

# Tourism and Modernity in 19th century Portugal: Ramalho Ortigão's national waterscapes travel books

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## Abstract

Among his travel writing works, the Nineteenth Century Portuguese writer Ramalho Ortigão was dedicated to the knowledge of his national territory. He published *Banhos de caldas e águas minerais* (*Thermal baths and mineral waters*) and *As praias de Portugal* (*Portugal beaches*), two books that remarked on the qualities of Portugal as a privileged waterscape country with a great potential for the development of tourism. As an heir of literary Romanticism but also as a positivist, the author created a very particular discourse within those books: tensions between nationalism or cosmopolitanism, artistic and scientific aims, and even literary or pragmatic discourse reside in both texts. Explaining such tensions brought about philosophical concepts to the scene: the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk used the term *Verwöhnung* (pampering) to describe new social needs oriented to relief and comfort, like the idea of vacation. In Ramalho's time, Portuguese waterscapes began to satisfy those needs, and a type of national proto-Tourism took shape. Besides, pampering was not only related to relief but also to health. Medical sciences contributed to a social transformation and recreational places became a necessity rather than a luxury. Massive and rapid transportation, mostly trains, supplied citizens with quick and safe access to beaches and thermal waters. The methodology consists in discussing Ramalho's observations about his travels across the waterscapes of Portugal considering Sloterdijk's ideas on pampering in Modernity, some of which can be applied to

the Portuguese reality of the nineteenth century. By reading Ramalho's *Banhos de caldas e águas minerais* and *As praias de Portugal* under the philosophical framework of Peter Sloterdijk, it is possible to understand the deep entailment between the development of tourism as a response to modern life needs and the transformations of the literary discourse, that gained levity and gradually prioritized informative function instead of the aesthetic one.

## Keywords

Ramalho Ortigão • Portuguese Literature • Peter Sloterdijk • Travel Literature • Tourism and Literature

## 1. Introduction

Portugal is a nation almost surrounded by water, and this fact is too meaningful for the history of Portuguese identity. Poems like Fernando Pessoa's *Mar Português* have reinforced national identity among Lusitanian citizens. On the other hand, tourism still represents a main part of the Portuguese national income. Weather, Andalusian heritage, Manueline style on historic buildings, fado, beaches, and nature represent powerful attractions for travelers. However, this kind of "heavenly" perception lies also in a discursive construction. Now, we have professional brand managers, copywriters, and a large advertising industry working on touristic promotion and, logically, we

can figure out that this condition did not prevail before the development of several concepts, needs and infrastructures, all of them related to Modernity in different ways.

Like other nations in Europe, tourism came to the Portuguese scene in the middle of the nineteenth century. Portuguese writers, diplomats, and travelers began to progressively import some practices, trends, and even needs, mostly from France and England, nations which were supposed to lead the development model of Global Modernity. One of those characters was Ramalho Ortigão. Although his work is still a little disregarded, compared to renowned intellectuals of his time like Eça de Queiroz or Antero de Quental, his traveling experience, the writings resulting from that experience, and his acuity for understanding the development potential of his nation, earned him the epithet of “precursor” when talking about Portuguese Tourism.

Best known for *As farpas* – a collection of journalistic and political writings published between 1871 and 1882 –, Ramalho Ortigão wrote several other books, especially travel books. He went to England, which resulted in *John Bull* (1887); to Holland, which led him to write *A Holanda* (1883); to France, Germany, Italy and Argentina, nations that inspired *Pela terra albeia* (1887) and a lot of texts about Brazil, Switzerland and many small villages across Portugal are found within the pages of *As farpas*. Ramalho's travels along Portuguese territory originated two more books: *Banhos de caldas e águas minerais* [*Thermal baths and mineral waters*] (1875) and *As praias de Portugal* [*Portugal beaches*] (1876). So, the main purpose of this paper is to reflect on the relation between these books and the development of the touristic industry in that country, regarding aspects such as structure, tone and the contents of both books which were written due to the emergence of a suitable audience.

