eça de Queirós’ short stories, Maria João Simões states that:

No século XIX, o conto conhece um grande desenvolvimento que não diminui durante a vigência do Realismo, pelo facto de este género se adaptar aos propósitos desta escola literária. Se, normalmente este tipo de narrativa secciona um bocado de vida dentro de um conjunto de eventos pressupostamente mais vastos, o conto realista apresenta esse excerto como uma elucidativa amostragem da vida real. (Simões, 2003: 21-22)

However, such and similar citations seem to contradict the definition of Realism and Naturalism as a temporally restricted and aesthetically autonomous movement. Realism constitutes a significant break with the romantics’ perception of reality by establishing a mutual relationship between fiction and the positivist sciences using detailed description and observation (Santana, 2007). Themes, cosmopolitan in nature, deal with society’s pre-occupations rather than with the passion of the individual. Topics such as education or the lack thereof, adultery, journalism, usury, haute finance and politics were fully articulated in fine detail (Reis, 2001:16). The genre capable of both integrating and propagating the new tenets was, beyond doubt, the novel French style, similar to the ones written by Balzac and Zola, but especially Flaubert, because:

[c]om a amplitude que lhe permite representar num longo período de tempo uma acção complexa, com múltiplas vertentes, em que interagem um grande número de personagens, susceptíveis de representarem o espaço social através da específica tipologia da personagem-tipo, e articulando convenientemente a narração com os diálogos e a descrição minuciosa de espaços, vestimentos e comportamentos. (Jesus, 2005:18)

One may thus find it odd that the *conto literário moderno* became a popular genre and reached full maturity at the time of Realism. After all, how can the restricted typographical space of a short story integrate the ideology, the themes and the techniques just referenced? Moving to short fiction published from the 1870's onwards, one notices that Eça de Queirós only succeeded in being fully realist in "Singularidades de uma Rapariga Loira" and in "No Moinho" (Simões, 2003).

Miscegenação emerges as the key word from close reading two essays on Eça's followers, the so-called epigones: Carlos Reis (2001), Maria Apericida Ribeiro (1994). Re-reading the essays with especial attention towards the nature of short fiction, one deduces that besides the very few genuine realist and naturalist fictions, two strong trends seem to have existed in the stories written during these periods. One is the short story in the lyrical vein, an odd and somewhat incompatible trend if one acknowledges the traits of Realism and Naturalism. The other tendency is that the vogue of the *conto rústico* clearly progresses as the century draws to a close, continuing to further incorporate elements from Realism and Naturalism whilst simultaneously taking up elements from fin-de-siècle aesthetics. We can trace the evolution by simply citing various authors and works: *À Beira Mar* (1869) by Augusto Loureiro (1839/1849-1906), *Contos da Sesta* (1870) by Eduardo Augusto Vidal (1841-1907), *Contos ao Correr da Pena* (1869), written by Alberto Pimentel (1849-1925) and the *Contos* (1874) and *Serões de Inverno* (1880) by Pedro Ivo. *Arvoredos* (1895) by Teixeira de Queirós (1849-1919) is often held as belonging to the heyday of the *conto rústico* (Costa Ideias, 1997: 95). The trend culminates in the works of Alberto Braga, Trindade Coelho and in Fialho de Almeida's short fictions. Short story collections belonging to Realism are also classified under the term *o conto rústico*, given how stories authored by those writers considered Realist or Naturalist are often evocations rather than a study of a social environment in the Realist, let alone Naturalist way. Besides, Realists and Naturalists alike were notoriously selective when it came to naming their prose fictions. Aside from *conto*, a label which definitely persisted, names referring to the scientific study of natural phenomena or pathological situations surge in titles of short prose fictions (Spaggiari, 1999:36). As mentioned, Teixeira de Queirós whose (short) prose is inserted in two cycles, *Comédia Burguesa* and

Comédia do Campo, employs the word *Arvoredos*. Abel Botelho, well known for *A Patologia Social*, gave his *Contos* the name *Mulheres da Beira*, suggesting that each *conto* constitutes a case study of women from the province of the *Beiras*. Júlio Lourenço Pinto uses the very word sketch in the title: *Esboços do Natural*. José Augusto Vieira goes even further, and being a reflexion of Naturalism at its most orthodox stage, his collection of short fictions is named *Phototypias do Minho*.

