


## Realism-naturalism as a new expression of art in the conception of Eça de Queirós

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### ABSTRACT

Realism and Naturalism were literary movements that strongly marked European literature. They brought new literary strategies with the aim of conceiving a new expression of art. We aim to clarify Realism-naturalism through the conception of the Portuguese writer Eça de Queirós, based on comments and explanations about texts found in the book "The Casino Conferences in periodicals: primary sources and literary history", a collection by Rosane Gazolla Alves Feitosa. The purpose is to discuss the Fourth Casino Conference, which had Eça de Queirós as a speaker, in order to obtain an idea of the Portuguese literary moment in which the periodicals had an important role. There is an approach to the culture and political history of Portugal in the nineteenth century, as well as comments on what each journalist expressed in their reports, in relation to the point that each one explained more, explaining what they said about Eça's exhibitions, which made him a landmark in literature. This is an unprecedented research in the sense of bringing a presentation referring to the important primary sources for the construction of Realism-naturalism in Portugal.

**Keywords:** Realism, Naturalism, Casino Conferences, Eça de Queirós.

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## INTRODUCTION

Searching for roots and seeking a national identity with the use of subjectivity was no longer enough for the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. Evolution came bringing with it the need to think objectively and to make use of reason. Therefore, intellectuals began to examine a new conception of literature, which valued reasoning and revealed the reality of beings and things, which brought to light the true human psychological state. Realism emerges in 1857 in France with "Madame Bovary", by Gustave Flaubert. And, in Portugal, from the 1860s onwards, through an intellectual clash entitled *Questão Coimbrã* (1865-1866).

Our proposal is to approach the lecture that Eça de Queirós gave at the Fourth Casino Conference, which was reported from different perspectives, with views of journalists who published them in periodicals of the time. In this way, we understand, through the elucidations of Eça's discourse, the history of how Realism-naturalism was conceived in Portugal. Some newspapers covered the event at that time, highlighting the talent of the young Eça, such as *A Revolução de Setembro*, *Jornal da Noite*, *Diário Popular*, *Partido Constituinte*, *Diário de Notícias*. Luciano Cordeiro, Pinheiro Chagas and Alberto de Queirós gave their opinions, exposing their point of view in relation to the ideas defended by Eça de Queirós. Pinheiro Chagas was the most critical. There is a certain focus on the culture and political history of Portugal in the nineteenth century.

Carlos Reis (1999) argues that the analysis of various literary periods and sub-periods is carried out in an articulated way, with the characterization of one period in close relation with that of another period or sub-period: "The appearance, disappearance and extinction of literary periods results, therefore, from a periodological interaction that, on the other hand and as already suggested, it cannot be dissociated from other cultural phenomena" (REIS, 1999, p. 412). In view of the above, due relevance is given to phenomena such as the reinterpretation of past movements, with internal transformations, which go through certain ruptures, that is, one period is formed against the other. So, it is possible to understand why Realism-naturalism presented ideals opposed to Romanticism.

Realism has a relatively well-determined French origin and is connected in different ways with Romanticism and Naturalism: with Romanticism, this relationship is one of confrontation and overcoming [...]; with Naturalism, this relationship is one of partial convergence, since Realism founds and consolidates technical-literary procedures that were later readjusted and ideologically refined, in context and with a naturalistic purpose (REIS, 1999, p. 436).

From the Coimbra Question, a group of young intellectuals emerged who entered into a debate with defenders of Romanticism in Portugal. The debate took place through newspapers between 1865 and 1866. They expressed opinions in defense of a literary ideology of their own. It is



worth remembering that in 1865, the Portuguese romantic writer Antônio Feliciano de Castilho<sup>2</sup> made a publication to censor the group of young people from the press of the University of Coimbra, asserting that they were obscure exhibitionists who subverted the notion of poetry, concluding that there was a lack of common sense and good taste.

Antero de Quental felt strongly affected when reading Castilho's text, as he led the new generation of writers. Then, a pamphlet published by the Coimbra press wrote the text of response, the "Letter to the Most Excellent Mr. Antônio Feliciano de Castilho", whose title included the expression "Good sense and good taste". It was a sarcastic criticism of those who built their own path, without asking permission from the masters, but consulting their own conscience, trying to walk autonomously, without repeating or copying. In his position, the writer's mission is comparable to the priesthood, which requires an ethical position and, at the same time, asks for independence of character and thought. In short, it contests the poetry that promotes the word to the detriment of the idea, conservative poetry, the one that sounds good, but does not teach, nor elevate.

In 1871, a group of young intellectuals later known as the "Generation of 70" gave rise to a movement in Lisbon that advocated arguments around the situation of the Portuguese nation. They talked about issues that interested the contemporary population that had common interests. They planned the Casino Conferences. According to Carlos Reis (2001), it was a "[...] a fundamental initiative promoted by the Generation of 70 (and promoted above all by the charismatic figure of Antero de Quental), the Casino Conferences, in which Eça proclaims Realism as a new form of artistic expression" (REIS, 2001, p. 12).

Among those involved were Antero de Quental, Eça de Queirós, Guerra Junqueiro, Teófilo Braga, Ramalho Ortigão, Oliveira Martins and Jaime Batalha Reis. They defended the idea that political and literary action influenced the way society was conceived. It was a sociocultural transformation designed by writers, some of them linked to journalism. They met to talk about the cultural and political life of Portugal. They planned and organized the Democratic Conferences of the Lisbon Casino, where they discussed topics on literature, politics, education, religion, etc. These conferences were part of a project of cultural, political and social intervention, however they were prohibited by the government of the time. The project was for ten Casino Conferences to be held, but only five conferences took place.