As shown in the paragraph above, Ramalho Ortigão was a great traveler for his time. Indeed, he was the one who traveled the most among his generation of intellectuals. All this traveler expertise explains very well his interest in bringing Portugal a touristic development at the same level he noticed in countries like England, France, and Germany. Because of this, it is important to remember a very recent type of books that was developed, many years before, within those countries: the traveler guidebooks, which had a very large distribution for that time. I am talking about the Baedekers' in Germany, the Murrays' Handbooks in England, and the Joanne guides in France. It is not easy to find out if Ramalho Ortigão knew about those books during his trips because the structure and style of those guidebooks are very different from the work of this Portuguese writer, although one of their

similarities could be highlighted: the catalog structure, where readers can go directly to the information they are looking for, instead of following a linear order like it used to happen with traditional travel writing where the experiences of the traveler-author were in the spotlight, leaving in the background all the practical information for incoming travelers.

This feature is a real innovation in Portuguese writing about traveling, mostly when considering the fact that Ramalho's later travel writings present a different structure, similar to a treaty about the countries he visited. Besides, it is of interest to notice the link between writing and the development of a local touristic market that takes the readers into consideration. Even when Ramalho Ortigão auto-characterizes himself as “mais literato do que outra coisa” (cited in Vilela, 2011: 19), this time his writing dealt with more than strictly Literature but with the now emerging activity in Portugal: tourism.

## 2. Science, humor and modern life: *Banhos de caldas e águas minerais*

As a traveler knowledgeable of foreign touristic infrastructures, he developed a certain type of awareness about the future of tourism and the Portuguese potential for this activity. Other than his contact with traveler guidebooks and foreign touristic infrastructures, Universal Exposition in Paris, 1867, played an important role in Ramalho's interest in waterscapes, because there, for example, he had learned about Seltz and Vichy waters possessing highly-valuable health properties that are described in the initial pages of this first book, because his insight led him to think that Portugal had something very similar and promissory.

Published in 1875, *Banhos de caldas e águas minerais* is, actually, a catalog of places that would solve the modern needs for rest, relaxation, and health. According to Quintela, thermal waters were recommended as a paradigm of wholesome nature, and its relationship with medical speech and touristic interests can be already traced back to the nineteenth century (2004: 7). Besides, it is difficult to isolate those needs from the old romantic topic of the “Change of Air”, mostly when associated with health, as I will discuss soon. According to Bastos (2011), we can trace back the origins of the thermal baths practice in Portugal by the sixteenth century, at least, when the queen Dona Leonor established a hospital in a place still known as *Caldas da Rainha*, in her honor.

When saying “a hospital”, a relationship with Science takes place. And it is pertinent to keep in mind that Positivism was a prevailing epistemological trend in the second half of the nineteenth century,

and the author used to sympathize with it. According to Catroga (1977), the name Ramalho Ortigão appears under the label of “integrated to Positivist movement intellectuals” within the *História das ideias republicanas em Portugal* [*History of republican ideas in Portugal*] by Teófilo Braga, a remarkable historian of Ramalho's generation.

As a man of his time and loyal to his thinking school, Ortigão tried to present a scientific discourse within *Banhos de Caldas e águas minerais*. For instance, the medical authority is energetically reinforced when his advice is posed as the first step before any baths: “A primeira coisa que importa fazer ao ir para as caldas é consultar um bom médico. Seguir no uso de qualquer medico os conselhos de um ignorante ou de um empírico é mil vezes mais perigoso do que não tomar remédio nenhum” ([1875] 2019: 23). In addition to that advice, the author lists a lot of technical information such as salinity, water temperatures, healing properties, etc., for each place mentioned in the book. Aspects like this could be understood because of Positivism, but it's interesting to point out as well the role of Hygienism in the medical thinking of the time, as Quintela did (2004: 7). All those ideas framed the legitimization of thermalism and bath therapy, which used to be an old and extended practice, but with new and solid scientific support at the end of the nineteenth century. So, it is possible to suggest that a new social need had been created.

