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Imagens de portugueses na literatura norte-americana

Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature

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resumo

Tendo como referência as teorias pós-coloniais e os estudos sobre a etnicidade, o presente trabalho propõe-se analisar alguns textos norte-americanos publicados entre meados do século XIX e meados do século XX contendo personagens portuguesas, estudando as relações entre a cultura dominante e as culturas das minorias. Analisa, também, os estereótipos raciais, étnicos, religiosos, económicos e culturais que os escritores norte-americanos de ascendência predominantemente anglo-saxónica criaram alusivos aos portugueses. Quer os escritores canónicos, quer os não-canónicos, retrataram os portugueses de uma forma preconceituosa. Este modo de olhar o mundo está patente nos textos produzidos, quer nas regiões onde esta minoria étnica tradicionalmente se instalou nos Estados Unidos da América, quer nos textos alusivos às mesmas, a saber: na Nova Inglaterra, na Califórnia e no Havai. Na análise destas representações com um certo cariz racista – despoletadas, em parte, pelas correntes do Darwinismo social – este estudo também questiona a veracidade dos estereótipos referentes à violência, à permissividade sexual, à sujidade, ao alcoolismo, ao tráfico de bebidas alcoólicas e do ópio, assim como a estupidez, estereótipos, por vezes, atribuídos aos portugueses por estes escritores norte-americanos. Estas representações corrosivas e de carácter questionável são, contudo, rejeitadas por um grupo emergente de escritores luso-americanos, na medida em que os seus textos literários reflectem uma preocupação com questões tais como o significado da pertença a uma cultura minoritária no seio duma cultura dominante. Ao tentarem facultar uma análise objectiva e credível quanto à localização dos portugueses no âmago da cultura norte-americana, estes escritores luso-americanos – e não os anglo-saxónicos – estão efectivamente melhor apetrechados para estabelecer a ligação entre as culturas portuguesa e norte-americana. Para além da análise do impacto da emigração portuguesa para os Estados Unidos da América, este estudo também oferece algumas pistas para uma melhor compreensão da recepção e acolhimento dos emigrantes portugueses assim como para a análise da transmissão e

subsequente transformação da cultura portuguesa nos Estados Unidos da América.

abstract

Based on postcolonial and ethnic studies theories of the relations between minority and majority cultures, this study focuses on American writings with Portuguese fictional characters, all of which written between the middle of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century. It analyzes the racial, ethnic, religious, economic, and cultural assumptions and biases that American writers of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon background have expressed towards the Portuguese. Both canonical and non-canonical American voices have taken a prejudicial look at the Portuguese, and this is reflected in the texts produced in or about the geographical locations where this ethnic minority has traditionally settled in the United States: New England, California, and Hawaii. In its exploration of the racially-charged snapshots prompted by social Darwinism, this study also questions the validity of the stereotypes pointing to violence, sexual license, filth, drunkenness, bootlegging, opium trafficking, and stupidity often attributed to the Portuguese by American writers of Anglo-Saxon descent. Such corrosive misrepresentations, however, are rejected by an emerging group of Portuguese American voices whose writings display a concern for matters such as what it means to belong to a minority culture within the context of a dominant one. These Portuguese American writers offer an unbiased and reliable discussion of the location of the Portuguese within American culture, and they, not the Anglo writers, are likelier effectively to establish the bridge between Portuguese and American culture. In addition, this study analyzes the impact of Portuguese immigration on America while providing an understanding of how Portuguese immigrants

were received and how Portuguese culture was transmitted to and transformed in America.

ÍNDICE

CHAPTER ONE

FRAMING THE PORTUGUESE WITHIN THE MARGINS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

There is a body of American literature written between the middle of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century containing some minor references to the Portuguese as an ethnic group living in the United States of America. Many of these texts – whether written by canonical writers or by second- and third-rank regional or local voices – stereotype this ethnic minority. As a cultural phenomenon within the framework of mainstream American culture, this attitude can be grasped through a study of the texts produced in or about the geographical locations where the Portuguese – especially the inhabitants of the Atlantic islands, the Azores and Madeira – have historically settled in the United States: New England, California, Hawaii and, more recently, the New York-New Jersey area. In this last case, Portuguese settlements are mostly by mainland stock. This field of literary and sociological or demographic scholarship is fascinating and it is still largely unexplored. There is much to be said about why some American writers – especially those, as I will argue, of a predominantly white, male, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant background – have, at times, depicted the Portuguese in a stereotypical manner, just as the Italians, Irish, and blacks had been before them. While some of these authors employ stereotypes, others do not, as we shall see ahead.

While the number of texts where American writers have portrayed the Portuguese is substantial, the amount of

pages they devote to them is often minimal. The common belief in America – as theorist M. Estellie Smith has pointed out – is that the Portuguese are an "invisible minority."[1] The Portuguese are, in fact, present in numerous works of American fiction, but the fictional characters drawn from this ethnic group have received little or no attention by scholars. The field itself is a rich one, even though most of the representations one actually encounters are not flattering or uplifting for the Portuguese American reader. What most American writers have betrayed is a distant view of the Portuguese, never assessing who they are as a people. In other words, they exhibit little or no concern for or interest in such things as their culture, way of life, anxieties, or inner desires. As such, for the Portuguese American reader, these portrayals look overwhelmingly biased, unreliable, and ignorant. With several different epochs in perspective, the purpose of this study is to show how inaccurate some of these portrayals (in Anglo texts of about 1850 to 1950) really were by contrasting them with texts written by some Portuguese American writers of about the middle of the twentieth-century onwards.

The representations of the Portuguese in American fiction are clearly predicated on – as I will try to show ahead – the prevailing theories of race in America at those times. This slaveholding country up to the Civil War, as Eric J. Sundquist has claimed in *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*, is one where "race remains very much at the center of […] experience."[2] It was simply impossible for the Portuguese to not be seen through the lens of racial theories. Race and racism, Toni Morrison reminds us in *Playing in the*

Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, are issues that literary critics have resisted addressing:

> One likely reason for the paucity of critical material on this large and compelling subject is that, in matters of race, silence and evasion have historically ruled literary discourse. Evasion has fostered another, substitute language in which the issues are encoded, foreclosing open debate. The situation is aggravated by the tremor that breaks into discourse on race. It is further complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture.[3]

For the purposes of this study, like Morrison, I also wish to "identify those moments when American literature was complicit in the fabrication of racism."[4] In order for this goal to be achieved, Morrison contends that one must "avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served."[5] Furthermore, Morrison does not hesitate to state that "Deep within the word 'American' is its association with race."[6] This is not, however, a matter that pertains to the American past exclusively. "Racism," Morrison further argues, "is as healthy today as it was during the Enlightenment." I, too, am "convinced that the metaphorical and metaphysical uses of race occupy definitive places in American literature, in the 'national' character, and ought to be a major concern of the literary scholarship that tries to know it."[7] Although Du Bois called our attention to racism at the beginning of the twentieth-century, it is still alive in America today. As I hope to prove in chapter two, several texts in this study show the extent to which some Americans have been

obsessed by the color of one's skin. Furthermore, these texts also show how the slightly darker complexion of Southern Europeans has spelled anxiety and discomfort in the minds of Americans of Northern European stock. A country that supposedly made Crèvecoeur's melting-pot theory one of its cultural cornerstones did not apply it evenly across all ethnic minorities. Looked at in closer detail, neither did Crèvecoeur since his pot, so to speak, only included peoples of Northern and Central European stock such as the English, the Dutch, the Germans, and the French. In the narratives containing depictions of the Portuguese, the Portuguese characters seem not to belong in the American mainstream because of racial and class prejudice.

Werner Sollors has pointed out in *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* that "A marital union or a love relationship across boundaries that are considered significant, and often in defiance of parental desires and old descent antagonisms, is what constitutes melting-pot love."[8] Sollors' discussion of the notion of *consent* and Crèvecoeur's encouragement of intermarriage and the melting of peoples clearly point to traits that are quintessentially American. But the point is that the Portuguese in, for example Martha Stanley's *My Son*, are not viewed by many native-born Americans as eligible for Crèvecoeur's essentially Eurocentric melting pot, as I hope to show in chapter two; often the texts equivocate on whether they are indeed 'white'. As I will suggest further on in this study, this was in part due to their cultural and linguistic affinities with the Capeverdeans living in New England, even though, to their discredit, the Portuguese often tried to distance themselves from this grouping. This racial prejudice against the Portuguese,

however, should be seen in the context of the Social Darwinism which swept through American letters, culture, and society at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries and which can be detected in the fiction of Frank Norris and Jack London, writers who will be discussed later on.

I will argue that a primitive, in-bred propensity to violence is yet another trait attributed to the Portuguese. The brief cameos one encounters in some American fiction tend to portray this ethnic group as a bloodthirsty, mysterious, unpredictable people. In addition, these writings imply that Portuguese individuals should not be trusted. They may even represent a threat to democratic America because they are said to be drawn to anarchy and communism – as Edward McSorley's novel, *The Young McDermott* (1949) shows.

The sexual habits and conduct of the Portuguese have also proven to be another element worthy of attention and hostile speculation in several of the works of literature that will be analyzed in this study. Briefly, I will argue that the Portuguese are associated with sexual license, especially the Portuguese female characters. They are often viewed as flirts who ensnare the good, law-abiding American male, leading him astray. In a society where Puritanical impulses have not abated altogether and which could be felt strongly until about the middle of the twentieth century, out-of-wedlock sexual activity was considered disreputable. Restraint being the watchword, the male character in, for example, the Hawthorne and Higginson stories that will be analyzed ahead, would, nonetheless, move amongst these alleged Portuguese temptresses so as to be sexually aroused. The rendition of such matters in these narratives has been discussed by

Leslie Fiedler, especially in his analysis of Hawthorne's "snow maidens" and "dark ladies" in his classic study, *Love and Death in the American Novel*. As shall be seen, Hawthorne views sexuality as an element that de-stabilizes the Puritan goal of constructing the "city upon the hill," to quote John Winthrop. As a Romantic writer, however, his fiction is imbued with exotic, sensuous elements as well and dramatizes the pull between sensuality and moral repression.

Moreover, the dynamics of sexual desire, Robert J. C. Young maintains, are contained in a framework where individuals belonging to a dominant culture eroticize the Other. In a colonial context, for example, Young argues that

> Colonialism was always locked into the machine of desire…Folded within the scientific accounts of race, a central assumption and paranoid fantasy was endlessly repeated: the uncontrollable sexual drive of the non-white races and their limitless fertility…. Nineteenth-century theories of race did not just consist of essentializing differentiations between self and other: they were also about a fascination with people having sex – interminable, adulterating, aleatory, illicit, inter-racial sex.[9]

Narratives centering on sexual arousal between individuals of opposite races, bell hooks maintains, revolve around the axis of desire and resistance, with the whites fantasizing about having sex with individuals belonging to darker ethnic minorities:

> Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture. Cultural taboos around sexuality

> and desire are transgressed and made explicit as the media bombards folks with a message of difference no longer based on the white supremacist assumption that "blondes have more fun." The "real fun" is to be had by bringing to the surface all those "nasty" unconscious fantasies and longings about contact with the Other embedded in the secret (not so secret) deep structure of white supremacy. In many ways it is a contemporary revival of interest in the "primitive."[10]

Once again, some of these texts written in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries with Portuguese characters draw from this longing for contact with the ethnic Other. In essence, Young and hooks maintain that the dynamics of sexual desire and longing for contact with Otherness transcend a specific time frame in that these impulses emerge in colonial situations or in multiethnic societies. On this issue, hooks recalls an episode during her tenure at Yale. She notes that while she was walking in the downtown area of New Haven, "which is close to campus and invariably brings one into contact with many of the poor black people who live nearby," she found herself "walking behind a group of very blond, very white, jock type boys." Seemingly unaware of her presence, "these young men talked about their plans to fuck as many girls from other racial/ethnic groups as they could 'catch' before graduation. […] Black girls were high on the list."[11] Furthermore, as Homi K. Bhabha has pointed out in *The Location of Culture*, especially in his discussion of Anglo-American nationalism as a "form of political, economical, and cultural imperialism on the world,"[12] in a colonial situation, stereotyping is yet another tool which has kept "colonized" peoples under scrutiny. Bhabha notes that British imperialism entails the assertion of superior

power over the weak and that this leads to an appropriation of their rights, freedom, and wealth. Bhabha also notes that it is during this interaction between the colonizer and the colonized that the colonizer's perception about and "colonial gaze" directed at the colonized come into effect. Although specifically referring to India and other countries under British rule, in my view, Bhabha's statements about this matter can be applied to the representations of the Portuguese in American fiction. As a model, Bhabha's discourse on the British "colonizer" and the "colonized" is generalizable outside the specific colonial situation. Bhabha's discourse functions as a particular explanation of how a dominant Anglo culture has looked at Otherness; in other words, his model posits the existence of a dominant, mainstream culture and the margins. Such a pattern is prevalent not only in colonial experiences but also in multiethnic societies as, for example, the United States of America where WASPs have exerted their dominance on the non-WASP minorities. The Portuguese emigrated to America of their own free will and, mostly, for economic reasons and, as such, were not colonized by Americans as, for example, the natives of South Africa or India had been by the British. In this particular instance of immigration, it entails the retention of privileges, wealth, and power by a social group in the face of the assault of new (and unusually impoverished) social groupings. As I will argue in chapter two, the Portuguese were also subject to the "colonial gaze," that is, the lens, mindset, and model Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists have put forth. Clearly, what can be grasped in some texts I will discuss is what Bhabha has defined as the objective of colonial discourse, namely, to construe "the colonized as a

population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction." Bhabha also alludes to "those terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation, scenes of fear and desire, in colonial texts."[13] He points out that this viewpoint is yet another mechanism which the colonizer resorts to in order to assert his power over the "colonized" peoples. And even though circumstances were significantly different, such a "colonial gaze" could be said to have been applied – as I shall explain – to the Portuguese immigrants in America.

Other postcolonial critics have also noted this mindset in texts focusing on the relationship between a dominant culture and a minor one. On the issue of literary representation of the Other as subordinate, Edward Said argues that:

> We have become very aware in recent years of the constraints upon the cultural representation of women, and the pressures that go into the created representations of inferior classes and races. In all these areas – gender, class and race – criticism has correctly focused upon the institutional forces in modern western societies that shape and set limits on the representation of what are considered essentially subordinate beings; thus representation itself has been characterized as keeping the subordinate subordinate, the inferior inferior.[14]

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, for example, would also argue that such texts as those offered for analysis in chapters two through five of this study are *bona fide* examples of what she considers as "literary representations of the dominant."[15] In other words, the Portuguese in many of

these texts occupy a subordinate position and in, for example, Frank Norris' *The Octopus*, they are depicted as "inferior." Moreover, Henry Louis Gates has noted that the problem with "Anglo-American regional culture" is that it has "too often masked itself as universal, passing itself off as our 'common culture,' and depicting different cultural traditions as 'tribal' or 'parochial'."[16] Previously, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon also emphasized that in colonial texts, "the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil."[17] In colonial American literature, William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative of Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* are good examples which support Fanon's argument. While in the first text Native-Americans are depicted as "howling beasts" in the wilderness, in the second one, they are agents of Satan.

In the particular context of Portuguese immigrants in America, they have settled in America more recently than old-time, native-born Americans, who had themselves appropriated and bartered the land from Native Americans. Settlement by immigrants is a reversal of the typical colonial paradigm, such as we find in respect of the British in India or Africa, where a materially weaker people is taken over by a more powerful one. In this case, an endemically poor, or a dispossessed itinerant population comes to live amid a settled and dominant group or groups. From the point of view of the former, it is in the hope of improving their lives materially; from the host point of view, the benefit of receiving them is to obtain services and labor at low cost. Culturally speaking, the immigrant community in most cases constitutes an underclass and as such is subject to a

certain amount of suspicion and fear, which expresses itself in unbalanced representations of it. This is further fuelled by the tendency of immigrant communities to live apart from the host population in the only form of accommodation to which their means gives them access, that is to say, ghettoes and shanty towns. Their concentration in impoverished and closed communities further exacerbates the fear, since it is compounded by their being cut off and hence their unknowability. From the immigrant point of view, the 'closed' nature of their communities is a natural response to the real and perceived hostility of the host community. Out of this understandable failure of communities to communicate or empathize with one another's 'difference', comes the 'name-calling' and negative stereotyping which is reflected in the literature under review. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that existing hegemonic groups have resisted the inclusion of cultures and peoples they neither understand nor control.