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<sup>2</sup> Antônio Feliciano de Castilho was a viscount in the nineteenth century and author of Romanticism. He lost his almost complete sight at the age of six due to measles, so he was an example of overcoming, being admired by fellow writers of his time. He was an influential intellectual and polemicist. As a pedagogist, he was the inventor of the Castilho Method of reading.



## THE CONFERENCES OF THE LISBON CASINO

Antero de Quental<sup>3</sup> was the one who headed the group that was leaving for a collective cultural event. According to Carlos Reis (2002), "Antero wanted to dynamize and lead, Eça accepts, deliberately and consciously, the project that we found formulated and that he subscribed to in the program of the Casino Conferences" (REIS, 2002, p. 18). The Generation of 70 helped to compose the history of this important literary phase, first in Coimbra and then in Lisbon. They were unhappy with the national culture and the political moment.

In the spring of 1871, Quental promoted the celebrated Casino Conferences. They managed to hold the first five conferences of the ten planned, in partnership with Eça de Queirós, Manuel de Arriaga, Teófilo Braga, Jaime Batalha Reis, among others. With the ideologies they had, they envisioned the possibility of transforming social issues such as politics, economics and religion in Portugal. The conferences held were: "The Spirit of the Conferences", by Antero de Quental; "Causes of the Decadence of the Peninsular Peoples", by Antero de Quental; "Portuguese Literature", by Augusto Soromenho; "A Literatura Nova" or "Realism as a new expression of art", by Eça de Queiroz; "The Question of Teaching", by Adolfo Coelho. The conferences not held were: "The Critical Historians of Jesus", by Salomão Saragga; "Socialism", by Jaime Batalha Reis; "The Republic", by Antero de Quental; "A instrução prima", by Adolfo Coelho; "The positive deduction of the democratic idea", by Augusto Fuschini.

The Fourth Casino Conference took place on June 12, 1871 and featured a presentation by Eça de Queirós. In it, Eça analyzed the so-called "New Literature", which proposed to conceive Realism-naturalism as a New Expression of Art. According to Massaud Moisés (1975): "Passing through Júlio Dinis, the Portuguese novel finds in Eça de Queirós its great representative within Flaubert-style Realism" (MOISÉS, 1975, p. 186). For Carlos Reis (2002), Eça was a talented cultivator of the aesthetics of detail, which is the subtle strategy of placing a significant element as an aesthetic resource in literary production.

The work of Rosane Gazolla Alves Feitosa, "The Casino Conferences in periodicals, primary sources and literary history", is a collection that brings a rare collection about the Casino Conferences, an event that is more political than literary. The Generation of 70 aspired for the country to renew itself culturally. The newspaper *A Revolução de Setembro*, of June 8, 1871, published on page 2: "The fourth conference that will be held at the Cassino Lisbonense is on New Literature, with Mr. Eça de Queiroz as the speaker" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 279). Some journalists who

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<sup>3</sup> Antero de Quental led the generation of 1870, his grandfather was an important politician from Terceira Island, one of the nine islands of the Azores. He was considered, in a way, rebellious. In the classroom, he belonged to the group of rabbits, those who sat at the back of the room. The ones that sat in the front were called bears. The writer had suffered psychotic episodes of schizophrenia, starting in 1873, at a time when there was practically no medication for the condition. He committed suicide in 1891. Friends considered him generous and humane, so much so that he adopted two daughters of his deceased friend Germano Meireles. He was the master, ideologue and mentor of the conferences of the generation of 70.

published journalistically around Eça de Queirós' explanation were: Alberto de Queirós, Luciano Cordeiro and Pinheiro Chagas.

## EÇA DE QUEIRÓS AND THE CONCEPTION OF REALISM-NATURALISM

Among the themes of the Fourth Casino Conference, Modern Literature consisted of investigating society as it is and as it should be, with ideologies that formed currents of thought and reformist ideals. Thus, Reis (2002) clarifies that "[...] the conferences have tried to show that what is at stake here is a vast and global plan of action [...]" (REIS, 2002, p. 18), an action plan that could transform social and cultural practices that involved a collective in crisis. Thus, artistic production was not isolated, as it presented, represented and portrayed the world, united to the realistic ideology that sought to reach the truth. According to the *Diário Popular* of June 15, 1871:

Unreadable and venal love, with its dreadful procession of hallucinations, remorse, terrors, debasements, shames, and ruins, appears to our eyes dripping with misery and rottenness, dreadful as a spectre before which one instinctively recoils with repulsion and horror. This is Realism in art, not only because the descriptive process employed by the artist characterizes it, but mainly because of the moral intention of justice and truth that the author imposed on himself and achieved (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 295).

With regard to the artistic moment, Carlos Reis (1999) asserts that Eça de Queirós answered with immaturity the question about what they wanted with Realism, saying that the writer's answer was that they wanted to make photography or caricature of the old bourgeois, sentimental, devout, Catholic, exploitative and aristocratic world.

It must be said that these words of Eça's suffer from some immaturity, which the writer would try to compensate for in subsequent novels and testimonies; this immaturity is denounced in that purpose of photographic representation of reality and also of the revolutionary emphasis that closes the transcribed passage (REIS, 1999, p. 438).

Portugal was inspired by French literary culture, so Eça was influenced by Honoré Balzac, a French writer who used to make psychological observations of the characters in his novels. The Portuguese writer and Balzac had a detailed, photographic style. The Portuguese nation was closely linked to France, since the Portuguese identified themselves with the French bourgeoisie.