Attentive to this phenomenon, and with a very pragmatic and versatile spirit, Ramalho took advantage of the new social need and tried to be useful to Portuguese readers. Even when, some decades ago, Murray and Baedeker guides were available for European travelers, it seems that the author didn't base his writing on those models: he presents a very flexible discourse which uses to mix science with triviality, humor with erudition, and even a kind of lyricism with a pedagogic tone. Those aspects earned his writing style the qualification of “multimodal” by Ana Luísa Vilela (2011), who is a major researcher on Ramalho's work. The “multimodal” discourse lets the writer to blend two personal interests, one of them as a result of his traveling experience, and the other as a science buff.

By the way, Ramalho Ortigão seems to be aware of what kind of reader he was trying to reach. As a feuilleton writer and as a humorist, he portrayed some particularities of thermal waters visitors who would have share some qualities with his readers:

*O brasileiro doente* [...] quando se dirige a outros enfermos ou os outros enfermos se dirigem a ele, nunca se cumprimentam senão por partes:

– Como vai a perna? – Como está o fígado? –  
Que é feito do estômago?

E, em vez de apertarem a mão, mostram o artelho, desabotoam o colete ou deitam a língua de fora.

Esta sociedade inválida tem as suas respetivas senhoras, que jogam um pouco à manilha, conhecem as diferenças atmosféricas pela sua dor de joelho e vão sempre ao banho. Mas não vão nunca ao picnic. (Ortigão, [1875] 2019: 145)

As the quotation shows, there is a concern about studying and amusing society in addition to the purpose of listing the main places for thermal bath therapy within Portuguese territory. Another aspect is the awareness of the relationship between Modernity and the new health needs. Júlio César Machado, a contemporary feuilleton writer who signed the prologue of *Banhos de caldas*, recognized how life in thermal waters meant a real change, an authentic *vita nuova*, as he asserted when linking the new practice with modern life:

A vida moderna faz doenças novas, que encontram alívio no descanso e na distração; distrair-se alguém em Lisboa de abril a outubro é difícil: as caldas conciliam tudo: mudança de ares, exercício ameno, banhos, copinho, peregrinação, entretenimento, *vita nuova*! Era indispensável adotar este regime, e o entusiasmo por ele está sendo sincero. ([1875] 2019: 12)

Thereby, waterscapes began to be more and more sought by urban visitors, who actually incarnate modern life. Because people needed to transport themselves and to lodge near or around thermal waters, railways, roads and hotels gradually started shaping the landscapes between cities and water sources; new cities were born with the emergency of an idle bourgeoisie which aimed to imitate aristocratic uses, creating a quick democratization process that reaches very soon the rising middle classes as I will show further.

When talking about “illness” and “relief”, I'm considering a key concept in Peter Sloterdijk's understanding of Modernity: pampering. The German philosopher uses the term pampering [Verwöhnung] to denote all “psychophysical and semantic reflexes of the relieving process that was inherent in the civilizational process from the start, but could only become fully visible in the age of a radical de-scarification of goods” (2013: 212). Boredom, for instance, can be considered an illness, which is a “psychosemantic consequence of the stay in the comfort [...] of an existence that finds constant peace, constant sustenance, and constant entertainment in its milieu” (ibid.).

Sloterdijk sees pampering as a general result of the erosion of “labor idolatry” “by the postmodernization of consciousness” (ibid.). This de-idolization of labor led to a “poly-dimensionally relieved society” (ibid.).

Within this context it is possible to understand the rise of waterscapes as a new center of that relieved society. Some lines before, I have mentioned the old romantic topic of “Change of Air”, which increased its relevance and its frequency in the day-to-day speech with the deepening of urbanization. Even at the time, leaving the city meant avoiding noise, hurries, routine, worries, etc., long before the very familiar notion of stress developed, as discussed in Morris (2017), who focused on the “Change of Air” as a medical and social construction within the Victorian period. Thus, leaving the city became one of the main activities of an individual belonging to the relieved society, and here we have a perfect example of how a literary topic becomes a cultural practice which then becomes a trend which turns into a real need, and even more so, remains as a very lasting feature of society.

