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Militant Nostalgia in Cape Verdean Literature

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Militant Nostalgia in Cape Verdean Literature

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Abstract- During the twentieth century, Cape Verdean diaspora authors challenged the longstanding Cape Verdean tradition of passively mourning what was lost. Previous poets and storytellers used saudade, or a sense of sentimental homesickness, to provide readers with an escape from daily life, particularly the physical and political hardships of living on the Cape Verde islands and the cultural dislocation of living elsewhere. A new group of authors, however, took a more militant approach in order to inspire ethnic pride, cultural and racial self-awareness, and political action. The results were activist literary movements, Claridade in the 1930s and Certeza in the 1940s, which led to the nation's civil rights and independence movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This essay analyzes Cape Verdean and Cape Verdean-American authors who transformed saudade to be a rallying cry for the celebration of their heritage and the assertion of self-confidence, unity, and action among their readers.

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I. Introduction

An important theme in diasporic literature is a sense of nostalgia for the homeland left behind, "a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (Brah 1996, p. 192). Authors1 within the Cape Verdean diaspora call their mournful, sentimental homesickness saudade.2 This bitter-sweet sentiment has appeared in poetry, songs, and folktales to provide an escape from daily life, including the physical hardships of living on the arid Cape Verde Islands and the cultural dislocation of living somewhere else. However, during the twentieth century saudade became more than a wistful, romantic longing for what was lost. It acquired a militant edge, meant to inspire ethnic pride, cultural and racial self-awareness, and political activism.

Cape Verde, ten small islands located a few hundred miles off the coast of West Africa,3 has developed a multiracial, multicultural society after centuries of miscegenation between Portuguese colonists and African slaves.4 In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many left the islands to escape drought, famine, poverty, and socio-political repression. Emigrants to Europe and the Americas usually improved their socio-economic position, but they also faced aggressive racism and discrimination, particularly in the United States where many emigrants formed insulated, supportive Cape Verdean-American communities. For many, departure did not diminish their devotion to a homeland they thought they remembered, a utopia of green fields, continuous singing and dancing, and happy children. This joyful, comfortable "memory" caused some to become disconnected from the islands' actual customs and socio-political issues.

The purpose of saudade underwent a transformation when, in the middle of the twentieth century, members of the Cape Verdean diaspora became more culturally self-aware and politically active. Authors decided that a deeper, more honest engagement with their cultural roots could help them challenge the racial prejudice and cultural erasure that had made escape into nostalgic fantasy desirable in the first place. Simultaneously using and rejecting the power of saudade,5 these authors gave Cape Verdeans and Cape Verdean-American readers an "inner freedom" to learn more about their heritage and become social activists. A mixture of nostalgia, realism, and activism, this new form of saudade united members of the diaspora, empowering them to fight for independence on the islands6 and civil rights in the United States.

II. "This Despair of Wanting to Leave but Having to Remain!"

At the beginning of the twentieth century, classically educated Cape Verdean authors wrote on abstract, "universal" topics, which ignored the daily suffering, discrimination, and cultural traditions of actual Cape Verdeans. They only mentioned the islands to wax nostalgic about a non-existent "Atlantis"7 of joy, brotherhood, and prosperity. This willful blindness began to change in the 1930s when the Claridade8 poets declared their cultural independence from European conventions, portrayed their homeland as it actually was, and encouraged readers to use native wisdom to improve their daily lives.

Manuel Lopes, one of Cape Verde's most famous Claridade authors, used saudade to inspire interest in cultural truths and to take a stand on the issue of emigration from the islands. His poem "Crioulo" (1964) honors the island culture that teaches boldness and resignation because Cape Verdeans gain "the humility born of disillusionment" (Ferreira 1975, p. 105) as well as hope and joy for an unlikely future. His "Nem Navio" (Neither Ship, 1964) honors saudade as a warm voice inside all Cape Verdeans but warns against complete devotion to sentimental nostalgia because it is "an illusion that disguises itself" (Ferreira 1975, p. 107), seemingly soothing but ultimately limiting and destructive. In Lopes's novel Chuva Braba (Wild Rain, 1956) protagonist Mane Quim recognizes the difficult

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truths about his homeland without rejecting the romantic vision inherent in its folklore. Mane confronts hardship pragmatically, which includes using traditional stories and customs to guide where and when to plant his crops and what types of people to love and respect. In the Faustian struggle at the end of the novel, Mane wins his soul by choosing not to emigrate across the Atlantic with his godfather. He remains not because the islands are ideal but because he is willing to work hard to build a future for himself and his community.