Eça de Queirós<sup>4</sup> wrote – in co-authorship with Ramalho Ortigão – the book "The Mystery of the Sintra Road", being a work about a crime that happened in the city of Sintra. It is the first Portuguese detective novel, also the first book written by two authors, in addition to being a book

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<sup>4</sup> Eça de Queirós graduated in Law at the University of Coimbra, in 1866. He practiced law for a short time in Lisbon, as he soon founded and directed the opposition newspaper *Distrito de Évora*. Later, he joined the *Cenaculo* group and worked as a collaborator at *Gazeta de Notícias*, *Jornal da Noite*, *Diário Popular* and *Diário de Notícias*. In 1871, he gave the conference "Realism as a New Expression of Art" at the Lisbon Casino. In 1872, he was appointed consul of the first class in Havana when he entered the diplomatic career through a competitive examination, being ranked first. He published his texts in periodicals before they became volumes. Eça had a critical and reformist spirit.



represented by two of the greatest representatives of Portuguese literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. Among the main Queirosian productions are "The Maias", "The Crime of Father Amaro", "Cousin Basilio", "The Relic", "The Illustrious House of Ramires" and "The Barbs". He published chapters through periodicals that later became volumes.

Let's go to the ROMANCE. We don't know what it is in Portugal. It only reveals that we have no morality. Adultery is romanticized; the most vile and heinous vices are sublimated; the black and disorderly truth is exposed; the pictures of virtue are not shown; but present-day society is still not as perverse as literature would have it suppose; the novels of Júlio Dinis still have appreciators. And often the authors of these wanton novels are excellent heads of families. The heart is pure, but the spirit and the taste corrupt. Morality is the basis of all literature. Art is the production of the spirit; this is a faculty that is rooted in the soul, and the soul houses love, friendship, and all virtues (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 259).

Of a scientific, descriptive and didactic nature, the naturalist Queirosian novels conquered the public for the way the author used words and the information they transmitted. Eça presented the scientific rationality that leads us to skepticism and relativism, foundations that propose a photographic look at social ills. Worldly problems form the human, so from the deterministic perspective we analyze Juliana's blackmail in "Cousin Basilio", when she makes her employer's adultery with her cousin a foundation to impose her humiliated and wounded ego, leaving Luísa under her cruel submission. In the perspective of Massaud Moisés (1975): "[...] The Queirosian worldview goes little beyond the alcove of a frivolous and hollow bourgeoisie of finis-secular Lisbon" (MOISÉS, 1975, p. 347).

When Eça published "O Primo Basílio", Machado de Assis wrote a harsh critical review of the work in Brazil. He raised variant hypotheses for the work of the Portuguese author, even stating that Eça de Queirós imitated Zola. Machado, as a critic, dismantled works. He said that the Portuguese writer was a disciple of the French writer Émile Zola. He also asserts that "The Crime of Father Amaro" was nothing more than an imitation of the book "The Crime of Father Mouret", by the same French author. However, there is information to prove that Eça de Queirós wrote and published his book first, and the critical judgment of Machado de Assis was considered exaggerated and erroneous. It should be noted that the Portuguese Realism of Eça de Queirós was different from the Brazilian Realism of Machado de Assis.

On the other hand, Machado de Assis also highlighted in his review the strengths of Eça de Queirós. He reports that "O primo Basílio", even though it was the second novel by Eça de Queirós, already showed the maturity of the young author. He reported that the Portuguese writer was at the beginning of his career, but that he recognized his talent and artistic vein. Therefore, Machado's review was far from being considered a devastating criticism. In fact, what happened was a confrontation of two great writers in formative time. It is worth remembering that Carolina, wife of



Machado de Assis, was the sister of the Portuguese writer Faustino Xavier de Novais, a friend of her husband.

It is our knowledge that Eça de Queirós possibly had the influence of the prolific French writer Honoré de Balzac. It should be noted that Eça had a link with Brazil, as he wrote for the newspaper *Gazeta de Notícias*, in Rio de Janeiro. He published texts produced for the Brazilian public. In some of these texts, he reflected on the mediation that the newspaper exerts between the individual and the information.

Eça and Machado get closer when they analyze the social perspectives of their time. However, Machado de Assis was more subtle in his analyses, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions. Who influenced him was the Irish writer Laurence Sterne. Eça de Queirós went to the last consequences, showing the adultery that happened, the evident exploitation, without subtleties.

In another partnership with Ramalho Ortigão, Eça de Queirós produces "As Farpas", it is the second work of the two friends. The first was "The Mystery of the Sintra Road", which was successful, having been initially published in the *Diário de Notícias*. Due to the recognition, they decided to release "As Farpas", provoking the state of things, the *status quo* of Lisbon society. Both authors manifested journalistic entrepreneurship, were irreverent, critical and conditioned by Portuguese youth.

## THE FOURTH CONFERENCE

Newspapers and journalists covered the Fourth Conference of the Lisbon Casino. The newspapers *Revolução de Setembro*, *Jornal da Noite*, *Diário Popular*, *Diário de Notícias* addressed the event. Alberto de Queirós, Luciano Cordeiro and Pinheiro Chagas explained about the lecturer of the conference.

The comments on the Fourth Conference were about the new literature that was emerging. According to the journalists who covered the Fourth Conference, on June 12, 1871, Eça de Queirós proposed the conception of New Literature and Realism as a New Expression of Art. The democratic conference, whose subject was Modern Literature, had positive and negative reviews published in the periodicals of the time.

## THE SEPTEMBER REVOLUTION OF JUNE 13

Alberto de Queirós, brother of the lecturer Eça de Queirós, published his programmatic reflections, exposing a favorable opinion about Eça's conference, asserting that the subjects presented were beautiful, elevated and interesting. He admits that art has a powerful influence on customs and morals, contributing to the realization of justice, which should be the basis of social relations.