When looking within the journals of the time, the rise of businesses can be traced as well. In locations such as the Algarve, in the very South of the country, it's not strange to find advertisements in regional journals that reveal the availability of services such as lodging, which could be rented for the season of bathing, as shown in this image, from *O Comércio do Sul* (1878):



### MONCHIQUE THERMAL BATHS

Until March 4th, proposals for the lease of the guest house of Caldas do Monchique for the future bath season will be received, in a closed letter, addressed to the undersigned. The lease conditions are valid at the signatory's residence.

Faro, February 11th, 1878.

Antônio Frederico Gomes  
Director

So, even in its early stages, the need to “Change of Air”, the opportunities for business, and the medically prescribed thermal baths configured, little by little, the touristic infrastructure of Portugal. Although regions like the Algarve were quite far from big cities such as Lisbon, waterscapes appeared very soon as powerful attractions not only because of the medical reasons which enticed people to seek thermal waters but also in pursuit of relief and leisure. As Pinto refers, this guest house in Caldas de Monchique had a piano and a billiard table (2013: 74), showing the link between recreation and health over the background curtain of the waterscapes, a phenomenon whose relevance was increased in *As praias de Portugal*, the second waterscapes book by Ramalho Ortigão, published a year later (1876), where the presence of relief and pampering lost its medical-hygienic basis.

### 3. From health to leisure: *As Praias de Portugal*

As we read this second book, it's possible to notice that relief is not only physical but intellectual for individuals. Ramalho's way of writing lets us observe this when looking at how his audience is addressed with the promise of light reading. The major consequence of this awareness is noticeable when the author sets aside all kinds of scientific aims and refused to bore his readers with very precise information about water temperature, salinity coefficients, specialized book references, various medical and hygienic advice supported in mere factual information. Instead, *As praias de Portugal* presents a very light and delightful catalog of beaches along the Portuguese territory, with brief stops in meaningful places like Foz, near Porto, where the author recalls his earliest memories with a dose of the unavoidable Portuguese *saudade*:

Foz! Saudosa Foz! Residência querida da minha infância tão afastada já –ai de mim! –destes anos duros! Com que terno prazer eu te saúdo, sempre que te avisto, ou penso em ti!

Estamos bem mudados ambos –velha amiga! –tu do que foste, eu do que era!

No tempo em que eu ia de chapéu de palha e de bibe, à tarde, apanhar conchinhas na costa, pela mão da minha avó, tu eras grave, simples,



burguesa, recolhida e silenciosa como uma horta em pleno campo. ([1876] 2014: 35)<sup>1</sup>

The Foz entry is just one among eighteen descriptions of Portuguese beaches personally visited and studied by the author. Despite the melancholic tone observed in the quotation above, Ramalho still perceived this book as a guide, as we can see in the sub-heading (*Guia do banhista e do viajante* [*Guide for bathers and travelers*]) something that did not happen with *Águas de caldas*, published a year earlier. Facts like the evocative and nostalgic tone in the chapter about Foz make us doubt if Ramalho knew the model of guides like *Baedekers*, but in the subsequent chapters the poetic writing progressively seems to be displaced by a more informative and precise one. For the case of *Banhos de caldas e águas minerais*, it is a remarkable fact that, instead of the author, it was Júlio César Machado, again, the one who used the term “guide” to classify the book: “Deste louvável empreendimento vai o livro [...] ser de ora em diante o melhor guia e o melhor companheiro” (Ortigão, [1876] 2014: 12).<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, within *As praias de Portugal*, it is possible to corroborate another inherent process of Modernity: the pampering's expansion and its link with the democratization of the habits that I have mentioned before, which I can illustrate with extracts like this: “[Pedrouços é] a mansão oficial da vilegiatura burocrática de Lisboa. Chefes de secretaria, oficiais, amanuenses, tabeliães, guarda-livros, caixeiros de escritório, escrivães, retemperam anualmente em Pedrouços a sua pálida e sedentária fibra plumitiva. Por isso, Pedrouços, a uma légua de Lisboa, tem um pouco o aspecto de uma secretaria de Estado – ao ar livre” ([1876] 2014: 61).<sup>3</sup>