American literary representations of the Portuguese are a case in point. While I propose to argue that some of these negative portrayals of the Portuguese are endorsed by the authors (as, for example, Frank Norris does in *The Octopus*), other representations however seem to me more open to interpretation. Some would appear to be offering a critique of the attitudes they describe in their characters, in some cases explicit and in others implicit (as Melville appears to do in "The 'Gees"). Still other writers, to my mind, do not always seem to be aware of some of the prejudicial implications of the positions they take up. Thus, in some defenses of the Portuguese, one finds presentations which are reprehensibly patronizing or reductive or ill-informed. What then are the stereotypes which have been attributed to the Portuguese? At one

extreme, we find the Portuguese as dirty, disagreeable people. They are depicted as low-lifes, cheap and miserly individuals who would rather hang on to their pennies than spend their money on decent clothes and living conditions. Furthermore, they are said to have a tendency to amass money ruthlessly and to be over-concerned about material things. Another of their alleged weaknesses is a propensity to alcoholism, with whatever money they have wasted on cheap liquor. Others are associated with criminal activity, especially bootlegging during the Prohibition years, and even drug-trafficking. Connected with this, they are made to seem like opportunistic law breakers and a threat to the country's well-being since they, as a community, clearly had little sympathy for or engagement with the temperance movements of the time, which aimed at fostering the spread of sobriety and controlling public disorder. Finally I will argue that some writers, including Twain and conceivably Steinbeck, who perhaps should have known better, find themselves making cheap and easy comedy out of simple and rustic characters, thus making the association between the Portuguese and vulgarity and stupidity.

This, in essence, is how I see American writers have represented the Portuguese in the literature under review in this dissertation. One might ask to what extent there is any substance to these imputed character traits? To me, it seems preferable and logical to take each individual assertion on its merits, looking at the social and historical context in which they occur. For example, the charge that the Portuguese may be considered dirty seems as an absolutely toothless one in connection with agrarian, in some cases, dust-bowl communities. In general, fictional representation has an oblique and

tendentious relationship with historical fact. We cannot say that nothing is generalizable from the presentation of the Portuguese in fiction, but at the same time we have a duty to be extremely cautious in inferring the veracity or applicability of any given trait ascribed to a people. All essentializing discourse about ethnic groups or nations is in one way or another self-serving for those who generate it. One of the objectives of this thesis is to identify the point at which fiction crosses the boundary between particular experiences and specific representations and ventures into the territory of unfounded and malicious stereotyping. Here we must admit the possibility of unexamined attitudes and prejudices, which greatly complicate the process of critical generalization and interpretation.

One might illustrate the difficulty with reference to the scene in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly, Or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799) when the novel's eponymous American hero is shipwrecked and washed ashore on the coast of Portugal. Although constituting only four pages of that novel, the hero's experiences in microcosm reflect the nature of the problem. He is somewhat contemptuous of the way of life of the fishermen who rescue him, in their "ignorance and penury" (138), and of the "sterile and rude" (137) landscape. Yet he understands that they could in their own straightened circumstances do no more for him. Subsequently he is transferred to a monastery where the monks are "bigoted and sordid" (138), bent upon imprisoning him until they can convert him to Catholicism. Yet in their midst is Chaledro, an enlightened monk who engineers his transfer from the fishing village to the monastery, secures him life-saving medical attention and eventually his freedom to pass on to

Oporto where he makes a full recovery and departs the land for New York. Negative general impressions of the monks are mixed with an account of acts of kindness and generosity on the part of an individual Portuguese monk. Similarly the dim awareness that life is harsh for the fishermen, that "My hosts had little attention or compassion to spare to the wants of others" (138) does not significantly temper his sense of being badly treated. Huntly's judgements are subjective and inconsistent – they serve primarily to reinforce his sense of his own worth and identity, to advance the impression that he *deserves* to be well-treated. His prejudices pass through Portugal largely unaffected. From all of this, how are we to construe Brockden Brown's feelings towards the Portuguese?

The issue of representation of the Other has received much attention in recent ethnic and postcolonial scholarship. A number of theorists have contended that all literary representations of ethnic minorities are marred by the writer's biases and ethnocentrism. The observer, William Boelhower notes in *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature*, gazes at the ethnic other according to the rules of his or her world. Boelhower has come to the conclusion that:

> ethnic seeing cannot be separated from the seer, nor the seer from his act of seeing. With this precautionary note, ethnic semiotics can now be defined as nothing more nor less than the interpretative gaze of the subject whose strategy of seeing is determined by the very ethno-symbolic space of the possible world he inhabits.[18]

Moreover, Young argues that the Other is only "knowable through a necessarily false representation."[19] In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Julia Kristeva has detected an attitude of

repulsion and attraction towards what is foreign or "other." Such feelings, she contends, are typical of mankind regardless of one's cultural background:

> Are there any happy foreigners?
> The foreigner's face burns with happiness.
> At first, one is struck by his peculiarity – those lips, those cheek bones, that skin unlike others, all that distinguishes him and reminds one that there is *someone* there. The difference in that face reveals in paroxystic fashion what any face should reveal to a careful glance: the nonexistence of banality in human beings. Nevertheless, it is precisely the commonplace that constitutes a commonality for our daily habits. But this grasping the foreigner's features, one that captivates us, beckons and rejects at the same time. "I am at least remarkable, and therefore I love him," the observer thinks; "now I prefer my own peculiarity, and therefore I kill him," he might conclude.[20]

Kristeva then goes on to explore the feelings of humiliation when the foreigner is made to bear responsibility for many of the real (or imagined) evils which are held to occur in society. In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Richard Rorty points out that cultures do not interact with each other in an objective manner. It is "natural" to gaze at otherness in a biased and ethnocentric manner.[21] When analyzing Sander Gilman's views on stereotyping, Michael Pickering notes that this is not always negative. While stereotypes provide "a matrix for structures of order" they are also "an indispensable feature of our functioning in the world." In addition, stereotypes operate as a "rhetorical strategy of naturalizing order and control." In other words, stereotypes "operate as socially exorcistic rituals in maintaining the boundaries of normality and legitimacy."[22]

In what has now become a classic essay in subaltern studies, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” Spivak has drawn our attention to the practice of Hindu widow self-immolation and how the British colonizers have traditionally reacted to it. She is particularly interested in these episodes for, she believes, they contain a “critique of current Western efforts to problematize the subject to the question of how the third-world subject is represented within Western discourse.”[23] In referring to this practice, Spivak wishes to show how both cultures are at odds and cannot understand each other. Basically, the Hindu widow usually casts herself into the funeral pyre supposedly to express her love for her deceased husband, but also to fulfill the expectations of her patriarchal culture. Her family, on the other hand, has pressured her to commit suicide since they wish to prevent her from inheriting her deceased husband’s property. They manipulate such feelings as faithfulness and a widow’s devotion to the deceased husband. Incapable of reading these ethnic “signs” (to paraphrase Boelhower), the British colonizers wrap this episode up as another instance of barbarianism. Spivak wishes to call our attention to these occurrences so as to argue that Western representations of native or ethnic cultures at the margin of mainstream, dominant cultures are not fair and objective. Not only are they ignorant, they miss the point, that is, the cultural issue at stake.

Matthew Frye Jacobson claims that this problem with representation stems from a particular type of sight. “The eye that sees,” Jacobson argues, “is not a mere physical organ but a means of perception conditioned by the tradition in which its possessor has been reared.”[24] In other words, the eye is trained to see according to a culture’s prejudices. Satya P. Mohanty further adds that

it is impossible to examine another culture objectively. The study of someone else's culture, Mohanty stresses, is

> complexly mediated by our own culture's biases, ideologies, and theoretical paradigms [which] make[s] cross-cultural encounters of any kind unavoidably difficult. But a retreat into either a positivist view of objective knowledge or the kind of skepticism or relativism I have identified cannot provide a way out of this difficulty.[25]

The real challenge, Mohanty points out, lies with the person who identifies with and is at the crossroads of both dominant and minor cultures. It is not easy to maintain a distanced objectivity, especially when the minor culture one is affiliated with is being misrepresented. In other words, the hyphenated American reader – in my case, Portuguese American – is confronted with a challenge of his own. It is not easy for a reader specializing in mainstream American literature to deal with a situation where specific works pertaining to that very same corpus look down upon aspects of life and culture that pertain to such a reader's own ethnic background. To put it bluntly, I was dismayed upon reading Frank Norris's novel, *The Octopus* for the first time in a nineteenth-century American literature seminar in the late nineteen eighties. As shall be seen in chapter two, the references to the Portuguese farmhands in this novel are not presented in a neutral or fair-minded way. The genesis of this study, this reader believes, dates back to this unpleasant "epiphany," so to speak. In Mohanty's words,

> It is difficult to get on with the business of simply interpreting the text (or the other) if the self-other relationship is itself partly constitutive of this "fabric" or text. Hence the necessity of the hermeneutical turn, the

> resituating of the positivist subject-object split in a deeper, fuller, social context that would include the positive – noncolonizing – relationships to which we have remained blind.[26]

Trying to respond objectively to the writers discussed in chapters two to five is, indeed, a challenge worth taking up even if, at times, it is a painful one.

Other ethnic groups have been exposed to misrepresentations in mainstream American literature as has been the case with Chicanos/as, as Gloria Anzaldúa has shown:

> I seek an exoneration, a seeing through the fictions of white supremacy, a seeing of ourselves in our true guises and not as the false racial personality that has been given to us and that we have given to ourselves…. I seek new images of identity, new beliefs about ourselves, our humanity and worth no longer in question.[27]

The same request could be made concerning Portuguese Americans. While both the ethnic minorities themselves and the majority of theorists have called our attention to the misrepresentations of the margins by the mainstream culture, to my knowledge, the only postcolonial critic who believes that a Westerner (regardless of whether such a "Westerner" is Anglo-American or Portuguese) is capable of writing objectively is Ato Quayson, who does not

> subscribe to the view implied in the debate about whether or not a Westerner is indisputably disqualified from producing any reliable knowledge on others. This is quite an erroneous impression, which, in these days of multiculturalism and ethnic studies is bandied about with great energy and little reflection. It does not stand up to any serious scrutiny. There is no doubt that historically the West has produced all kinds of fictitious knowledge about 'others'. But it is by no means the

> case that every single piece of knowledge produced in and by the West was necessarily contaminated with fiction or malicious motivations.[28]

In the light of the number of scholarly opinions on this subject, one may conclude that it is difficult – if not practically impossible – to represent the ethnic Other objectively. These theoretical viewpoints on the issue of cultural representation, I further believe, support the overall argument in this study: The Portuguese fictional characters discussed in chapters two through five are necessarily prejudicial representations of the culture and ethnic group they belong to.

Are the Portuguese such unpleasant people as some of these writings suggest? Or are we analyzing a group of writers who also endorse a wider social reaction against the arrival of new waves of immigrants who do not embrace the same values, lifestyles, and perceptions of those who had settled in America much earlier – especially during those periods of conservatism in American politics, such as that of the 1920s? Clearly, one should not forget that America is a country composed of immigrants (except for the Native Americans and the black slaves who did not travel there of their own free will). Some of these immigrants can claim ancestry dating all the way back to the Founding Fathers' landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620 or even earlier in Jamestown, Virginia. In the case of the Portuguese, the reason why they are misrepresented in American fiction has to do, on the one hand, with the fact that they arrive in America with cultural and religious values different from those of Anglo-Saxon stock and, on the other hand, with the fact that they suffer a backlash from negative previous prejudice to immigrants, namely

those immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe or even those from the South, as was the case with the Italians or even the Irish. As will be seen later in this study, the Portuguese from the Azores Islands began to sail to America in much larger numbers after the middle of the nineteenth century to work on board the Nantucket and New Bedford whaling ships. And several of the works of literature that will be discussed here deal exactly with this phenomenon. In Chapter Six, as we shall see, the prejudice shown to the Portuguese in chapters two through five is rejected by an emergent group of Portuguese or Portuguese American voices. Their writings attempt to understand the nature of these Portuguese fictional characters and to show how difficult it was for them to grapple with a new language and reality, while, at the same time, holding on to their native culture.

As Rey Chow has shown in *Ethics after Idealism*, the current outspokenness of ethnic writers represents a

> significant opening up of possibilities, whereby coming to terms with otherness means making attempts to seek and listen for the voices of the subordinated others, minority discourse has become arguably the most prevalent and most productive conceptual model in U.S. cultural studies. Unlike the absolute certainty of a negative conclusion such as “the subaltern cannot speak,” “minority discourse” analyses offer hope: their recognition of subordination (as evidenced in the word “minority” as opposed to “majority” or “mainstream”) is accompanied by a persistent belief in the possibilities of expression, articulation, and agency (as evidenced in the word “discourse”). In terms of its capacity for understanding cultural diversities as discursive practices, “minority discourse” is an eminently *enabling* conceptual model. Under its rubric, “otherness” finds a variety of

> infinitely expanding and changing expressions – as differences performed by way of class, gender, sexual preference, religion, and so forth. Articulated together, these multifarious minority discourses could potentially become an effective coalition against the domineering legacy of the white Protestant heterosexual man of property.[29]

This recognition, Chow contends, still revolves around issues of power since it is "still largely a one-way street – in the form, for instance, of *white culture recognizing non-white cultures only*." The difficulties non-white cultures experienced are very similar to those encountered by Portuguese American writers. Chow points out that:

> For those groups on the side of non-white cultures, the problem presented by multiculturalism remains one of tactical negotiation. Negotiating a point of entry into the multicultural scene means nothing less than posing the question of rights – the right to representation and the right to culture. What this implies is much more than the mere fight (by a particular non-white culture) for its "freedom of speech," because the very process of attaining "speech" here is inextricably bound up with right, that is, with the processes through which particular kinds of "speeches" are legitimized in the first place. To put it in very simple terms, a non-white culture, in order to "be" or to "speak," must (1) seek legitimacy/recognition from white culture, which has denied the reality of the "other" cultures all along; (2) use the language of white culture (since it is the dominant one) to produce itself (so that it could be recognized and thus legitimized); and yet (3) resist complete normativization by white culture.[30]

The confusion as to whether the Portuguese should be seen as “white” or “non-white” in America is an issue I will touch upon in chapter two. As will be seen ahead, this was, in part, motivated by the Capeverdean immigrants in New England. Many of the Portuguese American writers discussed in chapter six are concerned with such matters as how much America has shaped the Portuguese, how much they have given up to become more American or rather how much they have felt the need to resist being assimilated by mainstream American culture. Numerous Portuguese “pioneer” or first-generation immigrants have simply held on to their native language and culture, counting the days until they would finally be able to return to the land of their births. Unlike other ethnic groups who have come to stay forever in America, many Portuguese see their stay in America as a temporary one. These immigrants have found a complete break with their native land too hard to bear. And what is unique in these writers is that they present to us representative Portuguese themes; that is, what is missing in the narratives discussed in chapters two through five. First-hand discussions of Portuguese American cultural experiences are elements which have been missing for too long. And in taking this task in hand, they place the discussion of the representation of the Portuguese within American fiction in a more enlightened manner, one that questions the stereotypical portrayals perpetuated by writers of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon background.

Although self-representation is not objective either, these writers with a Portuguese ethnic background are, in my view, better informed in their analyses of Portuguese or Portuguese American experiences.

Before moving on to the thesis of this dissertation, I would like to situate my argument within the framework of contemporary discourse on issues of ethnicity and assimilation so that the location of the Portuguese at the margins of American literature and culture may be assessed more effectively. This may also help us to understand the unusual position of the Portuguese as compared to that of, say, the African-Americans, Native-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and other ethnic groups. Portuguese experience in America will in this thesis be compared mostly to that of the Irish and Italians since both groups are Catholic and European, with the latter perhaps closer to the Portuguese given the Southern European/Latin background and language barrier. The Jewish experience will be drawn upon as well so as to argue that even though they were usually wealthy and educated they, too, were discriminated against before World War II.