[...] Since art has a powerful influence on morals and morals, it should contribute as much as possible to the realization of justice, the only basis that social relations should have. Nor can it fail to see it this way, because historical evolutions comprehend and encompass within themselves all the manifestations of the human spirit. They produce a philosophy, a politics, they will necessarily produce a literature, an art, because they are a faithful mirror in which all their truth is reflected by the spirit and consciousness of any epoch. Individual action plays an important part in the formation of a great work, but the physical and social environments have left their deep and "indelible" mark on it (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 284).

In *A Revolução de Setembro*, of June 13, Alberto also maintains that he believes that there was no man who exceeded his time, his time, even though he was a genius, and justifies: "Jesus himself did nothing more than obey the current of ideas that dominated his time" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 284). Therefore, each art and literature had its own moment, that is, one cannot condemn the manifestations of the spirit. In short, what the journalist Eça's brother clarifies is that Greek art cannot be imitated and never will be because it is very difficult to achieve the simplicity of the time of the Greek philosophers, a simplicity that made them glory, with perfect harmony between form and idea, because the ideal of the new generation was to live from infinitely more complex elements.

Furthermore, Alberto de Queirós identifies with Eça's conception of realism: "This is the realism as Eça de Queirós understands it, as I accept it" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 286), with a view to achieving justice in man and society. For him, the arts are not an isolated fact of society, but something that is linked to its progress and decadence. Literary art has been criticizing temperaments and customs, being a helper of science and conscience. The artist takes everything that encloses the society in which he lives, that is, when in a time or in a country there is corruption in politics, this appears in the form of denunciation in literary art, this is exposed in the form of drama, novel, short story, poetry, having as a noble mission to mirror justice, truth and law.

From Alberto's perspective, there is the question of whether there is a realist art in Portugal, whose answer he himself mentions, about at that time there was not, and that in the works there was a small tendency towards Realism, but it would be an ideal of enlightened and disillusioned criticism, a literature that did not criticize anything was produced. However, there were poems of rare exceptions, such as those of Antero de Quental, Manuel de Arriaga, Guilherme de Azevedo and Bulhão Pato.

[...] Let us hope that art, being one of the forms that affects the progress of societies, will take its true form with the development of our country, and that we will not be pointed out for the future as relapses and this general law that governs the development of the human spirit. We will not undo the harmony and unity that art will have when it enters this broad and fruitful path. We ended by telling Mr. Eça de Queirós, who at the time he spoke of Romanticism, and who said that he sought to be inspired by ancient ideas, and that they belonged to the past, quoted *Notre-Dame*, by Victor Hugo. It has been forgotten that this man wrote *Les Châtiments* and *Les Misérables* which, if they are not a realistic novel, are a great social epic (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 287).





It should be noted that Eça was inspired by old ideas, he did not despise them, he even mentions the romantic Victor Hugo who, in Alberto's view, had built a social epic with his works. According to Marques Rebelo (1970), Eça is the maximum exponent of Realism in Portugal. He lived in a decadent country, did not belong to parties, "barbed" with Ramalho Ortigão and classified the heterogeneous aggregation of inactivities that cause boredom.

“[...] This position is reflected in his novels of a realistic nature. It is not that of a destroyer, but that of one who rebelled against misery, injustice and ignorance; of those who loved their country and wanted to see it magnified. Such love is later confessed in another form, sometimes in a pouring idyll, in the best pages of "The City and the Mountains" (REBELO, 1970, p. 152).

Finally, Eça de Queirós' speech at the conference was analyzed by the journalist and brother Alberto as an exhibition that sought the realization of justice in man, so that justice could later be realized in society, understanding that art must have an intimate alliance with philosophy and consciousness. Therefore, individual action has an important part in the formation of great works, because the individual's social environment can leave marks that are not possible to erase. Even if each art and each literature has its own moment, they can fatally leave history. Therefore, there can be progress in the understanding of art, considering the artistic ideal in different ways, respecting the manifestations of the spirit and principles of each artist.

### EVENING NEWSPAPER, JUNE 14 AND 15

In *Jornal da Noite*, journalists discuss, between June 14 and 15, that Eça proposed Realism in Portugal not only as a form, but as a content of philosophical basis in the artistic conception of the beautiful, the good and the just. He would paint adultery as immorality embedded in the mores of society.

He described the Second Empire and its art at length. He said that with the awakening of the public spirit in France, the appearance of Realism coincided. He presented as an example the novel *Madame Bovary*. He presented the theory of Realism: since its conditions should be, 1st take its matter in contemporary life; 2° to proceed by experience, physiology, sciences of temperaments and characters; 3rd to have the modern ideal that governs societies, that is, justice and truth (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 290).

The aforementioned newspaper addressed that corruption and immorality are the shames and ruins of society, immersed in misery: "Art must become realistic or it will be destined to decay" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 290-291). Eça de Queirós advocates literary art serving the interests of the "world in which it exists", criticizing Romanticism with vividness of words.



Eça spoke about the modern literature of the time, defending the ideas of Realism<sup>5</sup> and burying the romantic literary current in vogue at the time. He recalled the French Revolution of 1789, showing that Romanticism was divorced from the ideas of revolution, justice, freedom and truth advocated by the new literary current it defended, Realism-naturalism, in accordance with the revolutionary ideals of the time. Eça said that the art of the future was realism. In fact, such a focus persists in literary art to this day, especially in contemporary Brazilian literature.

The democratic conferences, of which Eça was one of the speakers, presented revolutionary ideas, developing the theory of justice over art. Eça pondered that art did not appear in society as an isolated fact, but as something closely linked to progress and social decadence. He explained that French literature led civilization to significant changes. He asserted about the state of the art in the period of the first French Revolution, as emphatic and sterile, presenting means that were proper to a counter-revolution. He made reference to the influence of Romanticism on customs and the decadence caused by this literary movement. As for Realism, he presented the moral theory of this movement, which helped the development of the idea of justice in societies, criticizing temperaments and customs, helping in science and in the formation of conscience, proposing that truth and justice can end the actions of the human being.