This theme became very popular with "anti-evasionist," anti-emigration poets. These poets wanted to teach the diaspora, as well as those on the islands, to respect their heritage and work together to survive in a hostile world. Poet Jorge Barbosa challenged the emigrants' sentimentalism, characterizing it as a sign of their abandonment. In "Casebre" (Little Shack, 1956), Barbosa portrayed the "bitter memory" (Ellen 1988, p. 24) of drought and starvation on the islands with specific and grisly details. The poem suggests that although many want to ignore this suffering and death by escaping into nostalgia, made possible by leaving the islands, their "silence" only further separates and destroys the "family" of those who remain. In "Poem of the Sea" (1941) Barbosa wrote that inside the heart of every Cape Verdean is a desire to travel, lamenting that while the sea "imprisons" the islands, it is also a "road" to a better life (Ellen 1988, p. 41). However, Barbosa himself refused to emigrate, stating that the love for his homeland filled him with the "despair of wanting to leave but having to remain!" He despaired that poverty and hopelessness dominated his people, but instead of running from the islands and his selfhood he made saudade a rallying cry for political self-determination and cultural self-respect.

The Claridade poets portrayed concrete reality and encouraged common Cape Verdeans to fight for their rights. These poets criticized sentimental nostalgia and urged readers on the islands and throughout the diaspora to reconnect with their roots. Saudade for many of these poets was no longer a numb sadness that allowed oppressed people to evade reality and wallow in self-pity; it was becoming a means to cultural self-awareness and ethnic unity. Ovidio Martins argued "Anti-evasao" (Anti-evasion, 1962) that he will "shout," "roar," and "kill" (Hamilton 1975, p. 290) for his homeland and its traditions rather than escape to Pasargada, the ancient capital of Persia and nostalgic location of metaphysical escape. Corsino Fortes's "Emigrant" (1974) urged members of the diaspora to recognize that they control their own future if only they have the courage to face it: "For every departure is potency in death/and every return is a child learning to read" (Ellen 1988, p. 53). This "departure" is more than emigration; it is the mental escape from facing the issues at hand.

This new, militant saudade reconnected Cape Verdeans to their African heritage. For example, Manuel Lopes privileged African folklore and native medicines over Western traditions, as in the short story "No terreiro do bruxo Baxense" (Under the Spell of Baxenxe, the Sorcerer, 1959). In addition, Aguinaldo Fonseca linked the Cape Verdean landscape with its African cultural roots in "Mae-negra" (Black Mother, 1951):

> The black mother cradles her son.
> She sings a remote song
> her grandparents used to sing
> on nights without a dawn. (Ellen 1988, p. 13)

Fonseca took this connection a step further in "Magia negra" (Black Magic, 1951), in which the "distant murmur" (Hamilton 1975, p. 297) of the Cape Verdean's African ancestors inspires the wounded and beaten poetic persona to take a decidedly militant stance. The poem suggests that the black man adopt the "fiery voice" of a traditional song and stand up to the whip.

Poets Ovidio Martins and Antonio Nunes reproduce Creole rhythms to express the African element of their Cape Verdean-ness and make political statements. Nunes's "Ritmo de pilao" (Rhythm of the Pestle, 1958) describes the pounding and grinding of the pestle, giving it a musical rhythm that "recalls the days of slavery and voices a protest against the continuing servitude and suffering of the masses" (Hamilton 1975, p. 300). Nunes creates tension in order to enrage his readers, and "in the final stanza the monotonous sound of the pestle appears to grow louder as it punctuates the air and accompanies strong words calling for change and revolt" (Hamilton 1975, p. 301). The urgency and aggressiveness of these protest poems caused many to rethink their approach to their heritage. Urbano Tavares Rodrigues called traditional nostalgia a malady in A Saudade Na Poesia Portuguesa (1967), stating, "Only saudades do not heal:/He that has them, with them remains" (Romo 1974, p. 29). This open wound represents people's separation from each other and from their past. Lamenting about the past robs it of life and significance. Rodrigues argued that Cape Verdeans must celebrate themselves, find common ground, and actively improve themselves and their community.