PHOTOTYPIAS DO MINHO

Most short story cycle/sequence theorists will mention that first indications always reside in para-textual evidence. Title, tables of contents, introductory notes, sometimes even the first short story can be seen as the announcement of the narrative programme to be developed in due course. *Phototypias do Minho* encapsulates all these elements. The title obviously refers to “the many in one” *Phototypias*, and to a place called *Minho*. This is not unimportant if one takes into account that a great deal of short story cycle theory has been built around two collections from modernism, *Dubliners* (James Joyce) and *Winesburg Ohio* (Sherwood Anderson). In line with the genre expectations and from the rather sparse information in the introductory note a few indications can be deduced. The *Preliminar* reads as follows:

Os contos que seguem, parte publicados em diversos jornaes sob o pseudonymo RUY DE PINA, parte ineditos ainda, apresentam-se despretenciosos e modestos aguardando a crítica do leitor. As PHOTOTYPIAS [sic] são a tradução das condições de meio, que influenciaram toda a nossa infancia e grande parte da nossa mocidade [...]

At least two important signals refer to a cycle or sequence as described by Ingram Forrest (1971) and by the critics relying on his seminal work. Some fictions were collected posterior to a prior publication and a few were even unpublished and thus added in the process. This implies they were probably chosen intentionally and or re-written, and it might even be understood that the collection was deliberately organized by the editor, most probably having a particular pattern in mind. At the same time, a preliminary note indicates that the stories ought to be read from a particular point of view, dearly important to Realists and Naturalists alike, namely how societal conditions influence adolescence and youth and thus are a part of growing up. One of the characteristics of a cycle or a sequence is that the text pieces accumulate to a general configuration and add up to a complete picture. In a sense, this implies a horizontal (re) reading. One likely horizontal reading (or re-reading) is what I would call the “Minho reading”, which has both a spatial and a temporal component. The

collection brings a large canvas of the Minho Province at the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Each of the four text pieces represents a season of the year. “As Arrecadas da Rosinha” – spring, “A Cura de uma Nevrosa” – summer, “A Procissão dos Defuntos”, winter and a “Carta do Brasil”, autumn. Each opening paragraph moves from general observations on nature in that particular season in Northwest Portugal, to particular representations such as plants, birds or other animals, usually concluding in a personification with a proleptic quality. “Era um dia de inverno, monótono e triste”—we read in “A Procissão dos Defuntos”, the third story in the collection —“A chuva soprada por forte vento sul, cahia torrentes e alagando os caminhos dificultava o transito. As arvores tinham um aspecto doentio e melancolico, dis-se hia que choravam a perdida verdura ao ver as gottas d’agua que pendiam, como lagrimas, dos seus ramos despídos”(171).

Each story opens in a similar way and moves into a description of the main character symbolically representing the season in which it is set. Through this approach the reader is informed in detail of the natural beauty of the *Minho*, its riches and its immanent possibilities for a tragedy. Reading the introductory paragraphs sequentially, and by switching back and forth, leads to a complete picture of the *Minho* province’s nature, the full year round as would be represented in a tourist’s guide and simultaneously introduces a typical, almost allegorical character representing the season. A young girl who could be a *coquette* had she lived in a metropolis (spring), a young lady belonging to the semi nobility suffering from a romantic depression ready to be cured by a virile priest (summer), an old widower in the final weeks of his life (winter) and a poor widow in the autumn of her life, receiving a letter from her fortune making son in Brazil, infusing her with new energy, as in an Indian Summer. One naturally thinks of Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* and this simile is applicable throughout the whole reading process. Further contributing to the delicate cohesion in *Phototypias do Minho* is that the plot has also been carefully chosen adhering to the *Natureingang*, unifying the seasons of a person’s lifetime with those in nature. The first story, “As Arrecadas de Rosinha” deals with first love, in spring around Easter time. In “A Cura de uma Nevrosa”, the main protagonists, Luiza the daughter of the Morgado de Soutello, and the one who will cure her, the priest Júlio, are in the summer of their lives. “A Procissão dos Defuntos”, representing winter deals with death an old man Claudio and with superstition namely the dead who hold a procession at night, in its turn a *pars pro toto* for winter. Finally “A Carta do Brasil” is representative of autumn, and the bringing of joy and happiness to a poor seamstress who saw her son emigrating to Brazil in the autumn of her life while the letter is read in the late afternoon while “As adorinhas esvoaçando aos bandos, combinavam entre si os preparativos da marcha para climas menos agrestes [...]”(199).

