Linked Stories and the Dissonant Voices of Luso-America: Brian Sousa’s *Almost Gone* and Anthony de Sa’s *Barnacle Love*

Ethnic American writers have used linked stories to approach issues related to migration and displacement since the beginning of the twentieth century (see Nagel and Davis). By combining the brevity, intensity, lyricism and fragmentation of the short story with the narrative wholeness, continuity and unity of the novel (Patea 9-10), this hybrid genre destabilizes boundaries and refuses fixity (see Lundén). Due to its disruptive nature, this genre is particularly suited to approach and represent the identity conflicts faced by diasporic groups in the United States, the inner struggles of the ethnic individual in search of self-assertion outside of communal bonds, as well as the cultural and generational gaps dividing the community.

Following this tradition of ethnic American writings, Luso-Canadian writer Anthony De Sa and Luso-American writer Brian Sousa have used linked stories in their respective collections *Barnacle Love* (2008) and *Almost Gone* (2013) to approach and represent the traumatic effect of displacement and cultural clash across generations. By putting the plural and discordant voices of the Portuguese diasporic community of Canada and the United States, respectively, in unsettling juxtapositions and contrasts, as well as by interweaving these dissonant voices with discontinuous temporalities and fragmented geographies, De Sa’s *Barnacle Love* and Sousa’s *Almost Gone* complicate the sense of unity at the heart of normative visions of communities. Both authors depict instead a community whose multifarious and conflicting voices separate its members and magnify the generational and cultural gaps between them. Accordingly, by using linked stories to approach Portuguese migration to North America, De Sa and Sousa not only dramatize the conflicts that continue to set the individual against the family and community in settings of migration, but also insert their writings in a larger ethnic American literary tradition to call attention to the mainly-unexplored Portuguese experience in North America and draw connections across borders.
References