The use of belittling expressions such as “pencil pusher” clearly suggests that the middle classes began to partake in pampering and to indulge in the new

activities that, a little while back, used to be exclusive to aristocratic and bourgeois groups. Pedrouços beach plainly illustrates a phenomenon, which Peter Sloterdijk, based on König ideas, named “democratization of luxury” (2004), showing how new needs came along with new treasures, like free time, which deserves a remarkable place, because it could be used for leisure, and for baths, of course. The de-idolization of labor shows, this way, waterscapes as a new scenario and *objet du désir* at the core of the touristic development.

Because of that, connecting cities with waterscapes is another frequent issue within *As praias de Portugal*. By the time Ramalho Ortigão published his books, Portuguese railways reached an important development. For instance, according to the chronology of Comboios de Portugal website, a line between Lisbon and Madrid was inaugurated in 1868; likewise, waterscapes like Caldas da Rainha were included in bigger railway projects. On the other hand, railways development allowed for the rise of a different kind of tourism: it's possible to find a link between a railway project which pretended to reach big historic and touristic highlights like Alcobaça and the development of cultural tourism in the country. Returning to leisure, there is information about how, in the same decade, railway lines for beach villages like Cascais or Póvoa de Varzim were in progress, in order to link them with the main cities of Lisbon and Porto, respectively. Ramalho's guide reports on how trains really accelerated leisure excursions and made them more affordable in terms of time and money: “Setúbal fica a sete léguas de Lisboa. A viagem faz-se com grande comodidade entre as duas cidades atravessando o Tejo e tomando o caminho-de-ferro de Sueste. Pode-se fazer a ida e volta no mesmo dia” ([1876] 2014: 162).<sup>4</sup>

Along with comfortable and fast paced transportation, bath and water therapies rapidly became a need for more and more people, who could afford them. After a big effort to support thermalism in scientific thought in *Banhos de caldas*, Ramalho avoided that exercise in *As praias de Portugal*, knowing that water had become a central element in recreation and leisure activities in a certain season of the year. This, without implication that he was not aware of this phenomenon since the first of those books, because it is possible to find some funny extracts where he advised about the coexistence of therapeutics and leisure:

1 Foz! Saudosa Foz! Beloved home of my childhood so far away –alas! – from these hard years! What a tender pleasure is to greet you whenever I see you or think of you! We are both very changed – my old friend! – you of what you were, I of what I was! On the days when I used to go out with my straw hat and my bib, afternoon, to collect shells on the coast, holding grandmother's hand, you were solemn, simple and bourgeois, sheltered and silent as a vegetable garden in the middle of the field.

2 From this laudable undertaking the book [...] will henceforth be the best guide and the best companion.

3 Pedrouços is the official mansion of bureaucratic holidays in Lisbon. Secretarial chiefs, officers, clerks, notaries, bookkeepers, desk cashiers, and more, annually retemper in Pedrouços their pale and sedentary “pencil pusher” fiber. Because of this, Pedrouços, which is three miles from Lisbon seems, a little, an outdoors State Ministry.

4 Setúbal is twenty-one miles from Lisbon. The journey between the two cities can be made with great comfort, crossing the Tagus and taking the Southeast railway. It's possible to make the round trip on the same day.

Cumpram porém advertir aos banhistas que as pessoas que geralmente frequentam durante o período das águas os casinos da Bélgica e da Alemanha não são propriamente os doentes. São as pessoas ricas e ociosas que procuram Badem ou Spa, como outras escolhem Mônaco ou o Cairo, como simples lugares de prazer e de jogo, com prazos anuais dados à moda, ao chic, ao amor fácil, à toilette ligeira. Nessa população ruidosa e garrida figuram principalmente os jogadores de profissão, as cocottes e os crevés, que não vão diretamente às águas, mas sim à roleta. ([1875] 2019: 27)<sup>5</sup>

So, waterscapes appear as necessary background for the development of leisure-traveling. Under the light of the “pampering” concept of Peter Sloterdijk, it is possible to find out how waterscapes and the progressive urbanization around them are symptomatic of the rise of a wealthy and relieved –if not an idle– European society. Furthermore, this cultural turn regarding waterscapes and their accessibility progressively implicated the establishment of the space as integrated into the market, and as a part of a new industry, one among the most powerful in modern life History: leisure industry, which, according to Henry Lefebvre “is as alienated and alienating as labor” (quoted in Butler 2004: 66), and the mention of gambling in the previous quotation can support that idea.