In *Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture*, Mary V. Dearborn is primarily interested in looking into "factors of 'otherness'… such as those of gender and ethnicity in order to understand American identity." Yet she also makes it clear that traditional approaches to issues of ethnicity are not trustworthy. In fact, what she suggests is that earlier analyses and portrayals of the ethnic other by American writers of predominantly Anglo-Saxon descent are not objective and unbiased. Over the past few years, she points out, there

> has been a persistent sense, among literary critics, historians, and writers, that the outsider can best represent what it means to exist within American culture… [that is,] literature by and about those who seem to be on the edges of American culture can perhaps best represent what happens within that culture."[31]

Dearborn's point in this passage is that one looks at and from the margins to understand the center. We must look into the margins since what we will encounter there is, in essence, American culture even if in the past it was not considered as such. Contemporary ethnic theorists argue that American literature and culture are no longer WASP and a Dead White Male terrain. That is why scholars such as Boelhower insist on the notion that "ethnic writing is American writing."[32] Clearly, what is relevant in this discussion is the contention that if one wishes to grasp the culture of a particular ethnic group one should look mostly into the texts produced by writers of that given ethnic group – not elsewhere. What is worth recalling, however, is that ethnicity, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism were unheard of back when the writers discussed in chapters two through five were actively writing these narratives.

Should one look into the non-ethnic, mainstream works propounded by Dearborn, however, one may detect the mechanisms or ways of "looking at the world characteristic of the dominant white, male, Eurocentric ruling class, a way of dividing up the world that puts an omnipotent subject at the center and constructs marginal Others as sets of negative qualities" – as Nancy Hartsock has pointed out.[33] Moreover, in her discussion of Albert Memmi's work, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Hartsock stresses the bond that exists between the colonizer and the colonized. As the colonizer

> draws a portrait of the Other as described by the colonizer the colonized emerges as the image of everything the colonizer is not. Every negative quality is projected onto her/him. The colonized is said to be lazy, and the colonizer becomes practically lyrical about it. Moreover,

> the colonized is both wicked and backward, a being who is in some important ways not fully human.[34]

Once again, I would argue that the same sort of reductive practices are applied to immigrants in the extant texts written by the canonical or second- and third-rank American writers, where the Portuguese appear as fictional characters and which I will analyze in chapters two through five. While they were depicted in a prejudicial manner before the middle of the twentieth-century, the non-ethnic or typical Yankee characters in these narratives are often represented as proudly exhibiting success and moral integrity.

Gordon Allport has shown, in *The Nature of Prejudice*, that the media, novels, and popular fiction are responsible for perpetuating stereotypes involving ethnic minorities. In a study focusing on "stock characters" portrayed in the mass media and conducted at Columbia University in 1944 (still within the period of many of the novels discussed in chapters two through five), Allport notes that:

> Popular light fiction was found to be perhaps the most striking offender. Analyzing 185 short stories, it was found that over 90 percent of the characters – nearly all the reputable ones – were Anglo-Saxon (or "Nordics"). But when characters were "menials, racketeers, thieves, gamblers, shady night club proprietors, crooked prize fight managers, such nonsympathetic characters were seldom Anglo-Saxon." And, in general, "the behavior of these fictional characters could easily be used to 'prove' that Negroes are lazy, the Jews wily, the Irish superstitious, and the Italians criminal."
>
> In the analysis of 100 motion pictures involving Negro characters, it was found that in 75 cases the portrayal was

> disparaging and stereotyped. In only 12 cases was the Negro presented in a favorable light as an individual human being.[35]

Unfortunately, I have encountered very few instances where the Portuguese are depicted in a positive manner before the middle of the twentieth-century.

This perception of the ethnic minorities in America is expressed in a yet more powerful and perceptive manner by Werner Sollors as he attempts to trace the origin and development of the word "ethnic" in his study, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. Sollors points out that in the Anglo-American tradition, the

> word retained its quality of defining another people contrastively, and often negatively. In the Christianized context the word "ethnic" (sometimes spelled "hethnic") recurred, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, in the sense of "heathen." Only in the mid-nineteenth century did the more familiar meaning of "ethnic" as "peculiar to a race or nation" reemerge. However, the English language has retained the pagan memory of "ethnic," often secularized in the sense of ethnic as other, as nonstandard, or, in America, as not fully American.… The relationship between ethnicity and American identity in this respect parallels that of pagan superstition and true religion.[36]

In the light of these crucial statements about the location and portrayal of ethnic minorities in American fiction, what is the position the Portuguese occupy in the corpus of American fiction? Where are they located within the margins of American literature? And from where within these margins are they speaking to mainstream American culture? Different from other ethnic groups – for example,

African-Americans, who seem to be at the heart of the discussion on matters of ethnicity within canonical and mainstream discourse – the position of the Portuguese is a rather different one in American fiction. Unlike such seminal texts as, say, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or even Albion Tourgée's *Bricks Without Straw*, which discuss African Americans in terms of their relation to and how they have been affected by mainstream American culture, most of the narratives where the Portuguese appear have not reached such wide audiences as these titles have. Since the Portuguese have been referred to as an "invisible minority" by M. Estellie Smith, this status is further substantiated through the type of narratives in which they tend to appear with most frequency. The allusion to or rather non allusion to the Portuguese has more to do with matters related to issues of canonicity and non-canonicity than with a typical mainstream vs. marginal discourse. In other words, very few canonical American writers include references to the Portuguese or even to characters from this background whereas texts written by second- and third-rank American writers include them more often. While this is due to the fact that there are more second- and third-rank writers and that their writings are seldom read today, this creates the illusion that the Portuguese do not figure in American writings – except in the few canonical pieces I focus on in this study.

In *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, David Theo Goldberg views these dichotomies as centering on issues of power and powerlessness. Silencing the "racial Other," Goldberg contends, is an objective of colonial or dominant discourse:

> Those thus rendered Other are sacrificed to the idealization, excluded from the being of personhood, from social benefits, and from political (self-) representation. Erased in the name of a universality that has no place for them, the subjects of real political economy are denied and silenced, ontologically and epistemologically and morally evicted. The universal claims of Western knowledge, then, colonial or postcolonial, turn necessarily upon the deafening suppression of its various racialized Others into silence.[37]

This is exactly what most of the writers discussed in chapters two through five do with the Portuguese. They do not give them a voice of their own. In other words, their presence is ruled by silence and speechlessness.

So far, I have been able to locate the presence of Portuguese fictional characters in the writings of only six major or canonical American writers. The writers and texts in consideration are 1) Herman Melville's short story titled "The 'Gees," which I will analyze at length and "Benito Cereno" – a text I will not focus on – because it includes only an insignificant reference to the Portuguese; 2) Frank Norris's *The Octopus*; 3) Jack London's *Martin Eden* and *The Valley of the Moon*; 4) John Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat*; 5) Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* and 6) Edith Wharton's unpublished fragment "Beatrice Palmato." In addition, these works are not these writers' most widely known pieces. Thus, the probability of American readers encountering there a Portuguese fictional character is minimal, which further supports the notion of the Portuguese as an "invisible minority." But this notion of invisibility is absent from many fictional works written by non-canonical regional writers, who have

written extensively about the geographical locations where the Portuguese have settled in America – New England, California, and Hawaii. Thus, portrayals of the Portuguese in American writing are mostly found in the texts written by regional local color writers. Therefore, this shift from the center of canonicity and the mainstream to the outer edges of the margins of non-canonical texts also means a very limited body of readers. While many non-canonicals had larger readerships in their day, practically nobody today reads most of the narratives that will be analyzed in detail in this study, a fact that further obscures the Portuguese in history. Needless to say, even within regional fiction many of the Portuguese characters occupy a very limited amount of space. Usually they appear for a few pages in a novel of about three hundred pages. My contention is that this situation does not seem to occur with narratives depicting other ethnic groups in America. This may be due to the total number of Portuguese immigrants in North America – less than a million even if we include Canada – whereas with other groups such as the Greeks, the Armenians, and Turks (who do not appear much in American fiction either), their numbers were much greater. In comparison with the Irish, for example, who emigrated more or less at the same time and who shared some of the same problems of illiteracy, their greater prominence in American literature can be put down to having no language barrier, which facilitated faster integration and economic stability.

If searching for Portuguese fictional characters in the writings of canonical writers is unrewarding, the same could be said for the scholarship dealing with this matter. In other words, one almost looks in vain for research on the issue of the representations of the

Portuguese in American literature. To my knowledge, apart from two published studies, there is no further material on this topic. These two studies are Mary Theresa Silvia Vermette's book, *The Image of the Azorean: Portrayals in Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Writings* (originally a thesis defended in 1975 and published in 1984) and George Monteiro's thirty-two page article entitled "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese" (1979). Obviously, one would not expect these early studies to make extensive use of current theories of ethnicity and postcolonialism; therefore, some of the issues which they address need to be re-approached. At the very outset of her book, Vermette draws our attention to the inconclusive nature of specific sections in her study, especially chapters five ("Writings by the Non-Azorean Portuguese") and six ("Azorean Writings"): "Please note that Chapters 5 and 6, dealing with writings by Portuguese and by Azoreans themselves are intended as preliminary in nature, needing further study by interested scholars."[38] There is also a need to update – and expand – the manner in which Vermette has dealt with the representation of the Portuguese. Most of her discussion focuses on the American representations of the Azoreans, almost exclusively in whaling and travel literature. My assessment of her discussion in these chapters is that a clear picture of the Portuguese in American writings does not emerge, perhaps because she was unaware of the wider contexts in which the Portuguese figure. Because the texts I have chosen to analyze offer a greater variety of activities and themes than writings focusing exclusively on whaling and travel literature, of all the names of writers and works of literature that Vermette alludes to, only six coincide with the pieces I

discuss in detail. And they are: 1) Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*; 2) Eugene O'Neill's play *The Haunted* in *Mourning Becomes Electra*; 3) Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous*[39] ; 4) Wilbur Daniel Steele's short story entitled "Footfalls"; 5) Edward Garside's *Cranberry Red* and 6) John Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat*. As to the Portuguese American writers that I wish to explore in chapter six, Vermette's study does not deal with any of them because these writings have only generated interest since the appearance of her study.

Monteiro's article sheds more light on the representation of the Portuguese in American fiction, but compared to Vermette, the study as a whole is brief and its scope is limited to only a few additional works and writers: Herman Melville's short story "The 'Gees," Frank Norris's *The Octopus*, and Edward McSorley's *The Young McDermott*. These are works that I am particularly interested in as well. In this study, Monteiro also draws our attention to the need for a more thorough study in this field:

> it would be desirable to divide up our consideration of the literary treatment of the Portuguese in America into time periods and geographical regions. Unfortunately, however, the basic bibliographical work on the subject of the Portuguese presence in American literature has not yet been done, and therefore we have not yet unearthed the materials – especially from popular literature – to make a full- scale study possible. What will be presented…must stand, then, as a preliminary, somewhat tentative, survey of what one student of American literature knows about. It should be kept clearly in mind that there is undoubtedly more out there, waiting to be discovered.[40]

What is worth noting is that Leo Pap's book, *The Portuguese in the United States: A Bibliography*, which lists the "popular literature" that Monteiro deems necessary to "make a full-scale study possible," was published in 1976 and Monteiro's article was published three years later. Pap's study cannot be considered a complete listing since it was followed up by a supplement, co-authored by David Vieira, Geoffrey L. Gomes, and Adalino Cabral. What seems evident is that there is still much more work to be done in this domain.

The issues that Vermette and Monteiro deal with merit discussion in terms of the current debate on ethnicity and assimilation in American culture. The focus of both scholars is different from mine, however. That is why I believe a study such as the one under consideration is pertinent and addresses current trends in American scholarship.

As far as the structure and scope of my dissertation are concerned, I concur with Monteiro's suggestion that a study of the Portuguese can be "organized partly around the nature of the treatment the Portuguese receive at the hands of the American writer and partly around each fictional character's profession, trade or occupation."[41] I would argue that a more effective study would be the one that would take into account the geographical regions where the Portuguese settled in the United States so as to assess the obvious differences in treatment they receive at the hands of regionalist writers. In these stories and novels, writers emphasize a special geographical setting and concentrate upon the history, manners, and folkways of the area as these help to shape the lives or behavior of the characters.

As far as the structure of this study is concerned, in chapter two, I shall center my discussion on the issue of scientific racism and the theoretical origins of negative stereotypes, why this was a typical phenomenon of its time, and the ways in which social Darwinism has fostered such a treatment of the ethnic minorities living in America. I will then apply this to the Portuguese immigrant context. The material I shall utilize to support my argument in these chapters has been subdivided according to the geographical regions where the Portuguese settled in the United States. Differences in treatment they receive at the hands of American writers will be brought out in the proper place. The items featuring racial matters which I will analyze are as follows:

California:

Frank Norris, *The Octopus* (1901); Jack London, *Martin Eden* (1909) and *The Valley of the Moon* (1913).

New England:

Herman Melville, "The 'Gees" (1856); Rudyard Kipling, *Captains Courageous* (1897); John Albert Macy, "Aunt Foster's Cranberries" (1904); Agnes Edwards Rothery, *The House by the Windmill* (1923); Martha Stanley, *My Son* (1924); Edward Garside, *Cranberry Red* (1938), and LeGrand Cannon, Jr., *Look to the Mountain* (1942).

Hawaii:

Armine Von Tempski, *Hawaiian Harvest* (1933).

In chapter three, I shall focus on the images of violence associated with the Portuguese, discussing at the same time the reasons why in America there has been a tendency to stereotype those ethnic minorities whose way of life and culture mainstream Americans do not understand. In the case of the Portuguese, it seems much

easier to dismiss them as violent and unpredictable troublemakers, as shown by the following body of writings:

New England:

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "The Haunted Window" (1867); Frank Shay, *Murder on Cape Cod* (1931); Charles Reginald Jackson, *The Lost Weekend* (1944); Wilbur Daniel Steele, "Footfalls" (1946); Edward McSorley, *The Young McDermott* (1949); Anton Myrer, *Evil Under the Sun* (1951).

California:

Janet Lewis, *Against a Darkening Sky* (1943).

In chapter four I shall concentrate on the stereotyping of Portuguese female characters. I will explore the extent to which they are associated with attitudes of sexual licentiousness and play out roles as wantons and temptresses. Too often they are assigned functions as women who lead men astray, especially in works which deal with New England puritanical communities. Perceptions of 'darkness', physical and moral, seem exaggerated when ascribed to an immigrant European people who for the most part embraced conservative social and religious practices. Ronald Takaki tells us in *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America* that this mindset and tradition can be traced all the way back to the English colonizers:

> In an uncanny way, America became a larger theater for *The Tempest*. As it turned out, the play was the thing: English fantasies of the stage were acted out in reality in the New World. As Englishmen made their "errand into the wilderness" of America, they took lands from red Calibans and made black Calibans work for them. Far from English civilization, they had to remind themselves constantly what it meant to be civilized – Christian, rational, sexually

> controlled, and white. And they tried to impute to peoples they called "savages" the instinctual forces they had within themselves. They feared, to use Lawrence's language, the "dark forest" within and the "strange gods" who came forth from the forest into the "little clearing" of their known selves and then went back. As civilized men, they believed they had to have the courage to dominate their passional impulses, and make certain those "dark gods" remained hidden.[42]

But the image of sexual temptation is always there haunting the characters in question. It can be encountered in the following works: Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Drowne's Wooden Image" (1846); William Cummings, *An Island Chronicle* (1924); Elizabeth Eastman, *Sun on their Shoulders* (1934); Victoria Lincoln, *February Hill* (1934); Edith Wharton, "Beatrice Palmato" (1935); Joseph Lincoln, *Out of the Fog* (1940); Ida A. R. Wylie, *Ho, The Fair Wind* (1945); Wilbur Daniel Steele, "The Thinker" (1927) and "For Where is your Fortune Now?" (1946).

In chapter five I discuss a series of images associating the Portuguese with filth, drunkenness, trafficking in alcohol and narcotics, stupidity, and ignorance. Such representations can be seen in the following stories:

Dirty people:

California: Mary Austin, *Isidro* (1905); Ruth Comfort Mitchell, *Water* (1931); John Steinbeck, *Tortilla Flat* (1935).

Alcoholism:

New England: Eugene O'Neill, *The Haunted* in *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931).