Cape Verde's revolutionary political leader Amilcar Cabral wrote his own self-awareness and protest poetry. His "Our Islands," "Pieces of the African," and "Of the Black Continent" supported unity between the islands and the African mainland. During his fight for Cape Verdean independence, Cabral also reached out to African Americans. In a 1972 speech, he (1973, p. 76) linked ancestral nostalgia with militant activism, stating, "we are very encouraged in our struggle by the fact that each day more of the African people born in America become conscious of their responsibilities to the struggle in Africa. . . . [N]ever forget that you are

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Africans." Cabral united Africans, African Americans, and members of the Cape Verdean diaspora in a common struggle for social and cultural independence.

Cabral championed other poets in the 1960s and 1970s who believed Cape Verdeans needed to reconnect with their African heritage. This militant nostalgia challenged the cultural denigration of white Portuguese and cultural denial by Cape Verdeans who could pass for white. According to scholar Russell Hamilton, Cabral often referenced poem that reinforced Cape Verdeans' ties to their homeland and culture. In one speech, he "extracted the phrase 'another land within our land' from Aguinaldo Fonseca's poem 'Sonho' (Dream), in which Fonseca anticipated the younger generation in their refusal to abandon the islands" (Hamilton 1975, p. 291). Activists like Cabral and protest poets like Fonseca connected the people's deep inner selfhood with relevant social issues. Onesimo Silveira's poem "Hora Grande" (The Big Moment, 1962) uses the Cape Verdeans' closeness to their ancient landscape and their anger at being enslaved and oppressed to declare a new political awareness in Cape Verde. At one point Silveira argued, as did Barbosa in "Casebre," that it is important to remember the past and learn from it:

> The slave ship will be lost in the league of time
> for the soul of our voices
> will not perish in the bottom of a hold.
> Hunger will no longer feed on hunger
> and we will soar on the Sun's wings
> holding destiny on the palms of our hands! (Ellen 1988, p. 14)

The flying African is a traditional, mythical figure of many African cultures. It has also been used by African American authors, like Toni Morrison in Song of Solomon, to represent the desire to escape white society and fly "home," as well as the belief that after death their souls fly back to Africa. Cape Verdean poet Armenio Vieira used the volcanic origins of the Cape Verde Islands as a metaphor in "Poema" (Poem, 1962), stating that someday his homeland will be reborn as a prosperous, industrial, self-governed state.

Felisberto Vieira Lopes, writing under the name Kaoberdiano Dambara, used the local Cape Verdean Creole dialect, Crioulo, and the Cape Verdeans' memories of "mother Africa" to attack colonialism directly in his collection of poems entitled Noti (Night, 1965). One of the most important ways Dambara reconfigured Cape Verdean nostalgia for his militant purposes was his use of the morna. This traditional song expresses melancholy and loss, but Dambara "expands the nationalist spirit of the morna to encompass, in its woeful lyricism, the recognition of injustices" (Hamilton 1975, p. 305). Furthermore, a few poems in Noti use the batuque, which is a Cape Verdean musical form that was taken directly from Africa without any European additions or alterations. Like his nationalist use of the morna, "Dambara penetrates that surface of exoticism that even some committed writers have assigned to batuque, and in so doing he raises the ceremonial to the level of a people's world view" (Hamilton 1975, p. 305). Onesimo Silveira and Teobaldo Virginio used the morna as a unifying battle cry against oppression and exploitation. For Dina Salustio, the morna can make a feminist statement, as well as being "music of nationality and cultural identity" (Gomes 2002, p. 279). The morna appears in modern protest literature, expressing a new, self-confident sense of African heritage, racial brotherhood, and nationalism. For example, Cape Verdean-American poet Teobaldo Virginio's morna in "Cronica" (Chronicle) challenges sentimentalism and attempts to reconnect emigrants to their heritage. In addition, Cape Verdean Manuel Ferreira's novel Hora di bai (Hour of Leaving, 1962) characters who rebel against Portuguese colonialism are the "morna-singing embodiment of Cape Verde's free spirit" (Hamilton 1975, p. 351). The morna philosophy of individual strength, endurance, and perseverance is an important element of the Cape Verdean self-identity.