The first story – as is often the case with integrated short story collections - plays at least a partial role in the foretelling power expected from a first text piece. Almost like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, José Augusto Vieira utilizing the mechanics of the procession of people going to a spring fair, *a Feira dos Cinco* enables all types of people living in the *Minho* Province to pass *en revue*: the hierarchy of fieldworkers and field owners, the members of the clergy, *the tendeiros*, the sorts of cattle, the different types of house utensils, the varieties of seeds, etc. Men and women are described in their typical dresses while regional variations are underscored: fisherman from near the coast and people dressed *à maneira galega*. They will all recur in one form or another in the other text pieces. Simultaneously, all the typical produces of the *Minho* province are for sale at the fair. By using this procedure, Vieira half way through the first story, has convincingly succeeded in fully revealing the microcosm later on to be elaborated into a macrocosm, i.e. what the total collection is. This procession, finds its mirror image in the fourth story, namely "A Procissão dos Defuntos" in which the dead rise and hold a procession. This is yet another aspect of delicate cohesion within the collection and also one of opposition and contrast which is the most central organizing principle of the *Phototypias*. If we keep in mind that the photographs or snapshots (*phototypias*) were at the time taken in black and white, the clue in how to decipher the collection of stories as an integrated cycle or sequence, might lie in the very meaning of the word *phototypias*. Essentially it may mean: a picture in *chiaroscuro*, i.e. one in sharp contrasts through which the author explores his texts. This is indeed a fact, as all four stories are built upon a deliberate succession of strong contrasts, like how black contrasts with white, not admitting colourful modalities or softer hues. Oftentimes smaller secondary plots springing from the main plot are generated, themselves painting a picture of a dual society engendered by the changes taking place at the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In "As Arrecadas da Rosinha" we can clearly distinguish between *the haves* (the minority) and *the have-nots* (the majority) as one of the most important oppositions; the *lavrador* who owns the land and the *jornaleiro* who lives by partially paid work. A further distinction is being made between rich farmers and poor farmers, and between the rich farmers and the even richer bankers. Another persistent contrast is one between ignorance and knowledge exemplified in the last story, for example where the old lady's letter is read by a schoolboy since she herself cannot read. The contrast could not be greater. In the story "A Cura de uma Nevrosa", a repetitive and extremely fraught battlefield is seen between scientific explanation and medicine as exemplified in the student of medicine from Oporto and his older master Doctor Polycarpo, and the *beatas'* superstition circling around the leary *padre Júlio*. Criticism here

of the superstitious clergy is also at its most scathing describing the *beatas* as mediators between the people and the clergy as termagant wives. Even the days of the week bear a sharp contrast. Sunday is:

o dia que o catolicismo consagrou á oração, consagro o habito ordinariamente á depravação. Nota-se a falta da energia trabalhadora , a ociosidade ataca de repente como uma lepra, individuos , que durante a semana tinham como distracção e como exercício o labutar do campo; e ao domingo sem saberem o que hão de fazer , inertes , ociosos, vadios , cheios de saúde e de actividade insaciador, agremiam-se na taberna, fallando, bebendo, disputando, embriagando-se. (130)

The contrast and duality is even present in addressing the reader of the pieces whereby a distinction is made between the *caro leitor* and the *cara leitora*, depending on the current theme. When dealing with the malefic consequences of romantic literature, the devastating results of superstition and especially so when dealing with alcoholism, the *caro leitor* is addressed; when dealing with meals, menus, cooking, love and sex, a *cara leitora* is addressed. This overt addressing is the author leaving the story behind, stopping the plot and temporarily suspending fiction to openly impart criticism. This occurs in all four stories but one, namely *A Procissão dos Defuntos* where love is related to food and the Age of Realism in Portugal is negated the epithet *positivo*.

However, José Augusto Vieira does not only accuse society's wrongdoings or leave the reader with a cynical vision for which there is no resolution except fatalistic acceptance. In between the fictional plots, small expository sections draw the attention of the reader to the fact that an escape from superstition and poverty is possible. This is true in all but "A Cura de uma Nevrose" where it remains unclear whether the problems are resolved. In the first story, a way out of the quandary is offered by being reliant on stable family relationships. José do Leonel follows his heart and does not marry the niece of Frei Vincente. Similarly, Rosinha sells her golden earrings to solve her father's debts. It leads to José's father's recognition of the marriage, and to the fact that Tio Custódio will help on the farm and leave poverty behind. The same strong reliance on natural family ties in the end brings fortune in the story "A Procissão dos Defuntos" where Claudio had an adopted *sobrinho* Thiagito but through various circumstances his fortune went to the real family after an old family member assisted him in the hours of his death. In "A Carta do Brasil", it is apparent that fortune inherited by the seamstress' son changes the situation completely. Additionally, there is an even more daring solution for the salvation of the

people of the *Minho* province. Augusto Vieira almost envisions the arrival of communism when he writes in “A Procissão dos Defuntos”:

[e]ffectivamente existe encarnado o principio da associação entre os lavradores do Minho; é como uma ideia espalhada, dispersa, informe, que não tem dando grandes resultados utilitários a falta de quem a subordine aos princípios de selva económica. (Photypias: 174)