### DIÁRIO POPULAR, JUNE 15

The newspaper *Diário Popular*, of June 15, expounds on the law of modern art in a playful and witty way. It is the new literature analyzing Greek art, classical art and the revolutionary movement of 1830. He affirms that art obeys the law that determines great evolutions of principles, which leads to improvement, elevation and progress. Eça spoke to auditoriums in which the presence of some ladies was noticeable. He was not a democrat, but he was true to his propaganda and his duty. He was the representative of Realism in the Democratic Conference hall, dressed in clothes that expressed formality.

There is the reference to art nouveau as the mother idea of justice. For Eça, Realism in art is characterized as a descriptive process employed by the artist, with the moral intention of justice and truth, which the writer imposes on himself and seeks to achieve it. Here, the moment of denial of art for art's sake is also highlighted, procreating the conventional, the false, the hollow, the lachrymose, the mushy. Realism ceases to be what some falsely suppose, it ceases to be a simple way of exposing

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<sup>5</sup> The Realism of Eça de Queirós was for art the moral intention of promoting justice and truth. For example, "The Crime of Father Amaro" where there is an exposition of the problem of priestly celibacy, since a priest is a human being, has his desires. Or in "Cousin Basilio" where there is the problem of adultery and the blackmail of the governess. In "The City and the Mountains", the encounter with nature can be more synonymous with happiness than wealth and modernity.



the trivial, the boring, the photographic, because one cannot falsify reality. Therefore, Realism is for Eça the form by the essence, it is the process by the doctrine.

### CONSTITUENT PARTY, OF JUNE 15

The newspaper *Partido Constituinte*, of June 15, reports that Eça spoke at the fourth democratic conference to show, through words, his as yet unknown talent as an ingenious and brilliant writer. He spoke with "[...] Serenity of spirit, a lot of eloquence, a lot of elegance and softness of phrase. His style is of a graceful, delicate and natural simplicity, which pleases and holds the audience [...]" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 299). It should be noted that he always had at hand a rich and varied cloak of words to involve the audience in his inspired idea, to deal with the conference of modern literature, to present the idea of art as it should be understood in a world transformed by the spirit of revolution. It was a theory of abundant arguments, exemplified with lucid exposition and critical sense.

In *The Constituent Party*, there is also a considerable reference to ideas: "Just, great and generous ideas will survive false principles" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 300). In fact, such ideas have survived in literary art to this day. The entire auditorium was amazed by the speaker's competence in exposing his ideas while still in his "green years" at the time.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the characteristic feature of individuality and originality was no longer useful, because it was a simplistic imitation of the past. The false principles of faith and charity that lead to ridicule will be exchanged for just ideas of a strong, studied and applied intelligence. Eça was considered young for so much erudition, ardent imagination and a spirit of lucid criticality, to the point of leaving the auditorium in awe, he received prolonged applause.

### DIÁRIO DE NOTÍCIAS, JUNE 15

The newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, of June 15, reports that Eça presented pure language, yet forming sentences with elegance. Taken from his discourse, he argued about modern literature, about art and the theory of justice, explained about the revolution of the permanent fact, analyzing terms such as politics, economics, ethics, system, mechanism and form, mentioning the revolution that is understood by an aesthetic principle.

Art appears linked to all social movements, determined by permanent causes, and accidental or historical causes: permanent ones derive from the soil, climate, race, to the influence of which the artist has to obey fatally; the accidental ones are taken from a certain order of areas that form the various historical periods, which determine customs, and which also subject the artist to his despotism (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 303).

Furthermore, the artist cannot become exempt from the influence of the environment in which he lives, as well as from the customs of his time and the state of the spirits. Each historical era offers



an idea about art, for example, ancient Greece when it valued the beautiful man from a physical point of view, valuing the outer plane, to the detriment of the inner plane, neglecting moral improvement and good morals.

What is expressed is that the artist is at the mercy of the influence of the environment in which he lives. It is also necessary to think that each age emits its ideal of what is beautiful in art. There is criticism of the imitation and copying of romantic literary art, in need of change. Writers cannot flee terrified of their time.

There is a veiled criticism of greed, which does not act in favor of denouncing the ills of society in literary art: "[...] exploits the people, selfishness, the love of money, are the watchword in all branches of activity" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 305). Finally, he proposes Realism as "the art of the present and the future". Then, Eça exemplifies that famous novels such as *Eurico*, the Cistercian Monk, the Youth of D. João V and the Arco de Santa Anna sin by being art outside the present time: "Art must correct and teach" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 305), aiming at a moral end. This is what it all says: to try the regeneration of morals through art, aspiring to the beautiful and the good, through the condemnation of vice and the aggrandizement of work and virtue.

#### THE SEPTEMBER REVOLUTION OF JUNE 16

In the Folhetim of the newspaper *A Revolução de Setembro*, of June 16, Luciano Cordeiro praises his friend Eça, and also leaves some criticism when he believes that Eça praises too much the ideas of art and revolutionary ideals only of France, abandoning the Greeks and the rest of Europe, such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Luther and so many other idealists with their different strands. It was not only praise in favor of Eça, on the occasion of his participation in the Fourth Casino Conference, as someone who loves Realism, thus completely in disagreement with his own previous ideas. He also remembers Shakespeare, a work of social criticism close to current Realism (from the nineteenth century) already written so long ago, also remembering Michelangelo's brush, all to contradict Eça at the aforementioned conference.