III. Memories of "Home"

At least half of the people who currently identify themselves as Cape Verdean do not live on the Cape Verde Islands (Lobban and Lopes 1995, p. 46). Cape Verdeans settled in the United States after serving on whaling ships in the nineteenth century, and many others joined the great influx of immigrants around the turn of the twentieth century. Those that arrived without personal wealth or professional skills worked as longshoremen, cranberry pickers, factory workers, and domestic servants, earning enough so their offspring could be lawyers, doctors, teachers, and entrepreneurs. In the face of a racist, discriminatory society, they formed insulated Cape Verdean-American communities, which gave them a sense of home and belonging. They maintained elements of their "distinctive and dynamic culture" (Lobban and Halter 1987, p. 1) by retelling traditional stories,9 singing traditional songs, and remaining connected with family and friends on the islands, sending money and letters via the Cape Verdean-owned packet ships. According to scholar Robert Hayden (1993, p. 10), these Cape Verdean-American communities helped new arrivals get jobs, homes, health insurance, and college scholarships in America. While some immigrants and their children became completely Americanized, most developed a multicultural identity, which included a deep respect for their Cape Verdean heritage.

Author Baltasar Lopes expressed the important of emigrants maintaining a real connection to the people and culture they left behind in his novel Chiquinho (1947). Lopes's protagonist Chiquinho arrives in the

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United States ready to use what he experienced on the islands and what he learned from the people there to face life's challenges. His journey emphasizes the difference between nostalgia and folk wisdom, and the value of using the latter to gain self-confidence and create a multicultural identity. Although Chiquinho gladly leaves his homeland to join his father in Massachusetts, he cannot deny the love he feels for the family and culture he leaves behind. Even before leaving, Chiquinho learns "the Creole nostalgia of the islands' son" by reading aloud letters from friends and family already in America:

> [The letters] revealed the archipelago's voice beckoning the emigrants to the corner of the world they had left behind. [. . .] A sentimental geography which placed America very near me. It no longer seemed a faraway land. America was at the reach of my hand. The distances became almost meaningless because of the intimacy those letters established with the island. (Ellen 1988, p. 84)

Cultural awareness is active, not passive. Chiquinho asserts his sense of saudade, recognizing success as a mix of socio-economic achievement and deep familial and cultural connections.

By the 1960s, more and more diaspora authors linked active rebellion with cultural self-awareness, loudly celebrating Cape Verdean culture and supporting their homeland's struggle for independence. Exiled activist Luis Romano ardently promoted the use of Cape Verdean Crioulo as the language of literature and protest. He argued that racism and violence would end only when the West recognized his people's cultural and social equality. In "Irmao branco" (White Brother, 1963), Romano criticized the imperialist nostalgia10 of the "white brother" as nothing more than the destructive domination of his African homeland and the exploitation of its people:

> You mixed my black blood
> with the soil of a land you strove to possess.
> [. . .]
> Everything was yours: my children, my treasures,
> my sons your slaves,
> my body your door mat.
> But that splendor was your undoing. (Ellen 1988, p. 17)

Romano suggested that what the Portuguese colonists remember with fondness is actually what will inspire Cape Verdeans to assert themselves and destroy the white oppressor's authority.

According to literary scholar Maria Ellen (1988, p. 158), the expression of "a nostalgic recollection of the native soil. . . . is perhaps the main characteristic of the poetry written by Cape Verdean immigrants in America." Although some Cape Verdean-Americans' sense of nostalgia only brought them a hopeless feeling of sadness and loneliness, many used this sense of saudade to build a strong self-identity and advocate for legal rights and social equality. After immigrating to the United States, poets Jorge Pedro Barbosa and Rosendo Brito used the language, music, and traditions of the islands to assert themselves. Barbosa warned his readers against the corruptive influences of Western culture in "The Woman of Today" and "Joao Pestle-Stick." Brito expressed great respect for Cape Verde's ancient mythology in "Islands in the Distance," concluding the poem: "No one understands that all roads/Compel us to return to our islands" (Ellen 1988, p. 171). If not a literal act of repatriation, this "return" can be a militant nostalgia, a fight for cultural identity and racial equality.