#### 4. Leisure: Acceleration and frivolity

The advances in transportation and communication technologies played a crucial role in the process of creating new spaces now seen as necessary as a consequence of the acceptance of these new cravings for recreative activities and their medical justifications, which soon became irrelevant due to the rise of a pamper society with large exceedances of free and unconcerned time. Nevertheless, having access to so much spare time led to unlikable behaviors such as selfishness and frivolity, of which intellectuals noticed

**5** However, it is convenient to warn bathers that persons who use to visit casinos in Belgium and Germany during the bath season are not exactly the sick ones. It is the rich and idle people who look for Badem or Spa, as others choose Monaco or Cairo, as simple places of pleasure and gambling, with annual periods for fashion, chic, easy love and light outfits. This noisy and flamboyant population includes mainly professional gamblers, cocottes and crevés [dandies], who do not go directly to the waters, but to the roulette wheel.

early on, as observed in the first pages of *Banhos de caldas*:

Diana de Poitiers, procurando o específico da formosura achou o verdadeiro segredo da longevidade. Sendo amada aos 70 anos com a veemência das mesmas paixões que inspirava aos 20, que melhores provas queria ela de que a eterna mocidade não é outra coisa mais do que a eterna beleza?

Que fez Diana para chegar a esses resultados miraculosos [...]? Simplesmente isto: conservou a pele por todos os meios higiénicos que podem manter-lhe a flor e o mimo; a saber: a cama dura; o travesseiro fresco forrado de marroquim; os banhos frios de cada dia em água desnevadada; os passeios matinais ao orvalho; a proscrição absoluta do álcool, das bebidas excitantes, de todas as demasias da alimentação; não passar uma só noite em claro; não chorar nunca. A frescura e o egoísmo. ([1875] 2019: 17-18)<sup>6</sup>

It would be pointless to remark on the occurrence of the word “pampering”, because the quotation mentions how this completely normalized phenomenon of our days, which today would be considered self-care, has its origins in very exclusive practices associated with the aristocratic sphere of European society. In an age when the middle classes went through remarkable growth, the democratization of luxury came along with search for comfortable living conditions, which is one of the main causes behind increasing the production of certain goods and the proliferation of services like transportation, lodging, dining and tourism –bathing tourism, specifically– as a collateral consequence of the progressive availability of these services in European host countries.

Considering The Grand Tour as a key phase in the History of Tourism (Towner, 1985), pampering would later become an underlying concept in the

**6** Diana de Poitiers, concerned with the specificity of beauty, found the real secret of longevity. Loved at 70 with the vehemence of the same passions she inspired at 20, which better proof did she want about that eternal youth is nothing more than eternal beauty? What did Diana do to get those miraculous results [...]? Simply: she preserved her skin by all the hygienic means for keeping her bloom and pampering; namely: a hard bed, a fresh pillow covered in Morocco leather, cold baths every day in thaw water, morning walks in the dew, the absolute abstinence of alcohol, exciting drinks, and all the excesses of food; not a single night without sleeping; never crying. Freshness and selfishness.

development of modern tourism. So, if the travel idea could be framed into an “adventure” context, where travelers have a close contact with nature or non-civilized environments and face several difficulties, the tourism idea implies the increasing offer of services and means for comfortable and unworried traveling. Using Phileas Fogg, the Julio Verne’s novel character as a paradigm of the new way of traveling in Modernity, Peter Sloterdijk poses traveling as a non-experience fact, meaning that the establishment of a pampered society normalized travels, parting ways with the idea of “adventure”:

Jules Verne’s message is that adventures no longer exist in a technically saturated civilization, only the danger of being late [...] In Jules Verne’s tale, the globetrotter has abandoned his profession as a documentarist and become a pure passenger. He presents himself as a customer of transportation services who is paying for a voyage without any experiences that could later be recounted [...] Nonetheless, the figure of Phileas Fogg has prophetic traits, in that he appears as the prototype of the generalized stowaway, whose only connection to the landscapes drifting past is his interest in traversing them. The stoic tourist prefers to travel with the windows shut; as a gentleman, he insists on his right to consider nothing worth seeing; as an apathetic, he refuses to make discoveries. These attitudes anticipate a mass phenomenon of the twentieth century: the hermetic package tourist. (2013: 37-39)

It’s not difficult to link this apathetic attitude with Lefebvre’s idea of alienation within the leisure industry. As I will shortly discuss, Ramalho Ortigão wants to rescue a little bit of interest from his readers, not in his writing, but in certain phenomena that surround waterscapes: history, science, and culture. It could be that, in opposition to the plenty of touristic and informative writing of Baedekers or similar handbooks, Ramalho’s guides may represent an effort to resist the absolute loss of interest within the pampering society “superstructure”. In terms of reading, the pampering phenomenon is relevant as well. As a light and delightful catalog of beaches throughout the Portuguese territory, *As praias de Portugal* displays how to pamper the readers in order to relieve them of the intellectual effort of facing a more creative, challenging or deeper writing. Ramalho’s readers had the opportunity of using these two works as a mere container of information in a similar way to Diana de Poitiers, whose concerns were limited to keeping her beauty and youth. For the tourist, reading ought to be associated with fun and even with triviality,

because the new relieved society is placed, following Sloterdijk, in an anti-seriousness frame where “banality and freedom are converging” (2013: 211). Such a context could explain the trend of light and easygoing reads that aimed to please a specific kind of audience, the one who participates in a new relationship with waterscapes as a result of freedom and relief that, indeed, meant the possibility of spending lots of time in trivial and alienating activities.

From this position of resistance as a member of a very critical generation of Portuguese writers, Ramalho Ortigão addresses his readers (and it could be interesting to notice the frequency with which he used to characterize them as women) in order to awake their curiosity: “Estais nas praias. Empregai as longas horas de ócio tão estiradas, tão tediosas, tão enervantes, estudado o mar nos seus grandes fenómenos, nas suas portentosas criações” ([1876] 2014: 29).<sup>7</sup> Even in an unhurried context like that, the author seems to be committed with making a final attempt to rescue some intellectual profit from the reading. Although a book like *As praias de Portugal* didn’t contain lots of specific and serious information about the sea, the author wanted his readers to go deeper about the portents of the sea, even when his book, forward, fulfills its intentions and turns more as a traveler guide than a sea treaty. This way, a final reflection appears when the market links waterscapes with a specific kind of reading, by using labels like “beach reads”, or “summer novels”, books that prioritize triviality, easiness in reading, or practicality; books that qualify better as an amenity than as a subject worth studying.

As a result, it is important to point out the oblivion that these two books have suffered along the passage of the time. Without the massive scope of journalistic texts as *As farpas*, with a notorious diminish of the fierce political criticism that characterized his generation, and without the erudition of the rest of his travel books, *Banhos de caldas e As praias de Portugal* are valuable works unfairly forgotten. Maybe the association with light writing, frivolity or his steps forward on the way to becoming actual tourist guides, led them out of a more critical appreciation. Whatever the dynamics of writing and reading we talk about, Ramalho’s books highlight the importance of waterscapes for the development of tourism in Portugal, and the need that writing had to evolve into more pliable texts and not restrict its functions to Literature, because the writing skills of

**7** You are on the beaches. Spend your long idle hours, so strained, so tedious, so unnerving, studying the sea through its great phenomena, its portentous creations.

people like Ramalho Ortigão will be used more and more as a tool for the creation of multiple discourses that belong to a modern, interconnected and versatile world.

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