Opium trafficking:

Hawaii: Armine Von Tempski, *Dust* (1928).

Bootlegging:

Ruth Eleanor McKee, *After a Hundred Years* (1935; Hawaii); Scott Corbett, *The Sea Fox* (1956; New England).

Stupidity, ignorance:

Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; on the Azores Islands).

In chapter six I shall focus on Portuguese or Portuguese American writers who either view themselves as immigrants or assimilated individuals. I will explore the challenges imposed by a new country and culture, seeing these matters through the immigrants' own eyes. I shall also distinguish between Portuguese American literature written in English (as is the case with the writings of Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz) and a form of Portuguese immigrant literature in Portuguese (as is the case with the writings of José Rodrigues Miguéis and Jorge de Sena), which one school of thought would argue as American literature in Portuguese. These issues are dealt with in the following works: a few short stories by José Rodrigues Miguéis; a few poems by Jorge de Sena; Alfred Lewis, *Aguarelas Florentinas e Outras Poesias* (1986); Thomas J. Braga, *Portingales* (1981); Frank Gaspar, *The Holyoke* (1988), *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death* (1994), *A Field Guide to the Heavens* (1999), and *Leaving Pico* (1999); and Katherine Vaz, *Saudade* (1994) and *Fado & Other Stories* (1997).

The writers discussed in this chapter explore such matters as what it means to be a Portuguese or Portuguese American adjusting to the American way of life and culture. And this viewpoint is shared by myself who, from

the first-hand experience, is also caught between both cultures, languages, and ways of life. My own position – as someone who has had the opportunity to live and study for many years in the United States and in Portugal, who considers English and Portuguese as his native languages, who can claim citizenship of both countries, and who is torn between both cultures – is that the representations of the Portuguese by American writers discussed in chapters two through five are highly offensive and deeply questionable.

As Gail Ching-Liang Low has shown in *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism*, what we will never know, however, is whether the dominant culture in a colonial situation or, I would argue, in a multicultural society is capable of seeing itself reflected in the mirror:

> One of the most important tropes in colonial fiction is that of the mirror. In these stories of Haggard's, the significance of the Other lies in the fact that he is symbolic of something that the Western mind must learn about itself. The journey across space is nothing less than a surreal journey into the self: the savage reveals the truth of the white man's self, if he only has eyes to see it.[43]

With the advent of multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and ethnic studies, the reflection of the dominant culture in the postcolonial mirror has changed. While the portrayals by the dominant, mainstream culture have diminished with, for example, the advent of the Civil Rights and the Feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, writers from ethnic minorities (for example, Louise Erdrich, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison) have gained positions of

prominence and are now regarded as amongst America’s finest contemporary writers.

Notes

[1] Quoted in the prologue to David Vieira; Geoffrey L. Gomes and Adalino Cabral, *The Portuguese in the United States (First Supplement)* (Durham, NH: International Conference Group on Portugal/University of New Hampshire, 1989. See also M. Estellie Smith, "Portuguese Enclaves: The Invisible Minority," *Social and Cultural Identity*, ed. Thomas K. Fitzgerald (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1974) [Proceedings of the Southern Anthropological Society, 8: 81-91].

[2] Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1993.), p. 17.

[3] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (London: Picador, 1993), pp. 9-10.

[4] Morrison, p. 16.

[5] Morrison, p. 90.

[6] Morrison, p. 47.

[7] Morrison, p. 63.

[8] Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), p. 72.

[9] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 181.

[10] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), pp. 21-22.

[11] hooks, p. 23.

[12] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory," *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 20-21.

[13] Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism," *The Location of Culture*, pp. 70; 72.

[14] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 95.

[15] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1999), p. xi.

[16] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 175.

[17] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington (London, Penguin, 1990), pp. 31-32.

[18] William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987), pp. 86-87.

[19] Young, p. 5.

[20] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), p. 3.

[21] Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge UP, 1998), p. 203.

[22] Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 38-45.

[23] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1988), p. 271.

[24] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1999), p. 10.

[25] Satya P. Mohanty, "Colonial Legacies, Multicultural Futures: Relativism, Objectivity, and the Challenge of Otherness," *PMLA* 110 1 (1995), p. 114.
[26] Mohanty, p. 110.
[27] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), p. 109.
[28] Ato Quayson, *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 2000), p. 69.
[29] Rey Chow, *Ethics after Idealism: Theory – Culture – Ethnicity – Reading* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1998), p. 3.
[30] Chow, pp. 11-12.
[31] Mary V. Dearborn, *Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), pp. 4-5.
[32] Boelhower, p. 3.
[33] Nancy Hartsock, "Rethinking Modernism: Minority vs. Majority Theories," ed. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), p. 22.
[34] Hartsock, pp. 21-22.
[35] Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 200-1.
[36] Sollors, p. 25.
[37] David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), p. 151.
[38] Mary Theresa Silvia Vermette, *The Image of the Azorean: Portrayals in Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Writings* (Angra do Heroísmo, Azores: Instituto Histórico da Ilha Terceira, 1984), p. 9.
[39] Readers may be surprised to encounter a discussion of a British writer in a dissertation on American literature. My reason to include it is the following: *Captains Courageous* is about the Gloucester fishing industry and dates back to the short period when Kipling lived in America.
[40] George Monteiro, "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese," Proceedings of the Fourth National *Portuguese Conference: The International Year of the Child* (Providence, RI: The Multilingual/Multicultural Resource and Training Center, 1979), pp. 167-8.
[41] Monteiro, p. 168.
[42] Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America*, Revised ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), p. 12.
[43] Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skin/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 66.

CHAPTER TWO

SCIENTIFIC RACISM AND THE ORIGINS OF ANTI-PORTUGUESE STEREOTYPES

In this chapter I shall analyze the ways in which mid-nineteenth-century American ethnologists used their research so as to postulate a scientific basis for racial discrimination, how social Darwinism shaped mainstream American society, and how it sped the debate on race in American society and letters at the end of the nineteenth century. As a cultural phenomenon, this ideology is reflected in both canonical and non-canonical American writings; and in this chapter, I am interested in seeing how it has been applied to a particular ethnic group – the Portuguese –, in specific American writings where the Portuguese appear as fictional characters. I shall try to argue that a rhetoric on racial matters like the aforementioned one pervades American writing as a whole. Because of my particular interest, I shall center my discussion exclusively on the geographical locations where the Portuguese have traditionally settled in the United States – New England, California, and Hawaii – since these regions offer a wide range of texts for examination. But before assessing how American writers were shaped by prevailing theories of race in their portrayals of the Portuguese in New England, California, and Hawaii, one must first address the current scholarly work on issues related to race and social Darwinism, and how many dark-skinned peoples have been lumped into the category formerly known as the "Negro." As we shall see, the

Portuguese who emigrated to the United States of America after the middle of the nineteenth-century were subject to the settler's gaze – similar to the colonial gaze as postulated by Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists – even if they had traveled there of their own free will. The literary texts where Portuguese fictional characters appear reflect it as well. Before analyzing these texts, my goal is to stress how the Portuguese were not the only ethnic minority to be represented in such a way. Other Southern Europeans such as the Italians experienced a similar treatment and the same could be said for peoples from other latitudes such as the Irish and Jews. From the outset, America had problems with difference and Otherness. One must not forget, however, that the Portuguese were colonizers as well and subject to the same prejudices and colonial gaze. A brief comparison with these ethnic groups may help us to better understand the Portuguese experience in America.

As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has shown, in nineteenth and most of twentieth-century America, "Race, along with all sorts of other unseemly or untoward notions about the composition of the literary work of art, was bracketed or suspended."[1] In other words, literary critics avoided discussing issues of race in a given work of literature since these themes were considered taboo. Although ethnic minorities have seen their value and efforts recognized in the last two or three decades, Gates has said the following: "To declare that race is a trope, however is not to deny its palpable force in the life of every African-American who tries to function every day in a still very racist America."[2] David Theo Goldberg has also called our attention to how the United States has been obsessed by issues of race. This country, Goldberg

maintains, has been constructed on race. Societies such as these,

> for whom identities and identifications have readily been established in racialized terms, that have a long history of racial creation and discrimination, societies – to use Stuart Hall's well-known phrase – that are 'structured in dominance' will more readily be open to exclusionary extensions than those societies not so historically defined. A society deeply class divided and historically racialized will be more likely in times of economic strain to abandon commitment to assisting the deeply distressed.[3]

As I shall argue when discussing the fictional writings, the first generations of Portuguese immigrants – like other ethnic minorities – have been excluded from the mainstream and have even been ostracized by it as well. Because of this and other factors such as the language barrier, the Portuguese also chose to be apart. "Racism," Goldberg has also noted, "is considered necessarily to involve the domination and subordination of those groups deemed inferior."[4] When addressing the issue of domination, this scholar offers some reasons why racist attitudes are adopted by the ethnic group that sees itself as superior:

> At the very least…some exclusions may be for the sake of nothing else than holding the racially different at a distance. The reasons for such exclusion may be various. They have been made to include cultural preservation, or maintaining the size of relative economic distributions and benefits of the included, or fear of the unknown, and so forth.[5]

Goldberg has also reminded us of the dangers involved in racial stereotyping, noting that:

> racist thinking always functions by way of stereotyping. It is assumed that individuals are squeezed into hard and fast categories by the rigid application to them of racial stereotypes. Racial stereotyping is taken to overgeneralize from a narrow data base of empirically perceived racial characteristics to their assumed status as core traits of the alien racial stock…. Thus, racial stereotypes are defined as overgeneralizations from persons' experiences of members of another race. Stereotypical or 'category-based' identification is considered to be fundamentally inconsistent with the 'individuating processes' of identification. Individual members of a race are stereotypically ascribed racial characteristics they may in fact fail to reflect. Treatment of all racial members is enjoined on the basis of possessing these characteristics, and so those members who lack the relevant traits will be treated – perhaps adversely - on grounds inapplicable to them….

Goldberg goes on to note that:

> every form of racial stereotyping suffers the fallacy of universalizing from particular characteristics or from individual members…. The argument underlying the first claim is that racists fail to notice the extent of individual differences in respect to a given property (e.g., ability, or intelligence, or culture) within the group under observation or that they deny the degree of overlap in respect to such traits between members of the observed group and those of the racist's own…. Where available evidence conflicts with their stereotypes, racists may be led to distort the evidence – via selection, accentuation, and interpretation – and thereby to corroborate the applicability of the stereotype at issue.[6]

As I propose to show, the Portuguese have been subject to this type of practice and, at times, attributed the erroneous categories and classifications that Goldberg is here alluding to.

Robert J. C. Young has reiterated the belief that culture, science, and the arts have supported the existence of racism:

> Racial theory cannot be separated from its own historical moment: it was developed at a particular era of British and European colonial expansion in the nineteenth century which ended in the Western occupation of nine-tenths of the surface territory of the globe. There is an obvious connection between racial theories of white superiority and the justification for that expansion, which raises questions about the complicity of science as well as culture: racism knows no division between the sciences and the arts…. Race, therefore, like ethnicity, has always been a cultural, as well as a political, scientific and social construction. The imbrication between them is such as to make them interdependent and inseparable. This can be seen particularly in the nineteenth century in the way in which racialized thinking permeated and was diffused throughout the entire academic establishment. Most areas of culture were, implicitly or explicitly, defined academically in racial categories that themselves echoed and mimicked the methods according to which academics divided up and classified the world. In the nineteenth century racial theory, substantiated and 'proved' by various forms of science such as comparative and historical philology, anatomy, anthropometry (including osteometry, craniology, craniometry and pelvimetry), physiology, physiognomy and phrenology, became in turn endemic not just to other forms of science, such as biology and natural history, to say nothing of palaeontology, psychology, zoology and

> sexology, but was also used as a general category of understanding that extended to theories of anthropology, archaeology, classics, ethnology, geography, geology, folklore, history, language, law, literature and theology, and thus dispersed from almost every academic discipline to permeate definitions of culture and nation.[7]

Although there is nothing new in, or, one suspects, conquerable about racial prejudice (canonical literature throws up many examples, of which the best known is *Othello*), scientific racism is a particular manifestation of the nineteenth-century. It pertains to a time marked by the ideology of Empire and of the era when Victorian England viewed itself as "the workshop of the world" and was looking around the world for markets for its goods. In America, this mindset was paramount during and after the Spanish-American war.

Melville's "The 'Gees," for example, is a story worth considering in the light of Young's position on how these prevailing theories of race are fleshed out in literature. In Young's words,

> Culture has always marked cultural difference by producing the other; it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it: the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has always been racially constructed.[8]

Arguing that this is also a political issue, bell hooks is of the opinion that from slavery on – and in the specific case of African Americans – "control over images is central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination."[9] Empowered to re-create the world according to their views, the negative light in which the majority of

mainstream writers discussed in this study have portrayed their Portuguese American characters is a substantiation of what hooks is arguing. hooks has also noted that:

> Most folks in this society do not want to openly admit that "blackness" as sign primarily evokes in the public imagination of whites (and all the other groups who learn that one of the quickest ways to demonstrate one's kinship within a white supremacist order is by sharing racist assumptions) hatred and fear.[10]

The avoidance of African Americans by other ethnic groups is an issue that Noel Ignatiev has noted in his work, *How the Irish Became White*, especially when analyzing the interaction between nineteenth-century Irish immigrants and African Americans. In this study, Ignatiev has shown that the Irish in America have been seen by nineteenth-century mainstream Americans as possessing a dark complexion. The Azoreans, as we shall see further in this chapter when analyzing *The House by the Windmill*, have also been referred to as "black" and that this has been a reason for being looked down upon. Because the Azoreans were aware of these racial stigmas, they, in turn, resisted interacting with Capeverdeans in New England. This attitude, however, did not prevent the Azoreans and Capeverdeans from being confused with one another.

Since the very foundation of the nation, mainstream America expressed fear towards Otherness. In his discussion of Winthrop Jordan, David R. Roediger has shown in *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* that "the roots of American racism before Jamestown, showing that the animus toward things and people who were dark, was already a powerful force in the British worldview."[11] Roediger further adds that racism

began to thrive during the years America was being colonized. He supports this assertion through another seminal work in the field:

> George Rawick, in his enormously suggestive conclusion to *From Sundown to Sunup*, argues that racism grew so strongly among the Anglo-American bourgeoisie during the years America was colonized because blackness came to symbolize that which the accumulating capitalist had given up, but still longed for. Increasingly adopting an ethos that attacked holidays, spurned contact with nature, saved time, bridled sexuality, separated work from the rest of life and postponed gratification, profit-minded Englishmen and Americans cast Blacks as their former selves. Racism, according to Rawick, served to justify slavery but also did more than that. Racists still pined for older ways, and even still practiced older styles of life, guiltily. All of the old habits so recently discarded by whites adopting capitalist values came to be fastened onto Blacks. As Rawick wonderfully puts it, Englishmen and profit-minded settlers in America 'met the West African as a reformed sinner meets a comrade of his previous debaucheries.' The racist, like the reformed sinner, creates 'a pornography of his former life…. In order to insure that he will not slip back into the old ways or act out half-suppressed fantasies, he must see a tremendous difference between his reformed self and those whom he formerly resembled.' Blackness and whiteness were thus created together.[12]

Roediger argues that this is due to the changes in the American economy, especially in how capitalist labor discipline dramatically reshaped the lives of American workers during the period between the War of 1812 to the Civil War of 1861-65.