Finally, the deliberate choice of words, especially in comparisons, elucidates a snapshot of science, medicine and technology in the *Minho* province. *Gomos foliacos*, *massa gelatiniforme* (for Rosinha’s baby), *narcotisadora morbidez* etc., are just a few of the words not likely to be expected in nineteenth century local colour fictions. It is not altogether impossible to group the vocabulary into two isotopies, long drawn metaphors, which run through and intersect the four stories. One is the comparison of the landscape with medicine, for example: “Un anglo de caminho collocou-os na Estrada; era como a grande arteria lançada do coração da villa para os burgos circumvisinhos. Os productos agricolas como o milho, o trigo, os legumes eram outros tantos globulos de sangue, que o campo enviava a vivificar o centro-o coração”(22). The second metaphor is from engineering, essentially electricity when concerning topics of emotion and psychology: “O velho senttiu um choque electrico ao ve-lo approximar-se”. But there are still others, in other stories, such as “agitação tremula, vibração febril, galvanizado de colera”, etc.

CONCLUSION

Without explicitly wanting to force *Phototypias do Minho* into the mold of an Anglo Saxon literary concept, there exist a host of reasons to believe that the collection is not just any collection of loose stories, but that there are indeed factors contributing to the cohesion of the four separate stories. These factors are nature and the resemblance between it and the protagonists of the plot. They are similar in all four stories. They are, to return to Fagundes’ theory, the centrifugal elements of the collection. Indeed, contrasts of various kinds dominate the plots and descriptions on many levels. On the surface, they exhibit a unifying order since they possess a high degree of recurrence. These factors appear to be ascribed to the reigning aesthetics of the time, namely the tenets of Realism and Naturalism. The themes are prejudice, usury, alcoholism, superstition, poverty, seduction and adultery. The contrasts are held together through a latently present network, namely the scientific vocabulary mentioned. The question now remains: what then are the centripetal forces? These are the generic qualities. A distinction should be made between the three shorter

text pieces and the longer one. The longer story can be seen as a novelette, or an embryonic novel. For this reason it is the most naturalist of all the text pieces containing almost all possible themes including a very strong criticism on romanticism—a queirosian feature. The other three text pieces are *contos* and contain many of the features which the oldest genre in prose has accumulated over the ages. The happy ending with a moral (thus not the realistic open-ending like in the third story), the stock characters, the rustic elements: these are surface characteristics capable of misleading the reader. However, the three *contos* have lost the main defining feature which defines a *conto* in Portuguese: the fictionalized reader's address, which is an interiorisation of an age old oral tradition, whereby the narrator of the first level cedes the word to the narrator of the second level who tells his or her story (Van Achter, 2010: 270).

If coherence in the *Photypias* is engendered by an accumulation and progression of stark contrasts on the textual and inter-textual level of the collection, the contrasts in their turn are symptoms of a fierce battle between genre (*conto*) and mode (naturalist prose fiction). The outcome confirms Walter Benjamin's lament of the decline of the art of storytelling. The *conto* on its way to *conto literário e moderno*, removed itself from the oral tradition (proxemic code) and narrative density is now created through repeated (altered) recitation. The result equally suggests a possibility for a revisionary literary history of prose fiction in the Portuguese nineteenth century. If from today's viewpoint literary history is presented (written and oftentimes partially rewritten) as the laborious evolution to, or the grim search for the "great Portuguese novel" a more balanced reality might come to the fore if collections of published short narratives are brought in and the question. If and in what sense integrated collections can be considered complementary or as an alternative to the more prestigious genre requires a serious re-reading of prose fiction belonging to the long and winding Portuguese nineteenth century.

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RESUMO

Estudiosos, maioritariamente anglo saxónicos têm considerado a colectânea de contos integrados como sendo o resultado da emergência de uma narrativa de instabilidade (região, comunidade, forma e temporalidade) estudando o género híbrido como uma emanação do modernismo e da poética da identidade pós-moderna. Depois de uma discussão da teoria vigente, a presente contribuição focaliza no ciclo de contos durante o último quartel do século XIX, utilizando *Phototypias do Minho* como exemplo. A conclusão contém uma sugestão para um estudo de história revisionária acerca da evolução da narrativa de novecentos.

ABSTRACT

Scholars, Anglo Saxon in the main, have considered the short story cycle/ sequence as the result of the emergence of the narrative of destabilization (community, region, form and temporality) relegating the hybrid genre to the aesthetics of modernism and to the poetics of identity. The present contribution brings a novel approach and argues for the nineteenth century origin of the cycle/sequence as a result of the clash between genre (*conto*) and mode (prose realism) in the last quarter of the Portuguese nineteenth century. After a succinct overview of the main theories, *Phototypias do Minho* is studied by way of illustration. In the conclusion suggestions are made for a possible revisionary literary history of nineteenth century Portuguese prose fiction.