Cape Verdean-Americans' memoirs also show the importance of maintaining a cultural connection with their homeland. For example, Belmira Nunes Lopes (1982) wrote that during the years of the Claridade and independence movements she became spiritually and culturally closer to the islands despite living in America. Rather than descend into sentimental nostalgia, she asserted her Cape Verdean self by describing the histories of her mother's and father's families. She admired her parents' generosity as they welcomed emigrants into their New England home and helped them find jobs and homes of their own. Despite seeing her father being ridiculed and abused by racist adults and children, Lopes learned to respect herself and her heritage through the folktales her mother told her, the traditional songs and dances her family and friends performed, and the traditional foods and Crioulo words she learned. As an adult Lopes sought out other Cape Verdean-Americans to form social clubs and political organizations, later visiting both Cape Verde and West Africa. Lopes stated that pride in her heritage caused her to actively support the Cape Verdean fight for independence and the African Americans' fight for civil rights. In the end she emphasized the importance of honest self-awareness, reminding her readers: "The Cape Verdeans have a history. We have a long history of accomplishments and achievements in the Cape Verde Islands" (1982, p. 201).

Lena Britto (2002) also wrote a memoir about her life in America between the 1920s and 1980s. Like Belmira Lopes, Britto fondly remembered her parents teaching her about her Cape Verdean heritage: they held traditional weddings, dances, and wakes in their home; they housed new arrivals from the islands; they spoke Crioulo at home; and they cooked traditional foods. Like Lopes, Britto was inspired by these memories to become an outspoken activist, fighting for civil rights in the United States and actively supporting the Cape Verdean independence, holding fundraisers and visiting Amilcar Cabral's widow. Britto and Lopes's strong sense of heritage and community helped them face discrimination and build strong self-identities.

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IV. Looking Back, Moving Forward

Since gaining independence in 1975, Cape Verdeans have continued to build upon their cultural reawakening. Although some authors have fallen victim to the "[o]utbreaks of nostalgia often follow revolutions" (Boym 2001, p. xvi), others have built upon the people's heightened cultural self-awareness, challenging their readers to "better understand themselves and contribute to the development of further studies about Cape Verde and the Cape Verdean people" (Balla 1990, p. 11). These authors validate their culture, their homeland, and their African heritage by telling stories about the past to encourage their readers to own their Cape Verdean-ness and their political autonomy. These authors continue to use the rediscovery of their heritage to help them participate in imagining and creating a better future for their communities, whether they are in Cape Verde or America.

Cape Verdean poet David Hopffer Almada used saudade in the 1980s to remind his fellow Cape Verdeans what they have endured and to emphasize what future changes are necessary. In his short story "Evocacao: Lenbransas di Arvi" (Memories of a Tree: An Evocation, 1986), Almada used a traditional piece of the Cape Verdean landscape to symbolize the past. The cypress tree in the middle of the town square represents Portuguese colonial rule and the Cape Verdeans' struggle to survive it. A rebellious "they" remove the Europeans' colonial presence and chop down the tree, which allows the townspeople to plant their own tree. The link to a colonial past ends, but the link to a Cape Verdean and African past is restored. The story urges readers to reclaim their own past in order to control their destiny.

Almada also urged the construction of a better future through a simultaneous celebration and rejection of the past in the poem "Song for Cape Verde" (1988). The lyrical poem nostalgically recalls what Cape Verdeans can appreciate about themselves and their homeland: the "African sandy pebbles," the "warm morabeza," and the "blue seas,/open skies and lofty mountains" (Ellen 1988, p. 68). It celebrates "the Fort of Santiago,/the carnival of Mindelo,/the First of May in Sao Filipe" as well as "the funana,/the drum dances,/the mornas,/the coladeira" (pp. 68-69). However, Almada rejected that his people are "Victims of the East Wind" (using the title of Manuel Lopes's second novel), and claims that they need a new identity, a new song (p. 66). He sought an active, self-aware nostalgia that inspires rather than saddens.