In his discussion of hybridity and the various nuances of human complexion, Jack D. Forbes has stated the following in *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*:

> During the summer of 1981 newspapers in the United States carried stories about 'blacks' rioting in British cities. What they failed to tell their readers was that in Britain today the term 'black' is applied not only to Africans or West Indians (of whatever shade or mixture) but also to people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and even to Latin Americans. (For example, a very light-skinned Chilean lady refugee living in Oxford was surprised to be referred to as a 'black.' Her dark hair, Spanish accent, and immigrant status had caused her to become 'black', at least to some English contacts.[13]

Allport has also asserted that "A person with dark brown skin will activate whatever concept of Negro is dominant in our mind. If the dominant category is one composed of negative attitudes and beliefs we will automatically avoid him, or adopt whichever habit of rejection is most available to us."[14] This has been a typical attitude of mainstream Americans when dealing with Otherness, whenever darker complexions like those of the Portuguese were evidenced. Allport has also maintained that social "Darwinism has been constructed as an argument for racism and as a justification for prejudice."[15] In addition, this theorist is of the opinion that consensus on the issue of race has not yet been reached and doubts whether it will ever be:

> Before we can hope to establish just what racial differences exist there must be agreement on the number and identity of the races of mankind. Unfortunately, anthropologists are not of one mind about

> the matter. Their classifications range from two to two hundred races. Ordinarily at least three are named: the Mongoloid, the Caucasoid, the Negroid. Coon, Garn, and Birdsell prefer to call these "basic stocks" and view them as groupings in terms of climatic conditions. The Mongol physique is adapted to live in extreme cold; the Negroid to extreme heat; and the Caucasoid physique is adapted to neither extreme of temperature.[16]

Among other factors, America has been shaped by race, but in the most recent decades it has made enormous efforts to eradicate the injustices created by slavery, its Ku Klux Klan subculture during and after the Reconstruction, and the racial segregation which officially ended with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Like numerous ethnic minorities, the Portuguese, too, were indirectly affected by these historical realities. It can be imagined that an essentially agrarian and fishing immigrant population would have achieved comparatively little cultural visibility in mid-and late-nineteenth-century America. Furthermore, even if greater numbers of them had appeared and a wider dispersal throughout the American heartland had taken place, it is doubtful whether their particular forms of folk culture would have been recognized as significant outside their own communities for the hundred years or so following their arrival. Thus, and as a small instance of this phenomenon, London's ignorance of the fact that the ukulele he refers to in *The Valley of the Moon* was introduced into Hawaii and California by the Portuguese is entirely characteristic of his time. Only recently in America has it been possible to acknowledge this kind of contribution thanks to the new openness in ethnic studies, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism. In the introduction to *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of*

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean put this issue quite eloquently: "If we can learn racism, we can unlearn it, and unlearn it precisely because our assumptions about race represent a closing down of creative possibility, a loss of other options, other knowledge."[17]

The Portuguese were not the only ethnic minority to be subject to prevailing theories of race and what came along with them, namely discrimination, violence, and rejection. Jacobson has argued that Southern Europeans only became Caucasian over time. Anglo-Saxons, who were dominant in government and business, asserted their Caucasian background automatically. The "vicissitude of Jewish whiteness," Jacobson argues,

> is intimately related to the racial odysseys of myriad other groups – the Irish, Armenians, Italians, Poles, Syrians, Greeks, Ruthenians, Sicilians, Finns, and a host of others – who came ashore in the United States as "free white persons" under the terms of reigning naturalization law, yet whose racial credentials were not equivalent to those of the Anglo-Saxon "old stock" who laid proprietary claim to the nation's founding documents and hence to its stewardship. All of these groups became Caucasians only over time; and all of them, like Roth's fictional Caucasian/Semite, faced certain challenges to their racial pedigrees along the way.[18]

It is unfortunate that such a recent work on European emigration to America does not allude to the Portuguese or even their experience of assimilation in America. It is studies such as these that perpetuate the Portuguese "invisibility" already referred to in the previous chapter. "Signs" of the Portuguese presence, I shall argue, are scattered in many parts of the country even if

not everyone notices them. Jacobson is also of the opinion that the "contest over whiteness – its definition, its internal hierarchies, its proper boundaries, and its rightful claimants – has been critical to American culture throughout the nation's history, and it has been a fairly untidy affair."[19] Jacobson ends his study asking a provocative question: "Are Jews/Italians/Greeks/Slavs/ Portuguese/Letts 'white'?" In America, they have been seen as "inbetween peoples."[20]

Of all the Southern Europeans who emigrated to America, the Italians were the ones who had the most in common with the Portuguese: Catholicism, a common Latin heritage dating back to the Roman empire's occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, and a language barrier. When discussing *Soul of an Immigrant* (1921) by Constantine Panunzio, especially the narrator's evolution from Italian to immigrant to American, Fred L. Gardaphé has noted the following:

> Aware that Northern Italians were usually better received in America than their darker-skinned southern counterparts, Panunzio stresses his "southern" roots to make a case for the potential of the southern Italian, who, for the most part, had immigrated under quite different conditions… Panunzio's autobiography was written at a time when the United States Congress was considering ways to stop the flood of immigrants from southern Europe. He completed it sixteen days before Congress enacted the Emergency Quota Act on May 19, 1921, and three years before passage of the National Origins Act (1924), which limited immigration from southern Europe to a tiny percentage of the immigrants already in the United States.[21]

What this shows is that at this time Italians with a darker complexion were fewer in America. These immigration

acts were intended to curb Southern European entrance into the United States. Gardaphé has also outlined in *Italian Signs, American Streets: The Evolution of Italian American Narrative* the stereotypes appended to the Italians:

> By 1930 various stereotypes of the Italian immigrant in American culture had been established as the myths through which the Italian American presence would be read. If the Italian was not seen as a gangster or a knife-wielding, mustachioed foreigner who had taken away American jobs from the earlier immigrants, then he was depicted as "a restless, roving creature, who dislikes the confinement and restraint of mill and factory," "very slow to take to American ways," "volatile, and incapable of effective team work."… In spite of the quotas established on Italian immigration in the mid-1920s, restrictionists in Congress pointed to the Italians as a major reason for unemployment and crime. Nativists argued for total exclusion and even wholesale deportation of Italians. If these views were not enough to marginalize Italians, the rise of fascism in Italy during this same period renewed suspicion of and hostility toward the Italian in America. Before the 1930s much of what the Italian had to say about his or her situation in America appeared only in Italian-language newspapers, and therefore had little, if any, effect on an English-reading American public.[22]

When discussing the Italian heritage of the twins in Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Sundquist has the following to say concerning America's attitudes towards the Italians in the 1880s and 1890s:

> In anti-immigrationist thought of the 1880s and 1890s, Italians were widely believed, on the basis of their "color," their reputed criminal activities, and their comparatively low standard of living, to be among the most degraded of immigrants, and their willingness to mix

with blacks brought forth excited nativist charges that new immigrants would further "mongrelize" America's racial stock. The Italian twins' blurring of the color line has an even more specific force in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Besides satirizing the aura of nobility and culture that surrounds the gentleman twins, Twain also capitalized on the common stereotype of Italians as criminals especially adept in the use of knives and prone to impassioned violence and vengeful assassination. The climax of such anti-Italian feeling, in fact, came in New Orleans just the year before Homer Plessy set out to test the segregated train car law. When a jury failed to convict a group of Italians on trial in 1891 for the murder of a New Orleans police superintendent, allegedly caused by his efforts to bring Mafia members to justice, a rioting mob of several thousand attacked the prison and lynched eleven of the suspects. The case created a national sensation, with the prosecution complaining that it was impossible to get convictions against the Mafia because of their strict code of honor, while politicians and periodicals lined up to defend or attack the mob's makeshift execution of the "assassins" and the atmosphere of lawlessness and "bloody duels" that some said had made it possible. Most important, the lynchings ignited a diplomatic crisis when Secretary of State James Blaine refused to grant redress to the families of the victims, some of whom were Italian citizens, or guarantee the indictment of the mob (President Benjamin Harrison finally offered redress some months later). The administration's logical but unsatisfactory contention was that the controversy came about because of the Italian government's inability to understand the "dual nature of our government" – that is, its division into federal and state jurisdiction. The incident grew briefly into a serious war scare and dramatized the entire question

> of immigration as few incidents had since the sensational Haymarket Affair.[23]

Jacobson has also noted that Italians in the South of the United States were not seen as whites. In addition, Southern white supremacists were bothered by the Italians' mutual understanding of and getting along with blacks. Immigrants, this scholar contends, who

> were white enough to enter the country as "free white persons" could also lose that status by their association with nonwhite groups. This was precisely the case with Italians in New Orleans. In certain regions of the Jim Crow South Italians occupied a racial middle ground within the otherwise unforgiving, binary caste system of white-over-black. Politically Italians were indeed white enough for naturalization and for the ballot, but socially they represented a problem population at best. Their distance from a more abiding brand of social whiteness (what Benjamin Franklin might have meant by "lovely white") was marked by the common epithet "dago" – a word whose decidedly racial meaning was widely recognized at the time and was underscored by the more obviously racial "white nigger."
>
> It was not just that Italians did not look white to certain social arbiters, but that they did not *act* white. In New Orleans Italian immigrants were stigmatized in the post-Civil War period because they accepted economic niches (farm labor and small tenancy, for instance) marked as "black" by local custom, and because they lived and worked comfortably among blacks…. Italian immigrants ran further afoul of white supremacists in the region when they "fraternized with local blacks and even intermarried," and when – like blacks – they supported Republican and Populist candidates instead of the party of white supremacy. From being "like Negroes" to being "as bad as Negroes" was but a trifling step in dominant Southern

> thinking; and hence in states like Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia, Italians were known to have been lynched for alleged crimes, or even for violating local racial codes by "fraternizing" with blacks.[24]

One would assume that the ability to express oneself in the English language would make it easier for the Irish to be more readily accepted by mainstream Americans. This was not true, however. In *How the Irish Became White*, Noel Ignatiev has shown how the Irish in America were desirous of acceptance by mainstream nativists. In order for this to materialize, they used labor unions, violence against blacks, endorsement of white supremacist values, did not reject jobs often dismissed as appropriate only for blacks, and used slavery and anti-Abolitionist rhetoric so as to be accepted by the dominant WASP culture. In other words, they endeavored to pave the way for their entry into the "white race." When the Irish began to emigrate to the United States during the Hungry Forties and settled in, for example, Philadelphia, Ignatiev notes the reaction of the Protestant Americans who constituted the dominant class in this city:

> As large numbers of working-class and disorderly (from a bourgeois standpoint the two terms were synonymous) Irish settled in Philadelphia, there arose a certain opposition to them among the existing population. The hostility had several origins and manifestations, which are ordinarily grouped under the heading of nativism. First was snobbery, the disdain of the members of an upper class for their social inferiors; this was shared by many who, while not themselves members of the upper class, aped its manners. Second was partisan: the Irish were Democrats while the upper class, except for a few black sheep like Charles Jared Ingersoll and Richard Vaux, was

> Whig. Third was doctrinal: most of the Irish were Catholic, and therefore suspect as Mary-worshippers and idolaters. Fourth was historical: the Catholic Church was for many Protestants the Whore of Babylon, an institution they viewed (not without cause) as incompatible with republican principles. Fifth was economic: native-born workers, primarily artisans but including others as well, feared that the Irish were degrading the conditions of labor. Sixth was political: as the slavery controversy moved to center stage, Irish support for the slave power came increasingly to vex those who sought to end its sway over the Union. And of course under the heading of what may be called moral there was the temperance issue. In actuality the various causes of anti-Irish feeling cannot be separated so conveniently as a simple list implies, but it will be useful to bear the distinctions among them in mind….[25]

In my view, this quote bears out the argument that resistance to immigration is not just rooted in racial theories. There are other reasons as well. The road to Irish "whiteness" was very irregular since the Irish were discriminated against repeatedly. Roediger has also noted how the stereotypes appended to the Irish parallel those attributed to blacks in the United States:

> *Low-browed* and *savage*, *grovelling* and *bestial*, *lazy* and *wild*, *simian* and *sensual* – such were the adjectives used by many native-born Americans to describe the Catholic Irish 'race' in the years before the Civil War…. A variety of writers, particularly ethnologists, praised Anglo-Saxon virtues as the bedrock of liberty and derided the 'Celtic race'. Some suggested that the Irish were part of a separate caste or a 'dark' race, possibly originally African…. There were good reasons – environmental and historical, not biological – for comparing African-Americans and the Irish. The two groups

> often lived side by side in the teeming slums of American cities of the 1830s. They both did America's hard work, especially in domestic service and the transportation industry. Both groups were poor and often vilified. Both had experienced oppression and been wrenched from a homeland.[26]

Compared to the Italians and the Irish, Jewish people seem to have been more tolerated in America as Karen Brodkin has shown in *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America*. This does not necessarily mean, however, that they were not the victims of similar practices as the ones endured by the Italians, the Irish, and the Portuguese. Brodkin contends that the general persecution or beating up of ethnic minorities in the United States was a given before World War II:

> It is certainly true that the United States has a history of anti-Semitism and of beliefs that Jews are members of an inferior race. But Jews were hardly alone. American anti-Semitism was part of a broader pattern of late-nineteenth-century racism against all southern and eastern European immigrants, as well as against Asian immigrants, not to mention African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexicans. These views justified all sorts of discriminatory treatment, including closing the doors, between 1882 and 1927, to immigration from Europe and Asia. This picture changed radically after World War II.[27]

Brodkin has also pointed to the reasons for the classification of Southern and Eastern Europeans as "not-quite-white" in America. The Census, she claims,

> carved out a special niche for racialized Europeans – they were not part of "Negroes and other races," but neither were they the same as "native" whites. It created a set of off-white categories by

> distinguishing not only immigrant from "native" whites by country, but also native whites of native white parentage and native whites of immigrant (or mixed) parentage (i.e., children of immigrants). Because the bulk of northwest European immigration was at least a generation earlier, those of northwestern European ancestry would more likely be classified as "natives," or children of native-born parents, while immigrants and children of immigrants would contain mainly more recent immigrants, or those from eastern and southern Europe. Thus, in distinguishing immigrants/children of immigrants (southern and eastern Europeans) from "native" (northwestern Europeans), the Census mirrored the racial distinctions of the social Darwinists, xenophobes, and eugenicists….Eastern and southern European immigrants were thus "seen" by the state and by popular culture as belonging to races that were less than fully white. Phrases like "not-quite-white," "not-bright-white," or perhaps "conditionally white" more accurately describe this range of racialization.[28]

As the following quote suggests, the prevailing theories of race in America and their application to particular cases became terribly oversimplified in the late nineteenth-century:

> At this point the triracial system of red, white, and black became somewhat conflated with a binary black-and-white one, as Asian, and to a much smaller extent European, immigrants came to be seen as similar to black workers *and* to native Americans. The confusion was evident in arguments that Asians or Mexicans, and occasionally Europeans, were so foreign, so savage, and such dangerous criminals that they could never be assimilated into American culture. When immigrants were seen as a necessary part of that working class which did the degraded and driven labor, they were constructed with

> stereotypes of blackness – stupid, shiftless, sexual, unable to defer gratification.[29]

After this introductory incursion into the prevailing theories of race and popular attitudes in America, social Darwinism, and how certain ethnic minorities have been viewed in America, my next goal is to discuss the Portuguese experience in the United States of America. This preliminary material will function as a sort of pool which I shall tap into so as to support the overall argument in this chapter: that Portuguese immigrants as represented in a good amount of American writings have been the victims of racial prejudice. Whereas in some texts they are victimized by authors, in others, however, they are shown as victims by authors. In most of the works under consideration, the Portuguese are an American underclass – as such they are labeled for their poverty as much as for their ethnicity. As an underclass which is perceived to be largely uneducated and having to make its way by manual labor, it is, therefore, subject to condescension on the part of wealthier, better-educated and more established opinion. In other words, writers such as Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, and Frank Norris – to name a few – adopt a condescending view of the Portuguese fictional characters in some of their writings because of these immigrants' poverty and social status. And yet these immigrants – like all other immigrants – were eager to stay on in an environment often hostile towards Otherness.

The Portuguese/Capeverdean Harpooners in the Light of Scientific Racism: A Case Study

The earliest fictional representation of the Portuguese or – as we shall see ahead – Capeverdeans to be discussed in the light of mid-nineteenth-century theories on race was, to my knowledge, Melville's short story "The 'Gees." This sketch shows Melville's fascination with issues of race and miscegenation, aspects which were central in his time. By drawing these fictional Portuguese/Capeverdeans, Melville wishes to take part in and, in a way, respond to the current theories on race and hybridity postulated by Josiah C. Nott and George R. Gliddon in their co-authored work, *Types of Mankind*. By eschewing the typical pattern of looking down upon Portuguese of Capeverdean extraction, Melville casts a sympathetic glance at ethnic minorities while warning mid-nineteenth-century American citizens of the dangers involved in the adherence to such theories.