Luciano Cordeiro approaches the literary lecture on which Eça presented from a didactic purpose, talking about the struggle of advertising for literary regeneration, of reason that makes serious scientific criticism, with the movement of modern ideas. He points out that it has long been affirmed at the conference that in the periodical and in the book there are certain principles that imply a certain literary communion. And social life finds in art an exclusion that persists, premeditated, systematic, being a social synthesis of the work that aspires to the spirit of revolution. There are three phases: "the *true* in science, the *just* in consciousness, the *beautiful* in art" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 308). Finally, he summarizes the fatal notion of the natural and historical



environment influencing the individual, emphasizing the good criticism about which there is no vanity by saying that in Portugal there is no conference on Naturalism.

It should be noted that the naturalist movement had objectivity as its main element. Contrasts were made to the canon when they manifested critical sense and scientific vision, with solidity and harmony in the face of the doctrine that emerged. They made use of legal theory, of the permanent fact that was invasive and caused pride in the societies of that time. They described the souls of the Platonic lovers who, from a constellation of Eden, said that the theory they dealt with was beautiful. However, the theory of the new generation was more beautiful, because the issue was not beauty, but the truth, the positive proof. And what would revolution be? An abstraction, a generalization, an ideal that merges to substantiate and contradict itself.

Cordeiro reports on the nature of any nature to be defined, especially that of the pure idealist theory, the theory of the just, the true, the exclusive, the intolerant who denied beauty in art, an item that the revolution dethrones. Social law consists of evolution to transform natural law, transforming thinking, action, and life. It is a great complexity that encompasses biology with its spontaneous generations, the sociological current of human efforts, together with the theory of free will: "Everything has a positive, natural, fatal reason for being: if it is missing or if it has ceased to exist, the *fact* does not progress or the *fact* falters. Look at the incendiary Commune and the Empire-Caesar" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 309). Consequently, the art of the French Revolution addressed the First Empire, the Restoration, the Second Empire, reinforcing its critique. The revolutionary movements of Germany, England, and Europe were silenced.

Luther forgotten, Shakespeare forgotten, and even closer to us, Goethe, forgotten too. The *encyclopedists themselves* can almost be said to have been forgotten, and only France was talked about: France replaced not only Europe, but the world. Criticism suffers from this: the friend himself would suffer; the great social elements are not isolated with impunity in explanation and critical appreciation (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 309-310).

Eça de Queirós was known by the readers of the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, especially because they were accomplices of the famous production "The Mystery of the Sintra Road", where there are elegant descriptions that have the collaboration of Ramalho Ortigão. The Portuguese authors of that time had the influence of Gustave Flaubert who, in accordance with what Roland Barthes (1984) mentions, produced a narrative fabric due to its size and care in detail. Barthes (1984) states that in Flaubert it is possible to verify that the aesthetic objective of description is still very strong: "In *Madame Bovary*, Rouen's description (real referent, let's say) is subject to the tyrannical limitations of what is necessary to call the aesthetic plausible [...]" (BARTHES, 1984, p. 91). Finally, the most exact considerations made in the Rouen model, as seen by Flaubert, remain the same.



To the *Diário de Notícias*, on June 19, Pinheiro Chagas expounds on the revelation of Eça de Queirós' beliefs and Realism in correlation with "Madame Bovary", the materialism of art, sentimental education, moral truths, among others. Chagas reveals that he would take into account Eça's talent, clarifying that the author would be one of the most notable figures in Portuguese literature. However, he criticizes what he was able to evaluate from the summary that the newspapers made of Eça's lecture: "Which does not prevent it from being completely in disagreement with many of the ideas he expressed there" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 312). In addition, he asserts that he is not sure if Eça himself is completely in favor of his opinion in his speech, supposing that deep down not even the author can agree with what he said.

Mr. Eça de Queirós was convinced that Realism was his idol, he adopted that official religion, he was baptized in that church, he had Gustavo Flaubert as his godfather, from time to time he confesses to praying the creed out loud..., but, as much as he tells me, I still persuade myself that he does not often go to mass (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 312).

The realist movement inscribes its flag with the barbarism of the good "réalisme", a French reality, advocating one of the great purposes of art, which is the study of human nature through consciousness, to investigate psychological issues. It did not consist in creating a work other than Molière or Shakespeare, but in exposing what is in the hidden human heart, revealing the most hideous desires and passions of the human being, plus the restless investigation of psychological truths.

[...] Has he not exonerated them in the immortal figures of Juliet, Othello, Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Richard III, and King Lear, and has he not then compelled them to manifest themselves in their most varied aspects, not letting a single one of those flashes escape which illuminate to the most intimate recesses the mysterious depths of the human soul? (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 313).

Realism dared to photograph the tragedy of everyday life, pointing to the rigid inflexibility of character, evidencing the deep psychological state in relation to stormy passions. Love becomes only an excitement of the senses, being held hostage to the violent affections of passion. Science brings knowledge of new pathologies to the domains of medicine and it is up to the arts to demonstrate scientific discoveries. In "Madame Bovary", Flaubert asserts, with a clinical eye, that man can move with pulsations that provide feverish states, driven by love or ambition.

The adultery in Madame Bovary is indeed presented under a repellent aspect, but I did not suppose that the author found in it a high moral intention. He saw a loathsome disease and described it coldly and crudely. Emma is the sensual woman in all her brutality. Feydeau's Fanny still wins in perversion; this is the female yahou of *Gulliver's Travels* transplanted to the refinements of modern civilization. Beneath those silks, that elegant language, there are only the bestial instincts. Love in these women and men is purely physical, and it was only





from this point of view that realists studied it. *Fanny and Madame Bovary* are two cases of forensic medicine (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 313).

Pinheiro Chagas criticizes Eça and defends the romantics: "They were the ones who had the audacity to scrutinize the intimate arcana of the human heart" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 314). According to the journalist, materialist Realism reaches the sublimity of ridicule. The conclusion he reaches is that all kinds of Realism are repugnant because they lack light, moral light. He also asserts that Eça "does not let himself be blinded by the motto of the realists" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 315), but accepts that Eça has enormous artistic-literary virtues.