Joao Rodrigues's poem "Who Said We Had Departed?" (1986) argues that cultural self-awareness and social change occur through the act of sharing stories, memories, and songs. Emigrants must use the nostalgia they feel for their homeland to shape their identity and achieve solidarity. Rodrigues asked for Cape Verdeans across the diaspora to "join our hands/to your hands" to create a circle within which they all could "dance/like children,/to sing the song of rain" (Ellen 1988, p. 65). The cleansing, life-giving rain is rare on the islands, which makes it all the more precious as a symbol of joy, unity, activism, and renewal. Rodrigues called his readers to return to their roots and use this reconnection to improve their daily lives.

Other authors used nostalgia metaphorically, suggesting that surviving and succeeding in the future depends on a strong, positive connection to the past. In Armenio Vieira's "Historias recuperadas: as coisas deste mundo e do outro" (Retrieved Stories: Things of This World and of the Other, 1984), the ghost of an ancestor turns off the protagonist's gas stove so he does not die in his sleep. The link between past and present is so strong that the ancestor does not only inspire someone today, he can perform a practical service that affects the person's everyday life. Tome Varela da Silva's "Natal" (Christmas, 1988) rewrites the Christmas story with a Cape Verdean setting and Cape Verdean characters. The memory of an important religious and social tradition aids in the renewal of a community.

Even second- and third-generation Cape Verdean-American authors remember their heritage with a generative nostalgia, one that invigorates their self-identity and social conscience. For example, Marcel Gomes Balla (1990) criticized the American government and the American educational system for devaluing and ignoring an important minority group in The "Other" Americans. He declared: "Now, for the first time, I have decided to inform America about our rich cultural heritage so that all Americans will know that we exist as a united and proud people" (1990, p. 9). The book is at once a history text, a memoir, and a collection of cultural documents, including poems, a short story, a timeline, the Cape Verdean national anthem, and its declaration of unity and rights. Balla recounted his people's history, their contributions to American society, and his own visit to the islands to educate and protest. He argued that by learning about their past, Cape Verdean-Americans can express their current "needs and grievances" and gain recognition and equality (1990, p. 112). Balla emphasized that Cape Verdean-Americans deserved the same rights as any other American, declaring: "We all know that the Bostonian's battle cry during the famous Boston Tea Party was 'No taxation without representation.' [. . .] If they were proud of this, then we should be willing to stand up and refuse to pay taxes for education until we are duly represented in the system" (1990, p. 28).

Cape Verdean-American Louis Babbitt (2002) published his book of poetry in English, but he nostalgically used his cultural and historical heritage to recommend tolerance, cooperation, and equality between different races and across the diaspora. His

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"When Hate Dies" revisits the horrors of the slave trade and segregation, the remnants of which linger today and must be resolved, not ignored or avoided. A closer connection to "motherland Africa" is necessary to protest racism in the United States and to change the nation's "way of life, morals and attitude" (Babbitt 2002, p. 44). "What It Took to Make this Crioulo" remembers the "miserable moments, mixed with degrading memories" (p. 53), but the cruelties of slavery and colonization has only enhanced and intensified the pride and talent of the people, creating a diaspora "with a lot of pride and talent, lots of love, fulfilling our task" (p. 54). "Whispers of the Past" suggests cultural rebirth and social change results from understanding the past as it happened, including slavery, genocide, and a fight for rights. In "Down It Flows" a person's rights and liberties must be fought for, and saudade translates into a rallying cry: "Clear your throats, there is going to be a change this day, laws to govern the status of many, not just the few" (p. 79).

Babbitt urged members of the diaspora to rally around their ancestors. In "The Dreamers," the speaker makes a connection with ancestors from his "living past" (2002, p. 95). He learns that "every part of [his wise ancestors] is in him," providing the means for his protection. He metaphorically can "call on all his past for help" (p. 96) as he fights for social justice and learns to become a better person. Respect and understanding for African and African American heritage also has relevance in the present, evident in the poems "The Nigerian," "The Ethiopian," and "Black Past in America." Babbitt's "Oakdale of My Past" expresses the value of maintaining Cape Verdean communities in the United States, which make the past relevant in the present. His "From Meek to Sheek" demands that the younger generations, who are ignoring their past, regain their self-respect and avoid being drug dealers, prostitutes, and killers (p. 144).