I shall also start my region-by-region analysis with New England, more specifically with this story from the *Piazza Tales*. This is a piece about the Nantucket whaling industry and one in which Melville seems to be parodying scientific racism. In this elliptical and enigmatic tale, Melville is horrified by mid-nineteenth century discussions of race and how they could be manipulated for perverse purposes. They eventually evolved into social Darwinism at the turn of the century. As a case study, Melville's piece may be measured against the discourse on race in the other texts offered for analysis in this chapter. As we shall see, Melville's piece sets my agenda

for the debate on race even if it disrupts the geographical sequence I have proposed to follow.

Well before the ascendancy of social Darwinism at the turn of the century (a theory prompted by an application of Charles Darwin's theory in *On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, published in 1859, that viewed certain Nordic ethnic groups as more fit and advanced), racist attitudes towards other ethnic groups – as well as towards the Portuguese – existed in America. To my knowledge, the first instance I have encountered where such a discourse is applied to the Portuguese in California takes place at the end of the nineteenth-century; in New England, however, it was well rooted in the 1850s. Even though social Darwinism became more widespread in America, racial prejudice and intolerance were already well implanted in the American consciousness well before Frank Norris's and Jack London's applications of it.

A powerful strain of intolerance in American society and culture has been a trait of mainstream Americans in general and can be traced all the way back to the old New England stock. For instance, the Plymouth Plantation Founding Fathers rebelled against Thomas Morton's skylarking with the Native Americans at Merrymount – and this because of his rejection of their puritanical, oppressive outlook on life. What this episode indicates is that from the very beginning, the British colonies in America were not receptive of Otherness and a plurality of perspectives. In other words, the Pilgrims were not tolerant individuals. Representations of the Founding Fathers in older textbooks used in American elementary classrooms, especially around Thanksgiving, tended to mythologize them while omitting negative references. As

they, themselves, were fleeing from Cromwell's intolerance in seventeenth-century England and were desirous to found "the city upon the hill," they believed that their social model (embodied in the spirit of the Mayflower Compact and other documents), should be imitated by others elsewhere and, eventually, hailed as the ultimate experiment in theocratic government. Unfortunately, tolerance was not one of the concepts holding the Massachusetts Bay Colony together. In "The 'Gees," Melville is testing whether this intolerant impulse was still alive in mid-nineteenth century America, in a specific geographical setting – New England – where intolerance has been passed on from one generation to the other. Before some of these particulars are dealt with in this story, a brief incursion into the debate on Melville's writing of the story might shed some extra light on this piece of writing, seldom read among the enormous body of writings Melville produced.

Although not sufficiently acknowledged, the Portuguese (more specifically the Azoreans and the mulattos from the Cape Verde islands) contributed enormously to the American whaling industry during the nineteenth-century. It was this activity which drew the Azoreans to this country and that explains why they initially settled in Massachusetts, where the whaling centers – New Bedford and Nantucket – were located. This is the background – along with his own experiences as a seafaring man – that Melville draws upon to contextualize his criticism of racism in his short story "The 'Gees," which he often witnessed on board the whaling ships. While these attitudes do not emerge in *Moby-Dick* when alluding to the Azoreans, in this short story, however, the Capeverdeans (erroneously referred to as the Portuguese[30]) are not exempt from such a treatment. The story deals with

an uglier side of America's sea captains, which was manifested during those long whaling voyages that Melville took part in for a spell. In "The 'Gees" Melville invites us to enter the mindset of certain sea captains, the ones in command of this enterprise for which these Portuguese and Capeverdean harpooners and sailors have hardly received any credit. The only recognition they were ever granted, Melville suggests, was a touch of New England intolerance.

Although Melville does not explain the origins of the Capeverdeans, the fictional 'Gees in Melville's story are representative of the matings between the Portuguese colonizers and African blacks, which resulted in a hybrid breed. As Forbes has noted when distinguishing between a *mulato* and a *mestiço*, "a tendency existed by the 1590s to distinguish between part-African and part-Indian mixed-bloods by the selective use of *mulato* and *mestiço*. Another Italian merchant, Carleti, noted at the Cabo Verde Islands that the Portuguese there were intermixing with *nere* (blacks) and *mulatte*."[31] The issue of hybridity has received much scholarly attention within postcolonial, cultural, and ethnic studies. Young, for example, explains that the term "was scarcely in use until the nineteenth [century]." Whereas "'Hybrid' is the nineteenth century's word," Young notes that "it has become our own again. In the nineteenth century it was used to refer to a physiological phenomenon; in the twentieth century it has been reactivated to describe a cultural one." Young also notes that:

> A hybrid is defined by Webster in 1828 as 'a mongrel or mule; an animal or plant, produced from the mixture of two species'. Its first recorded use in the nineteenth century to denote the crossing of people

> of different races is given in the OED as 1861. Although this is certainly too late (it was used by Josiah Nott in 1843), this date is certainly significant. Prichard had already used the term 'hybrid' in the context of the question of human fertility as early as 1813. However, since the whole point of his argument was to deny that humans were different species, he never directly used the term 'hybrid' to describe humans, speaking instead of 'mixed' or 'intermediate' races. Its appearance between 1843 and 1861, therefore, marks the rise of the belief that there could be such a thing as a human hybrid.[32]

Melville's story, published during this period, was his way of focusing on the theme of human hybridity as well as an intriguing literary representation of the issue at stake. Hybridity was an undeniable reality in America even if most of its citizens preferred to remain silent about it. His account of the 'Gees in the whaling centers in Nantucket and New Bedford, Massachusetts, which Melville gives in his short story of the same name, relates closely to the case of mulattos in the Southern plantations, and could be seen as Melville's attempt to address it as well. On the issue of hybridity, Young also points out that

> the races and their intermixture circulate around an ambivalent axis of desire and aversion: a structure of attraction, where people and cultures intermix and merge, transforming themselves as a result, and a structure of repulsion, where the different elements remain distinct and are set against each other dialogically."[33]

Apart from America's concern with the biological effects of hybridity on the dominant white society, Melville's story focuses on the relationship between a dominant culture (represented in the story by the white American

sea captains) and the subordinate one represented by the natives of Cape Verde on board this New England whaling ship.

It is also important to note that "The 'Gees" was probably written in the summer of 1854[34] and was first published on March 1, 1856, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (12: 507-9) with no attribution.[35] This was the last of seven short works by Melville to be published in *Harper's* between 1853 and 1856. In a letter addressed to Harper Brothers dated 18 September [1854?], Melville wrote: "Gentlemen: I send you by Express a brace of fowl – wild fowl. Hope you will like the flavor." While Davis argues that the "'brace of fowl' is still unplucked,"[36] meaning unidentified, Sealts speculates that the enclosure of this letter may have contained both "The 'Gees" and "Jimmy Rose."[37] It is possible that the "wild fowl" Melville is alluding to is the "'Gees," a pun on geese. It should, nonetheless, be pointed out that the sketch itself contains internal evidence not supporting Davis' comment and rendering Sealts' speculation far more plausible: "Like the negro, the 'Gee has a peculiar savor, but a different one – a sort of *wild*, marine, *gamy* savor, as in the *sea-bird called haglet*. Like venison, his flesh is firm but lean" (emphasis mine; 347-48). As in *Typee*, it is as if in this story Melville was packaging the 'Gees for voracious audiences who longed for stories appealing to the exotic, which was so central to the writings of the American Renaissance.

"The 'Gees" is the shortest of all pieces written by Melville between 1853 and 1856 while he was writing for both *Harper's* and *Putnam's* magazines. Because it is a lesser-known piece, it has received little critical attention. While most Melville readers are very likely

unaware of its existence, contemporary students of Melville are drawn to this piece because of Melville's discussion of race in mid-nineteenth-century America and less for its literary merits. In the groundbreaking essay, "'Race' in *Typee* and *White-Jacket*," Samuel Otter notes that:

> In the first phase of his career, the extended fiction from *Typee* (1846) through *Pierre* (1852), Melville is fascinated with "race." This fascination animates his literary practice, fueling his rhetorical excess and provoking questions about identity and intersubjectivity that he pursues across his texts. Melville inquires into the science and politics of "race," the constitution and the boundaries of human bodies, and the deep structures of identity. In a remarkable series of texts excessively linking bodies, discourse, and ideology, Melville examines the ways in which human bodies have become written and overwritten with racial meaning.[38]

Although this quote implies that Melville's obsession with race ended in 1852, such was not the case since in "The 'Gees," published in 1856, Melville returned to the theme of miscegenation. What kind of critical reaction, then, has this story generated?

Sidney Kaplan, alone amongst critics, accepts the statements made by the narrator literally, equates them with Melville's own perceptions and attitudes towards race and slavery, and dismisses the entire sketch as "the ugliest, most tasteless thing Melville ever wrote."[39] Carolyn Karcher, an advocate of the opposing viewpoint, for example, reads "The 'Gees" as a satire on pseudoscientific racism and the punning used by Melville to attack Southern ethnologists (Josiah C. Nott and George R. Gliddon, especially their co-authored work entitled

Types of Mankind), whose scientific research supported the institution of slavery. Young has pointed out that *Types of Mankind* was the "standard American scientific explanation of racial differences." In other words, this book was widely endorsed as science and, in due time, it became an authority on matters related to race in antebellum America. Published in 1854, it "went into eight editions by 1860."[40] Young also stresses that the debate prompted by Nott and Gliddon in this influential work

> focussed on two related questions, one cultural, one biological: these two aspects always went hand in hand and were always assessed simultaneously. The cultural question was whether there had ever been black civilization: if not, this would substantiate claims about the superiority of the white race and the inherent inferiority of the black; the biological question was whether the hybrid offspring of unions between the two races were fertile or not: if not, this would show that they were different species and prove that white and black really were different.[41]

As Young has, once again, shown,

> The success of Nott and Gliddon's volume was doubtless the result of a particular combination of skills that united both these areas: Nott was a physician (Professor of Anatomy at the University of Louisiana, with a medical practice in Mobile, Alabama, the centre of the Alabama slave trade and the port where the slave ships arrived from Africa; Nott himself owned nine slaves, six of them under 24 years old), while Gliddon, an Englishman by birth who had lived much of his life in Cairo, was an Egyptologist. The significance of their work was the way they brought the scientific and the cultural together in order to promulgate an indistinguishably scientific and cultural theory of race. Biology and

> Egyptology thus constituted *together* the basis of the new 'scientific' racial theory.[42]

As pro-slavery anthropologists, Nott and Gliddon considered miscegenation to be a practice that would culminate in the "inevitable decline" of the first progeny of "the mixing of the races."[43] In other words, they endorsed the pure, unmixed races. When writing on this subject, Otter argues that American ethnologists manipulated science to support the institution of slavery and the removal of native Americans from their ancestral lands:

> Aligned with the justifications for African American slavery and native American "removal," American ethnology transformed scientific thinking and political and popular culture. What was "American" about the "American school" was the obsessive nationalistic insistence on finding physical evidence for the "fact" of the separate and unequal capabilities of human beings. As the result of the meticulous, encyclopedic efforts of such ethnologists as Samuel George Morton, Josiah Nott, and George Gliddon, by the 1850s the claim that American racial groups were inherently unequal and that the physical characteristics of the body specifically, literally, and permanently revealed hierarchical differences in racial character was approaching the status of fact.[44]

Another reader of Melville's story is Bickley. The emphasis he puts on the narrator, whom he views as ironical, also supports Karcher. Finally, William B. Dillingham stands somewhat in the middle-ground. He at first argues in *Melville's Short Fiction 1853-1856* that "the sketch is a hoax, a joke played on the 'Gees of the world who will read it and not recognize themselves," but

when he identifies the speaker of the sketch as Melville, his rhetoric is then self-explanatory:

> The speaker is a seaman (or ex-seaman) referring here to the yarns he tells, but the voice of Melville commenting on his own stories is unmistakable. In describing these much maligned inhabitants of Fogo, he assumes the stance of a bigot and racist of the first water. To him 'Gees are little more than animals – they smell like "haglets," and they kick like "a wild zebra."[45]

"The 'Gees," I believe, is Melville's way of reflecting on the social debates and the conflicting stances concerning the issue of slavery. This is also the opinion of Eric Sundquist, who contends in his introduction to *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*, that

> Melville, along with Douglass, is probably the foremost analyst of American slavery in the nineteenth century – and not simply from a "white" perspective…the fact that Melville does not write *Benito Cereno* from Babo's point of view – indeed, he calculatedly eschews that point of view – does not prohibit him from giving Babo centrality and heroic meaning, or prevent him from displaying a stringent understanding of key elements of African culture in New World slavery.[46]

A master of narrative point of view, in "The 'Gees" Melville eschews the point of view of the Capeverdeans. By giving us a full account of the racism the white captains showed to the Capeverdeans on board this whaling vessel, Melville allows us to picture the racial slurs and emotional blackmail – which will be seen ahead – directed at this ethnic minority. His adoption of this particular narrative point of view is, in a way, a means for him as a writer to assert that he does not identify with such

treatment of the Capeverdeans. The sketch was written in a time when slavery was evidently a current topic and anticipates the Civil War by just a few years. Race, Otter tells us,

> helped to shape Melville's literary career. "Race" not only gave him a personal, family, and political content, it also provided him with the forms, scenes, figures, and assumptions of his fiction. "Race" stimulated the obsessions about character and characteristics and identity and intersubjectivity that preoccupied his omnivorous, overwrought imagination.[47]

It is true that Melville draws on his own experiences as a seaman for the composition of "The 'Gees." The "face whose contours he outlines," Otter argues, "the skin whose substance he examines, the head whose contents he inventories, and the heart whose motions he traces are his own. He lays himself open and exposes shared structures of feeling and belief."[48] The sketch is intended to be a re-creation of the entire *modus vivendi* on board a whaleship. Power relations and the capitalistic work ethic on a whaler are precisely what Melville strives to bring to the fore. Melville is horrified by the exploitation of paid labor at sea. To make his point, he creates a narrator who gives the reader a vivid snapshot of a whaler seething with racism but who does not identify with what is therein displayed. Throughout the sketch, the narrator keeps a distance between what he shows us and what the white crew members believe. When racist comments are made in the sketch, the narrator associates these with a third person(s). Melville identifies the racists on board the whaler as being: "some crusty old sea-dog," "his shipmate," "the skipper," "those ignorant young captains," "certain masters," or simply "old captain Hosea Kean, of

Nantucket." What are we as readers to make of the forewarning inserted at the very beginning of the sketch? The narrator makes it clear that: "Of all men *seamen* have strong prejudices, particularly in the matter of race. *They* are bigots here. But when a creature of inferior race lives among them, an inferior tar, there seems no bound to *their* disdain" (347; emphasis mine).The phrase "But when a creature of inferior race lives among them, an inferior tar" *a priori* may suggest that the narrator himself is a racist too, but this mode of writing, I would argue, is clearly a deliberate parodying of the crew's prejudiced jargon on the part of the narrator. The narrator ends the sketch by way of telling the reader that if he wishes to know more about racism and the relationship between the white crewmen and the 'Gees, the best person to contact is Captain Hosea Kean, of Nantucket, an expert on such matters: "For further and fuller information apply to any sharp-witted American whaling captain, but more especially to the before-mentioned old Captain Hosea Kean, of Nantucket, whose address at present is "Pacific Ocean" (351).