Consequently, Realism proclaimed itself as an idolater of reality, and the sentiments it expressed were often false. The French writer Gustave Flaubert indicates moral education based on the impressions of a hero who hoped to love a pure and chaste woman, but a contradiction occurs that is difficult to explain. On the same side, "Eça de Queirós possesses the literary qualities most incompatible with the defects of *Realism*. He is a poet and a thinker" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 315). The Portuguese author ponders that the habit of considering the passage of things historically makes him renounce the excessive anxiety that agitates hearts and spares disappointments. For him, consolation and hope are never lacking.

In short, Pinheiro Chagas did not intend to refute the ideas of Eça de Queirós, as he considers that this would be absurd, not least because he did not attend the conference, however, he reports that Eça adopted this flag that is fearless and has defects. He also declares that art for art's sake is a disastrous principle, because art must have the constant investigation of truth.

### THE SEPTEMBER REVOLUTION OF JUNE 20

For the newspaper *A Revolução de Setembro*, of June 20, moral truths do not consist in the materialism that teaches them, nor even in the Realism that discovers them: "[...] Realism does not know passion, which for it is nothing more than the excitement of the senses. Realism knows passion, studies it, and determines the cases in which it is legitimate or false" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 317). This delimits materialism as a propeller of moral truths. There is criticism of the ideas of Pinheiro Chagas' Realism and defense of Eça about what he said at the Fourth Casino Conference. Pinheiro Chagas acted in this way because he "professed another literary creed" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 317), which is why he has a false idea about Realism. In Realism, the defense of the true is linked to the value given to science, to the defense of the just, linked to the value given to consciousness, and to the defense of beauty, linked to the value given (by realists) to art.



## THE SEPTEMBER REVOLUTION OF JUNE 24

Again, we return to the programmatic reflections of Luciano Cordeiro, published in *A Revolução de Setembro*, of June 24, which deal with the conclusion of Eça's lecture. He states that the pamphletists of that time were anemic lyricists, who only prayed for the breviary of the "Review of the Two Worlds", subjects with thoughts entangled in a continuous dream that explain what has happened and what is about to happen. Cordeiro also remembers the rogues and hypocrites in the face of social rot and alludes to the social dissolution of France and exposes his indignation because of the "rotten Society of the Second Empire". Here the political struggle of the time is shown, the first signs of the political clash between monarchists and republicans.

More than one guy has lately abandoned *Murtinho* in the noble resolution of writing the *History of the war*, in some neighborhood of Lisbon a *History of the Commune* is being prepared, and every day he sees one or another young man abandon with commendable abnegation his little Parisian novels to offer the men who now lead France the most salutary advice and to indicate to the world the course that should be followed (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 322).

Cordeiro also mentions the sadness of those times and says that they were happy because they had reasons to smile. The writers of this generation learned to laugh at vain joys, at passing moments, at the ideas they formed of the things of the world. They turned society inside out, photographing and denouncing ills, such as: adultery, exploitation of man by man, among other things. They felt that the movement adopted by the generation of the 70s would be the "giant of the century". They would make photographs with which they would dissect existence, that is, nothing would go unnoticed. According to them, Flaubert dissected the figure of women and went even further, but he did not do everything, since women contemporary to them were not really that way. They claim that the French writer was unaware of the passion of the serialists.

The friend wants art to have an essentially didactic lesson, but in what does it encode its teaching? In presenting ourselves with what is, leaving it to our will, establishing a kind of free examination for what should be. Flaubert makes a kind of dissection, a novelistic attempt at psychological study, cold, severe, *realistic* they say. He puts a human mannequin on stage and describes in detail the cords and springs that move it (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 323).

Realism expresses the intimate connection of literature with science and consciousness. He works with what is natural, spontaneous and fatal. In it, art is art and, for it to be true, it must be spontaneous and natural: "The *fatum* of modern art is made of human nature, social and historical environments, institutions, science" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 324). So, the first condition of art is spontaneity. It is believed that idealized truth has a fruitful and positive purpose.

Furthermore, Naturalism is called the last broad and positive formula, where criticism is not imposed, but sedimented. The art of Greece, medieval art, Shakespearean Naturalism and the



Realism of the idealists are criticized, in addition to the writers of the press, of the field of journalism, innovated.

[...] We suppress history by pamphlet, we do not admit retrospection, idealization – look, I do not say idealism; –hysterical. Naturalism in the broadest sense explains the art of all epochs up to the ambiguous false art of today, and announces the positive art of the future. In Naturalism Realism fits and above all science is at ease. Not everything that is *real* is *true*, you know, but nature is the *truth* (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 324).

The divergences of worldly life were exposed, through a crudeness that consisted in the disrespect for the embellishing talent of things. It was the framing of moral deviation, explicitly based on the human search for the satisfaction of natural desires, which cause bitterness, sadness, and frivolity. In counterpoint, there is pride, vanity and arrogance. Writers did not allow themselves to go backwards, they idealized the hysterical Naturalism, they explained the art of all ages by art, which was becoming at that time ambiguous and false. They sought the positive art of the future, especially that which is at the discretion of science. They started from the conception that everything that is real is true, and nature reveals the truth. The new generation became revolutionary, proposing that literary art should approach photography, with denunciations of social problems such as deviation of character, breaking with the ultra-romantic molds.

A new artistic-literary order emerged through Realism. It is noted that "Science does not harm art" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 324), as the Romantics thought, because art has to be spontaneous and natural to be true, with Naturalism being the last positive and broad formula: "In Naturalism Realism fits and science is at ease" (FEITOSA, 2023, p. 324 and 325), nature is what reveals the truth. At the end, Luciano Cordeiro reminds his friend Eça of "the sadness and bitterness" they feel, caused by their frivolity.