Cape Verdean-American poet Vasco Pires (2003) also engaged with his past to find his own voice and envision a better future for all Americans. "African Seed" and "My Drum," for example, use historical and cultural nostalgia to express a message of social protest, which becomes more apparent in the poems "White Cage, Black Rage" and "The Power of One." By learning the truth about his past, Pires realized his identity and asserted his voice. His readers experience their Cape Verdean homeland in "The Spirit of Cabo Verde" and "My People." They learn about the cultural "forces" within their souls in "Who We Are?" which instructs members of the diaspora to "Show the world,/what we are about" (p. 51). Furthermore, "Continuing the March," "Diversity," and "Rediscovering America" urge Cape Verdeans and African Americans to build racial solidarity and protest those people and institutions that continue to denigrate and oppress both groups. Finally, Pires's "Rise Up!" commands "black men" that "It's time to make a stand./I know we can. I know we can" (p. 17).

African American poet Everett Hoagland (1998) also made this saudade connection. Hoagland included Cape Verdeans in several poems of cultural self-awareness and social protest. Criticizing the police and white America's legacy of institutionalized oppression and abuse, Hoagland's "The 'To Serve and Protect' Blues" connects Emmett Till and Rodney King with Cape Verdeans who "testify with mornas" (p. 58). He also links the African heritage and socio-political struggles of African Americans and Cape Verdeans in "B.A.C.O.N. and Beans" and "Parting Ways." In "This City: A Catalogue," Hoagland argues that instead of being prejudice and divisive, the world should see the "raceless faces" of the "Latino, Cape Verdean, Afro American" children in New Bedford, Massachusetts, as evidence that "there is only one race:/The Human Race" (p. 15).

In conclusion, recent Cape Verdean and Cape Verdean-American authors have used militant nostalgia to raise self-awareness and incite political protest. They resisted the desire to idealize what was supposedly lost or to seek escape from a history of slavery on the islands and discrimination in the United States. Instead, these authors fought for cultural pride, racial unity, and social empowerment through their connection to those memories. Poets and novelists continue to celebrate and document Cape Verde's oral history, folklore, traditional music, and Crioulo dialect. The result for many is pride for their Cape Verdean homeland, their successful revolution against Portuguese colonialism, and their activism against segregation and racism in the United States. The new sense of saudade rallies Cape Verdeans and Cape Verdean-Americans to celebrate their past in order to actively improve their present and future.

Notes

[1] All works are written in English or translated by scholars listed in the References.

[2] The word saudade, or sodad, is untranslatable. According to Carlos Romo (1974, p. 29), it "has direct affinity with the Greek pathos; it is a feeling bitter and sweet at the same time; 'the sadness of sweet memories' as the Cape Verdean poet, Eugenio Tavares in his mornas describes it." A stoic ability to survive the greatest hardships "is the most singular characteristic which profoundly describes the very soul of what it is to be Cape Verdean" (p. 31).

[3] The volcanic archipelago was uninhabited until Portuguese explorers discovered it in the 1462. After colonization, it became a bureaucratic hub of the slave trade. Slavery was abolished on the islands in 1876, but racial discrimination and exploitation continued long afterwards.

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[4] Approximately 71% Creole, 28% African, and 1% European (Leary 2001, p. 4).

[5] According to Svetlana Boym (2001, p. 62), marginalized or oppressed groups use a militant, or "off-modern," type of nostalgia in response to Western culture's sentimentalization of the "past," which whitewashes Western aggression, naturalizes white supremacy, and encourages dangerous extremist movements like Nazism and McCarthyism.

[6] Cape Verdean Amilcar Cabral organized the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) in 1956. Cabral was assassinated in 1973. Cape Verde won its independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975.

[7] Classical Cape Verdean poetry like Jose Lopes's "Minha Terra" (My Land, 1929) and Pedro Cardoso's "Hesperides" (1930) often portrays Cape Verde as the lost city of Atlantis.

[8] The first issue of the literary journal Claridade (clarity) was published in 1936. It inspired the more militant Certeza (certainty) movement of 1944 and the independence movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

[9] In 1923, folklore scholar Elsie Clews Parsons interviewed Cape Verdeans living in New England and transcribed 133 traditional folktales (many with multiple variations), 183 proverbs and sayings, and 292 riddles, publishing them in English and Crioulo, which was spoken in many Cape Verdean-American communities.

[10] Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo (1989) coined the term "imperialist nostalgia" in Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis.

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