The first question anyone should ask is why has Melville chosen to expose racism in this sketch? Why has he also criticized the capitalist exploitation of cheap labor? It can be argued that in most of the *Piazza Tales* Melville expressed his contempt and criticism of what he considered wrong in American society. Perhaps no other man of letters had so intensely felt the effect of continuous negative criticism from reviewers and critics as Melville had experienced. He knew what it meant to be ridiculed and have most of his books dismissed as worthless. Apart from an initial enthusiasm with the publication of *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847), his later works such as *Mardi* (1849),

Redburn (1849), *White-Jacket* (1850), *Moby-Dick* (1851) and *Pierre* (1852) brought him neither critical acclaim nor financial reward. In addition, he was well aware that his works attracted fewer and fewer readers over the years. As the following quotes suggest, Melville was morbidly sensitive to book reviews and articles on his writings. It is unlikely that he remained indifferent to such reviews as the London *Athenaeum* (June 2, 1855) comment on *Israel Potter*. The columnist notes that Melville

> becomes wilder and wilder, and more and more turgid in each successive book….Mr. Melville, to conclude, does not improve as an artist, – yet his book, with all its faults, is not a bad shilling's worth for any railway reader, who does not object to small type and a style the glories of which are nebulous.[49]

Or the one in the *Dublin University Magazine* (January of 1856) about *Mardi* which

> cannot prevent the judicious reader from laying down the book with a weary sigh, and an inward pang of regret that so much rare and lofty talent has been so wilfully wasted on a theme which not anybody can fully understand.[50]

No wonder his shorter fiction written between 1853 and 1856 reflected his own despair and subsequent desire to denounce the hypocrisy in American life: exploitation of factory workers, slavery, and racism. In Hawthorne he found some solidarity. He told Hawthorne that

> Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar….What I feel most moved to write, that is banned, – it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches….Though I wrote the Gospels in this century, I

> should die in the gutter….What "reputation" H.M. has is horrible. Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough, any way; but to go down as a "man who lived among the cannibals"![51]

Although Melville's shorter pieces have been highly commended by mainstream reviewers and readers, the implicit irony is that these short stories criticize American society, the very one which had scorned him earlier in his career. In "The 'Gees," Melville the author does not come across as racially superior. He assigns that belief to the white crew. Nowhere else in Melville's fiction is there such an explicit racist language and ideology directed at any Portuguese-speaking crew member as the one displayed in "The 'Gees." Melville is reported to have encountered many sailors from Portugal, the Azores Islands, and from the Cape Verde Islands during his seafaring years. His opinion of them is largely favorable; to him, they are simply honest, hard-working people. This, at least, is the image one can gather from such works as *Moby-Dick*, *Omoo*, and *White-Jacket*. That Melville also had some knowledge of Portuguese literature, especially the works of Luís de Camões, is substantiated in some of his writings.[52] In *White-Jacket*, Captain Jack Chase is referred to as "an ardent admirer of Camoens. Parts of the *Lusiad*, he could recite in the original."[53] In this work there are also scattered references to sailors from the Cape Verde islands and to Antone, a Portuguese sailor. Coincidentally, in *Omoo*, there is also a reference to a certain Antone, but this one is from the Cape Verde islands.[54] In *Moby-Dick*, too, there is among the *Pequod* crew a sailor from the Azores Islands (referred to as "Azores sailor"), a Portuguese sailor, and a St. Jago's

sailor (a Portuguese-speaking sailor from São Tiago, the biggest and most populous of the Cape Verde islands).[55] George Monteiro's seminal work, *The Presence of Camões: Influences on the Literature of England, America, and Southern Africa* is worth quoting here:

> Of Herman Melville's interest in the life and works of Luis de Camões there exists ample evidence. First, there continues to sing out from the pages of his novel *White-Jacket* (1850) the cries of the "matchless and unmatchable Jack Chase," who appears to have been the young sailor Melville's beau ideal: "For the last time, hear Camoens, boys!" Secondly, from the pages of Melville's encyclopedic novel *Moby-Dick* (1851) come unmistakable references to Camões's poem of empire *Os Lusíadas* (1572), "the great epic of the ocean." Third, among the books in Melville's library (including books owned by Melville or known to have been read by him) we can with confidence number *The Lusiad: Or The Discovery of India*, translated by William Julius Mickle (1776); *Poems, from the Portuguese of Luis de Camoens*, translated by lord Viscount Strangford (1803); and *Poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (1854), the last of which includes Miss Barrett's "Catarina to Camoëns," a poem well known to Melville and useful to him, it has been proposed, in the writing of his ambitious long poem *Clarel* (1876). Fourth, several of Melville's poems allude to or draw upon Camões's work. And, finally, as culminating evidence of his abiding interest in the Portuguese poet, Melville has left us "Camoëns," a poem made up of paired sonnets entitled "Camoëns" and "Camoëns in the Hospital."[56]

With such contact and evident respect and affection for Portuguese literature, is it probable that Melville could have shared the bigotry and callousness on show in "The

‘Gees”? In this and in so many other contexts, Melville avoids presenting judgments about other peoples and races. This is in striking contrast to the writers I will presently deal with – whose attitudes, I hope to show, are heavy with the prejudice both of ignorance and uninvestigated assumptions.

This argument is further highlighted when the narrator requests the inexperienced captains to inspect the ‘Gees they are about to recruit carefully, especially their eyes:

> For the rest, draw close to, and put the centre of the pupil of your eye – put it, as it were, right into the ‘Gee’s eye; even as an eye-stone, gently, but firmly slip it in there, and then note what speck or beam of viciousness, if any, will befloated out (349).

The play of words in this passage, however, is Melville’s way of criticizing the white crew members. Melville parodies them because they are capable of judging and pointing out the imperfections of the ‘Gees without first looking at themselves. This passage can only be fully understood in the light of Christ’s parable in Matthew 7:2-5 where He gives valuable insight into how one should judge other people.[57] The source for this passage indicates that Melville used it so as to discredit the white man’s arrogance and ethnocentrism. Melville is here deliberately questioning the extent to which white and – supposedly – devout Bible readers of his time effectively put into practice Christ’s teachings.

This is not the only passage in which Melville alludes to the Bible in “The ‘Gees.” When the narrator reminds the inexperienced captain to check “His knees, any Belshazzar symptoms there?” (349), he is once again

drawing on the Bible (Book of Daniel: 5). The point here is that the ‘Gees about to be recruited ought to be robust men and manifest none of the physical weaknesses (such as inflexibility caused by old age) attributed to Belshazzar. As individuals said to be prone to various diseases, what Melville is, once again, parodying is the widespread belief in antebellum America that hybrid people would, in due time, bring about both cultural and physical degeneration. Young tells us that Josiah Nott was of the opinion that if the

> mixing of races took place, the United States would degenerate not only culturally, but also physically. In maintaining the reduced fertility of mulattos, Nott thus put the emphasis less on any threatened degeneration of American culture as such than on the idea that widespread sexual interaction between white and black would cause the American people to decline and literally die out altogether. Only by uniting with a pure black or white could the mulattos increase their fertility, in which case, Nott claimed, the tendency was for the progeny to revert to one or other of their parent stocks. In Nott’s argument sexuality and miscegenation thus occupy a core position in what amounts to a covert defence of the Southern American States’ slave system.[58]

As far as the references to the Bible are concerned, they have a point to convey. The Bible, Melville seems to argue, is one of the most powerful weapons used by the white man to support the very existence of slavery. In other words, he is criticizing the hypocritical use of the Bible. That the ‘Gees are compared to black slaves throughout the entire sketch is what the narrator attempts to convey. The slaves and the ‘Gees have much in common – they are easy prey for economic exploitation. While Melville is not totally condemning capitalism in his

sketch, he, however, shows little respect for an economic system which takes advantage of and totally dehumanizes a specific group of individuals – black slaves in the South and the ‘Gees on board this ship. That the sketch is full of commercial language is no mere coincidence. “Cheaply,” “business,” “wages,” and “negotiate” are a few terms demonstrating this.

Melville deplores an economic system that takes advantage of the ‘Gees’ ignorance. Both the ‘Gees and black slaves, are easily exploited; the “reward” for their work is corporal punishment:

> An unsophisticated ‘Gee coming on board a foreign ship never asks for wages. He comes for biscuit. He does not know what other wages mean, unless cuffs and buffets be wages, of which sort he receives a liberal allowance, paid with great punctuality, besides perquisites of punches thrown in now and then. But for all this, some persons there are, and not unduly biassed by partiality to him either, who still insist that the ‘Gee never gets his due (348).

From the viewpoint of the captains and owners of the whalers, the ideal situation would be to hire such workers who can easily handle the job and receive little or preferably no pay. Melville seems to argue that it is not American crew members but ‘Gees who can satisfy this condition since their

> docile services being thus cheaply to be had, some captains will go the length of maintaining that ‘Gee sailors are preferable, indeed every way, physically and intellectually, superior to American sailors – such captains complaining, and justly, that American sailors, if not decently treated, are apt to give serious trouble (348).

In addition to this, the captains should make sure whether any of these ‘Gees have any disease. The narrator tells us of a ‘Gee who had been recommended to a New Bedford captain by a middleman, himself a ‘Gee. The captain, with no further ado hired him on the spot, completely unaware of the trap into which he had fallen. We are immediately told that

> at the first taking in of sail the ‘Gee hung fire. Come to look, both trowser-legs were full of elephantiasis. It was a long sperm-whaling voyage. Useless as so much lumber, at every port prohibited from being dumped ashore, that elephantine ‘Gee, ever crunching biscuit, for three weary years was trundled round the globe (350).

It is as if in this passage we can listen to Melville openly criticize the capitalist system which perceives disease and human frailty as obstacles preventing the obtaining of profit. That this seems to have been one of Melville’s recurrent ideas can be further attested through a close-reading of Old Bach’s motives in “The Tartarus of Maids.” He will only hire unmarried women because he believes that pregnancy and child rearing drastically reduce levels of productivity.

The callousness and indifference shown to the ‘Gees by the white crew members comes to the surface when they lure the ‘Gees into performing the most dehumanizing chores. Their technique is to use emotional blackmail when, for a brief moment, acknowledging the ‘Gees’ manhood. The narrator tells us that

> there is no call to which the ‘Gee will with more alacrity respond than the word “Man!” Is there any hard work to be done, and the ‘Gees stand round in sulks? “Here, my men!” cries the mate. How they jump. But ten to one when the work is done, it

> is plain ‘Gee again. “Here, ‘Gee! you ‘Ge-e-e-e!” In fact, it is not unsurmised, that only when extraordinary stimulus is needed, only when an extra strain is to be got out of them, are these hapless ‘Gees ennobled with the human name (350-51).

Melville also makes clear that not all ‘Gees are eligible for this type of work. The captains should refrain from getting involved with ripe ‘Gees for they no longer will put up with exploitation. This because they have already mastered the “tricks of the trade.” The hottest commodity is a green ‘Gee, one who is utterly ignorant, easily manipulated, and ultimately exploited. The captains note that

> notwithstanding the general docility of the ‘Gee when green, it may be otherwise with him when ripe. Discreet captains won’t have such a ‘Gee. “Away with that ripe ‘Gee!” they cry; “that smart ‘Gee; that knowing ‘Gee! Green ‘Gees for me!” (349).

Over the years, these “green ‘Gees” have experienced the uglier side of the capitalist work ethic, and they, like the slaves in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, are depicted by both authors as automatons, that is, mindless bodies who are also explicitly compared to animals. The reader can easily detect the threads of animal imagery woven into the texture of the sketch. The teeth of horses and those of the ‘Gees, the captains seem to argue, are one and the same. This idea is conveyed through a metaphor:

> His teeth are what are called butter-teeth, strong, durable, square, and yellow. Among captains at a loss for better discourse during dull, rainy weather in the *horse-latitudes*, much debate has been whether his teeth are intended for carnivorous or *herbivorous*

> *purposes*, or both conjoined (348; emphasis mine).

References to parts of the skull of slaves or half-breeds remind us of the research experiments conducted by S. G. Morton, "an American anatomist and Egyptologist, whose *Crania Aegyptica* appeared in 1844, five years after his influential *Crania Americana*, in which he had published his measurements of the different skull sizes of the different races, a method which was regarded as having enabled for the first time a precise scientific measurement of racial difference."[59] "In the many scenes of cranial contemplation, which restage the scrutinies of phrenology, physiognomy, and craniometry, Melville," claims Otter, when analyzing race in *Typee* and *White Jacket*, "gets inside the head of antebellum ethnology. He criticizes the obsession with defining, ranking, and separating human types and analyzes how ethnology composes its objects."[60] If the reader had somehow missed the implications of such metaphorical language, the narrator makes this comparison explicit by way of stressing that

> To know 'Gees – to be a sound judge of 'Gees – one must study them, just as to know and be a judge of *horses* one must study *horses*. Simple as for the most part are both *horse* and 'Gee, in neither case can knowledge of the creature come by intuition (349; emphasis mine).

This passage further illustrates Melville's acute sense of irony in that he is criticizing those who pass judgement on others without a fair knowledge of the individual or culture at stake. The 'Gee is likened not only to a horse but also to a wild kicking zebra: "He has a serviceably *hard heel*, a kick from which is by the judicious held almost as dangerous as one from a *wild zebra*" (348;

emphasis mine). As noted earlier, the ‘Gees are essentially mulattos, but to the white crew members they resemble apes. This image is also conveyed through the use of metaphor. The reader is told that such a view emerges from “that jeer of theirs, that *monkey-jacket* was originally so called from the circumstance that that rude sort of *shaggy garment* was first known in Fogo. *They often call a monkey-jacket a ‘Gee-jacket”* (350; emphasis mine).

When Melville compares the selection that all ‘Gees must first undergo before being hired, he is referring indirectly to similar practices prevalent in nineteenth-century America prior to the Civil War, namely the slave auction market. To grasp the significance of the following excerpt, one must read it along with similar passages in such works as the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* or *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. In both cases, the slave trader and inexperienced captain should

> Get square before him, say three paces, so that the eye, like a shot, may rake the ‘Gee fore and aft, at one glance taking in his whole make and build – how he looks about the head, whether he carry it well; his ears, are they over-lengthy? How fares it in the *withers*? His legs, does the ‘Gee stand strongly on them? His knees, any Belshazzar symptoms there? How stands it in the region of the *brisket*? etc., etc. (349; emphasis mine).

The prospect of a promising and fairer future for the ‘Gee is included in the antepenultimate paragraph of this sketch. The speculation here is that the ‘Gee may benefit from the exposure to educational enlightenment, thus ceasing to be a mindless body. This reasoning, I would argue, should not be taken seriously for it is an example of the burlesque. The narrator argues that

> the intellect of the ‘Gee has been little cultivated. No well-attested educational experiment has been tried upon him. It is said, however, that in the last century a young ‘Gee was by a *visionary* Portuguese naval officer sent to Salamanca University. Also, among the Quakers of Nantucket, there has been talk of sending five comely ‘Gees, aged sixteen, to Dartmouth College, that venerable institution, as is well known, having been originally founded partly with the object of *finishing off* wild Indians in the classics and higher mathematics (351; emphasis mine).

This is clearly another passage in which the rhetoric displayed is, once again, an apotheosis of absurdity. In the first place, the tone is overwhelmingly jocular. The message here is that for the white captains, ‘Gees are ignorant and stupid people; their minds are simply objects for ridicule. It is also possible that Melville is criticizing the arrogance of Western culture, which sees itself as the best and only one worth studying. Clearly the word “visionary” here carries a very heavy ironic charge. The intentions of the officer are simply chimerical. The phrase “finishing off” can mean to kill or destroy. Melville is here deliberately parodying the attempt to educate Indians (and by extension, the ‘Gees) in “traditional western subjects obviously irrelevant to their lives.”[61] The allusion to Quakers “sending five comely ‘Gees, aged sixteen, to Dartmouth College” is deeply ironic. It was generally believed that Quakers tended to feel disdain for formal education. Finally, it would seem highly improbable that a Portuguese naval officer would venture to think of Salamanca University in Spain when Portugal had the University of Coimbra, founded in the thirteenth century, as a fine substitute. As

stressed earlier, Melville knew more than most Anglophones about Camões (and even identified himself with him given their common roles as mariners and writers) and was aware that he had been a student at the University of Coimbra. It should not be forgotten that the ‘Gees either speak Portuguese and/or a Portuguese-creole dialect, and, obviously, not Spanish. The point that Melville is trying to make here is that these allusions give nineteenth-century American readers the impression that they are credible, realistic references when in fact they are completely bizarre.

In “The ‘Gees” readers are exposed to a thoughtful mind at work. The question is whether Melville’s mid-nineteenth-century audience was able to understand his ironical sentences. In this piece as in the ones I shall later focus on, what is obvious is that in a country where discussions on racial matters were inevitable, there was simply no way the Portuguese immigrants could avoid being caught in its web.