In summary, the literary "old guard" clashed head-on with the Portuguese literary avant-garde, which emerged with an inflamed ideal in favor of the new literary art, within the new mold of writing poetic art, or a work of fiction impregnated with denunciations of the "rotteness" of Portuguese society at the time, manifested in the form of adultery, blackmail, corruption, oppressors against the oppressed and so many other forms of immorality.

Young literati won the debates that lasted days, months and years, and their artistic-literary ideals endure to this day in contemporary literature, especially in Brazil today, influencing the production of novels and poems in favor of the construction of a more just, humane, liberal, understanding society, in defense of the marginal of society, of female emancipation, of society against the violence of organized crime, in defense of the environment. For example, books where the current situation of the indigenous people and the environment is clearly defended, so necessary for us to be able to know the situation of minority groups.



Finally, we must conclude with the statement of Carlos Reis (2001) regarding Realism and Naturalism, stating that Naturalism is the partial superimposition and complement of Realism, with literary Realism being an anti-romantic movement, with the tendency to describe and observe contemporary reality, submitted to a critical and reformist propensity. Naturalism, on the other hand, "[...] will seek to explain it on the basis of working methods with positivist and determinist roots" (REIS, 2001, p. 11). So, from this scientific propensity, it is noted as a result "[...] a literature that is often artificial and captive to an ideological doctrine that is too restrictive in terms of themes and literary strategies that it has consented to" (REIS, 2001, p. 11). However, the initiative promoted by the generation of 70, promoted by Antero de Quental, made Eça proclaim – at the Casino Conferences – Realism as a new form of artistic expression.

The Fourth Conference brought the light that was missing to illuminate the ideas of the literate and arts-loving public of the time. Most newspapers and journalists praised the young lecturer Eça de Queirós, and one of the exceptions was Pinheiro Chagas, who criticized Realism and Eça voraciously. The young intellectuals proposed a social epic, with significant changes in the way of thinking, manifesting the art that comprises literature, the novel, the drama, poetry with an intimate alliance with the judgments of conscience, in the development of the spirit of justice, truth, law, forming the science of conceiving contemporary art to them. They sought the intimate life, which is the matter of art, in the struggles, sufferings and works of society. They studied the social environment in the light of psychology, observing customs in a real way, even in search of self-knowledge, inciting self-improvement.

In short, Eça proposed art in general, and literary art in particular, to act as an instrument in the defense of justice and truth in the society in which it was inserted. It was literary art committed to acting with the highest ideal in defense of freedom, against the lack of morals and the excesses of some members of society who felt powerful to the point of acting without commitment to justice and truth.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the prohibitions coming from the Portuguese government, the Casino Conferences of 1871 were successful. Even though only five conferences were held out of the ten planned, they had the effect of conceiving the first signs of Realism-naturalism in Portugal. The main contents of the conferences were published in newspapers, with comments from the journalists who wrote the reports. Our focus was on the Fourth Conference, which had Eça de Queirós as a speaker.

In an attempt to be succinct, we comment on some items addressed in the book "The Casino Conferences in Periodicals: Primary Sources and Literary History", a collection by Rosane

Gazolla Alves Feitosa, in order to obtain an idea of the history of the aforementioned Portuguese literary phase in which periodicals played an important role.

Several newspapers covered the event in that period, highlighting the talent of the young Eça, such as *A Revolução de Setembro*, *Jornal da Noite*, *Diário popular*, *Partido Constituinte*, *Diário de Notícias*. All sparing no praise for the young writer, an excellent orator. Luciano Cordeiro, Pinheiro Chagas and Alberto de Queirós gave their opinions, exposing their point of view in relation to the ideas defended by Eça de Queirós. Pinheiro Chagas was the most critical.

We seek to analyze the vision of Realism and Naturalism through those who remained alive in the memory of these literary moments that influenced Modernism. Through literary criticism, we comment on these literary movements that strongly marked European literature, especially because, during the Casino Conferences, they articulated on new literary expressions.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the young people of the new generation formed an informal group of intellectuals who, leaving the universities, left for the journalistic and literary fields, seeking to analyze the society of their time with a realistic lens. The charismatic Antero de Quental headed the group that included Eça de Queirós, the speaker of the Fourth Casino Conference. According to Carlos Reis (2002), the Eça who emerged in this period was eclectic: "[...] in whom it is possible to distinguish at least three appeals: the Eça who yields to the appeal of what is decadent, morbid and even immoral" (REIS, 2002, p. 25); in addition to this, there was Eça who interpreted the rigors of Naturalism with an impressive overload of details; and there was also another Eça with a plastic bent for good and for bad, with excessive descriptions.

Therefore, this article intended to discuss the conception of Realism-naturalism made during the lecture of the writer Eça de Queirós, at the Fourth Conference of the Casino, which was analyzed through different perspectives, and published in newspapers of that time. Through the reading and analysis of texts that some journalists wrote about Queiroz's explanations, we noticed that there was an approach to the history of Portuguese Realism-naturalism. There was even a certain focus on the culture and political history of Portugal in the nineteenth century.

The relativism that seeks to explain the origin of everything, the determinism of the environment forming the individual, the foundations of rationality, all with reflections within serialized narratives, provide an essentiality that expresses the university ideal that guided the young writers of the 70's generation. They were strengthened and purified over time, bringing to Lisbon the knowledge gathered in the years of university studies.

They bowed to the exchange of ideas, with intellectual adventures from an original and new angle. The public had the opportunity to experience the sometimes unpublished contexts of life, without prejudice to the analysis of the narratives that became known to critics. Thus, Realism-naturalism was well represented by Eça de Queirós, an author with unique literary qualities.



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