From the Top of the Racial Pyramid: Social Darwinism, Racial Hierarchy, and the Portuguese Farmers in California

In this section, my goal is to show how *fin de siècle* social Darwinist discourse in America was overwhelmingly popular with intellectuals and how two mainstream Californian writers, Frank Norris and Jack London, absorbed its dangerous ideology. Although Norris and London responded differently to this matter, both writers identified with its ideology of superiority given their class and Anglo-Saxon background. Whereas Norris adhered to it unquestioningly because of his upper middle-class background, London’s working-class origins, however,

may have inhibited him, for a while, from expressing his views on the issue at stake. While the former writer did not waver on this issue, London's views are very contradictory. What both writers have in common, however, is how they apply their social Darwinist worldview to their fictional Azorean farmers, whose real counterparts they witnessed working in the fields of California.

Frank Norris (1870-1902) and Jack London (1876-1916) embody the spirit of the time and have brought into their fiction America's obsession with race which this section aims to review. In the following exposition, the spotlight will also be cast on the Portuguese in such novels as *The Octopus*, *Martin Eden*, and *The Valley of the Moon*.

Of all of Frank Norris's writings, *The Octopus* (1901) is perhaps where Norris comes closest to utilizing the postcolonial rhetorical framework that several contemporary scholars have applied to readings of earlier works of literature. The model that Homi K. Bhabha postulates in *The Location of Culture* can be applied to Norris's novel since it reflects how a dominant, mainstream culture has looked at a minority culture, more specifically that of a group of Portuguese farmers living on its margins.

The Octopus was, without a doubt, where Norris expressed his belief in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority most forcibly. Such rhetoric, however, should be seen in the context of the *fin de siècle* belief in social Darwinism, a doctrine which was still alive in the twentieth-century. That this novel reflects the current ideological framework ingrained in turn-of-the-century consciousness is obvious: while the Anglo-Saxon characters are seen occupying the top of the racial pyramid, the Portuguese are located at its very bottom.

Perhaps the application of social Darwinism to the fiction produced in *fin-de-siècle* America is not so vividly rendered in any other work as is the case with Frank Norris's novel, *The Octopus*. Contemporary readers often wonder why Norris depicted ethnic minorities with such evident distaste. None of the ethnic groups clustered in the San Joaquin Valley is exempt from scrutiny by his all-judging Anglo-Saxon eye. This eye is the most critical when directed towards the Portuguese farmhands. I shall first focus on the ideology that shaped Norris and his contemporaries and, afterwards, represent *The Octopus* as the medium through which Norris applies some of his views on race to California's Portuguese farmers.

Norris's acceptance of imperialism and racism is one of the personal traits that his biographer, Franklin Walker, singled out. These ideas, however, came to the surface precisely at the outbreak of the Spanish-American war in 1898. It was at this time that he could see his beliefs put to the test, that is, his belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon stock. As Walker has noted, when a Spanish fleet was destroyed in Manila bay, Norris is reported to have become

> a cog in the machine, welcoming the advance of the skirmish line across the Pacific "still pushing the frontier before it," confident that the Anglo-Saxon was now "to fulfil his destiny and complete the cycle of the world."[62]

Shortly after the declaration of war, Norris signed up for a position as war correspondent in Cuba to write for *McClure's Magazine*. The urge to pack and head towards Cuba is proof enough that this war meant a great deal to Norris. Supporting this idea is the very fact that he totally abandoned his literary commitments. *Moran* was then

close to being published, *McTeague* was waiting for a publisher, and *Vandover* was outlined. He also had plans for a collection of short stories. His belief in the Darwinian idea of prosperity of the fittest along with the manifest destiny of Anglo-Saxon superiority came to fruition when the Spanish soldiers began to surrender. At the time, Norris is reported to have argued that

> The war was not a "crusade," we were not fighting for Cubans, it was not for disinterested motives that we were there, sabred and revolvered and carbined. Santiago was ours – was ours, ours, by the sword we had acquired, we, Americans, with no one to help – and the Anglo-Saxon blood of us, the blood of the race that has fought its way out of a swamp in Friesland, conquering and conquering and conquering, on to the westward, the race whose blood instinct is the acquiring of land, went galloping through our veins to the beat of our horses' hoofs….We rode on there at a gallop through the crowded streets of the fallen city…triumphant, arrogant, conquerors.[63]

While this passage is susceptible to other readings, namely that these Americans may be seen as brutal conquerors, to Norris this episode meant that America was heading in the right direction – a new and vigorous country whose manifest destiny was to become a world power and its people, heroic supermen. Many Americans were of the opinion that this conflict opened a new chapter in Western civilization. It signified that the "weaker" and older empires such as that of Spain were beginning to lose ground or about to disintegrate.[64]

Among other evolutionary ideas of the turn of the century, there was also the widespread belief that certain human beings would inevitably regress back to a fundamentally brutal nature. Life in the late 1890s and

early 1900s was seen as an arena of struggle and survival and man potentially a brutish and uncivilized being. This is precisely the portrayal we get in such works as Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*, Norris's *McTeague* and, to a lesser degree, *The Octopus*. The farmhands working in the Quien Sabe ranch are a substantiation of such views. This is clearly illustrated by way of comparing their repulsive and beastly eating habits with those of wild animals. Although Norris simply refers to them as workers, one ought to bear in mind that the attack is deliberately directed towards the Portuguese, who outnumber any other ethnic group in both the Quien Sabe and Los Muertos ranches:

> It was between six and seven o'clock. The half-hundred men of the gang *threw themselves* upon supper the Chinese cooks had set out in the shed of the eating house….The table was taken as if *by assault*; the clatter of iron knives upon the tin plates was as the reverberation of hail upon a metal roof. The plowmen rinsed their throats with great drafts of wine and, their elbows wide, their foreheads flushed, resumed *the attack* upon the beef and bread, eating as though they would never have enough…one heard the incessant sounds of mastication and saw the uninterrupted movement of *great jaws*. At every moment one or another of the men demanded a fresh portion of beef, another pint of wine, another half loaf of bread. For upwards of an hour the gang ate. It was no longer a supper. It was a veritable barbecue, *a crude and primitive feasting, barbaric, Homeric*.
>
> But in all this scene Vanamee saw nothing repulsive. *Presley would have abhorred it* – this feeding of the people, *this gorging of the human animal, eager for its meat*. Vanamee, simple, uncomplicated, living so close to nature and the rudimentary life, understood its

> significance. He knew well that within a short half hour after this meal the men would throw themselves down in their bunks to sleep without moving, inert and stupefied with fatigue, till the morning. Work, food, and sleep, all life reduced to its bare essentials, uncomplex, honest, healthy. They were strong, these men, with the strength of the soil they worked, in touch with the essential things, *back again to the starting point of civilization, coarse, vital, real, and sane* (97-98; emphasis mine).[65]

The point here is that we are in the presence of two conflicting views to this "primitive" banquet. The difference is highlighted when contrasting the Anglo-Saxon observer or commentator (Presley) to the non Anglo-Saxon one (Vanamee). The rabbit hunt, which will later be discussed in greater detail, is another prime example of a ruthless world.

In this excerpted passage, Presley –"whom many have considered to be a portrait of Norris himself, [and who] emerged almost entirely as a literary device without marked personality, an organism upon which to register impressions"[66] – is the character through which Norris expressed his own feelings on ethnic minorities. On this issue, Lawrence E. Hussman notes in *Harbingers of a Century: The Novels of Frank Norris* that

> Presley owes his makeup in part to traits in his creator. More than in any of his other fiction, Norris was able in *The Octopus* to mold separate sides of himself into subtle and complicated characters whose interactions deepen the work's primary significance.[67]

Contempt is what Presley has to offer because

> These uncouth brutes of farmhands and petty ranchers, grimed with the soil they

> worked upon, were odious to him beyond words. Never could he feel in sympathy with them, nor with their lives, their ways, their marriages, deaths, bickerings, and all the monotonous round of their sordid existence (10-11).

Annixter, too, gives vent to his own beliefs on racial issues, although less explicitly when compared to Presley. He is reported to have once referred to Magnus Derrick's cook as a "Chink" (90), but this evidently before marrying Hilma Tree. Gradually, she manages to purge his earlier belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority and misogyny, for all these personal traits vanish right after the wedding ceremony. She instills in him the importance of respecting women and ethnic minorities. In addition to the Chinese cook, there are references to Mexican and Spanish farmhands and to a certain "Swede" (98) working for Annixter. These men, however, are never fully portrayed. In this novel, Norris seems to have deliberately focused on the Portuguese. Although none is ever given a surname, save for Montalegre (a foreman working for Annixter), this group is foregrounded in the novel. It is obvious that racial distaste is directed against practically all ethnic groups, but the Portuguese farmhands are the ones to feel its impact more strongly. Norris's aim is to show – as we shall see ahead – this ethnic group in the very process of decline and degeneration.

It should be mentioned, by the way, that Norris never bothers to specify the regional origins of these Portuguese farmhands. His reference to them may lead readers to believe that they came from the Portuguese mainland. This may have been the case with just a handful of people, but demographic research has shown that:

> most of the Portuguese immigrants to California, like those who settled in New England, came from the Azores; these, up to about 1900, were almost exclusively from the western islands of Pico, Fayal, São Jorge, and thereafter also from Terceira. They were augmented by small numbers of Madeirans and by groups of Capeverdeans as well.[68]

There is internal evidence in the novel of the presence of Madeirans in California, especially in the northern section of the Valley of the San Joaquin. When returning from their honeymoon, we are told that "Annixter, checking off the stations, noted their passage of Modesto, Merced, and *Madeira*" (291; emphasis mine). As to the distribution of the Portuguese from the various regions in Portugal then residing in California, Pap argues that

> In 1870…California held 27.3 percent of the total Portuguese immigrant population in the United States, and New England about 70 percent. In 1880, California's share had risen to 51 percent because during the 1870s some 80 percent of all new Portuguese immigrants to the United States settled on the West Coast. Thereafter, California's comparative position waned again; by 1920 it was down to 30 percent of the United States total of Portuguese-born residents.[69]

This decline may be attributed to the passing of the California gold rush which had attracted many Portuguese, but also to the immigration restrictions brought in by the Immigration Acts of the 1920s. Dinnerstein and Reimers also point out that from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards,

> Fewer than 100,000 Portuguese, 98 percent of whom were Roman Catholic, came to the United States, but those who did gravitated mainly to New Bedford,

> Massachusetts, where the whaling fleets are docked, and to Rhode Island and California. In fact, about one third actually settled in the Golden State. Their focal point originally was the San Francisco Bay area but they spread out from there to the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, and a number planted roots in Oakland. Many of those who were not seafarers became successful farmers. By 1950 most of those of Portuguese stock were in the rural areas of the state, and in southern California they ranked second only to the Dutch in the dairy industry. One Portuguese immigrant, J. B. Avida [sic; Ávila?], a native of the Azores, arrived in the United States sorely missing one of his favorite vegetables. In 1888 he bought acreage near Merced, California, and started cultivating it. His crop grew well and he sold it to restaurants wherever he could. The San Francisco restaurants served it first but then it made an impact throughout America. Soon Avida [sic] was known as the "Father of the Sweet Potato Industry."[70]

While a handful of Portuguese people residing in California were employed in the fisheries, the vast majority worked on farms and in the dairy industry. Pap points out that some of the farmers who moved into the San Joaquin Valley during the 1880s "took up relatively large leaseholds of from 120 to 600 acres to grow field, feed, and grain crops; these were operating in companies of six to fifteen men, usually unmarried."[71]

In *The Octopus*, the Portuguese farmhands are not depicted as honest, hardworking people. The entire texture of the narrative is pervaded with racial stereotyping. When alluding to certain hybrid Portuguese, Norris argues that the original stock is somehow losing its genuineness or is on the verge of racial decline. This viewpoint comes across when we are told that

> the priest [Father Sarria] had covered nearly fifteen miles on foot, in order to administer Extreme Unction to a moribund *good-for-nothing, a greaser, half Indian, half Portuguese*, who lived in a remote corner of Osterman's stock range, at the head of a canyon there (145; emphasis mine).

To call him a "greaser" is the equivalent of saying that he can be easily taken for a native of Latin America or even Mexico. Norris's views here are that the Portuguese, Mexicans, and Indians are alike in the sense that they are inferior when compared to the Anglo-Saxon stock. To Annixter when he was still single, this man was simply a lazy, violent thief: "A lazy, cattle-stealing, knife-in-his-boot Dago" (146). As if the reader may have missed the point, the narrator immediately insists that "This particular greaser was the laziest, the dirtiest, the most worthless of the lot" (146). When Annixter calls this particular "greaser" a "knife-in-his-boot Dago," he is voicing the dominant culture's attitudes towards Southern Europeans. In this particular instance, the word "Dago" refers to Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, or any people with a Latin heritage. Whether it is the hybrid Portuguese or the Portuguese themselves, they are both portrayed as a bunch of violent criminals. After the barn shooting episode between Annixter and Delaney, the narrator immediately reminds us that "Father Sarria had more than once administered the sacraments to Portuguese desperadoes dying of gunshot wounds" (188).

In a letter addressed to Magnus Derrick, Gethings of the San Pablo ranch points out that "we number in our ranks many small farmers, ignorant Portuguese and foreigners" (323). Most characters of Anglo-Saxon stock in this novel believe that the minds of these Portuguese

farmhands are not to be taken seriously. Another image meant to remain in the reader's mind is the reference to a group of Portuguese men who are simply incorrigible drunkards. The narrator tells us right before the rabbit hunt that "Three of Broderson's Portuguese tenants and a couple of workmen from the railroad shops in Bonneville were on the porch, already very drunk" (346).

When "a group of Osterman's tenants, Portuguese, swarthy, with plastered hair and curled moustaches, redolent of cheap perfumes" (170), arrive at Annixter's barn dance, the image is intended to provoke a certain feeling of distaste. In addition, the reference to "swarthy" associates these dark-skinned Portuguese with creoles or even blacks in the minds of the novel's mainstream characters. The image of the "Portuguese in brand-new overalls, smoking long thin cigars" (346) is a clear-cut contrast with that of nineteenth-century tycoons smoking thick and expensive cigars, especially the owner of the railroad the ranchers in this novel are fighting against, represented by S. Behrman. The perfumes and thin cigars may show some amount of pretentiousness, but the point is that this attitude also has a contrary effect – it clearly exposes their cheapness and vulgarity, especially to the Anglo-Saxon eye since they cannot afford the more expensive ones because they are, in essence, exploited by those whom they are working for and, to use Jack London's phrase, kept under their "iron heel."

When Presley worries over Minna Hooven's loose behavior, he seems to have struck on one of the Portuguese's psychological traits. The point here seems to be that some of them tend to take advantage of what we now call "easy sex." In his view, Minna has no scruples about her reputation since she deliberately spends her time with

those whom he perceives to be totally inferior beings. There is, nonetheless, a touch of jealousy in Presley's account for he cannot resist

> wondering vaguely what would become of such a pretty girl as Minna, and if in the end she would marry the Portuguese foreman in charge of the ditching gang. He told himself that he hoped she would, and that speedily. There was no lack of comment as to Minna Hooven about the ranches. Certainly she was a good girl, but she was seen at all hours here and there about Bonneville and Guadalajara, skylarking with the Portuguese farmhands of Quien Sabe and Los Muertos. She was very pretty; the men made fools of themselves over her. Presley hoped they would not end by making a fool of her (263).

In the light of bell hook's contention, Presley's jealousy, after all, may be seen as his way of expressing his lusting after her even if he may try to deny it. This passage also suggests that marriage to a Portuguese man is a positive thing compared to her sexual licentiousness that will, we know, end in prostitution at the novel's denouement when these small, jobless ranchers and farmhands are crushed by the railroad trust. In this sense, the Portuguese man can be seen as a potential savior of Minna.

The rabbit hunt is meant to compare the Portuguese farmhands to wild animals, eager to jump on their prey. The point, however, is that the Portuguese rank the lowest when compared to the very dogs initially intended to slaughter the rabbits. Right after the rabbit hunt, the narrator tells us that

> On signal, the killing began. Dogs that had been brought there for that purpose when let into the corral refused, as had been half expected, to do the work. They

> snuffed curiously at the pile, then backed off, disturbed, perplexed. But the men and boys – Portuguese for the most part – were more eager (353).

When the reader is told that "The Anglo-Saxon spectators round about drew back in disgust, but the hot, degenerated blood of Portuguese, Mexican, and mixed Spaniard boiled up in excitement at this wholesale slaughter," (354) this reference, once again, places the Anglo-Saxon stock at the very top of the racial pyramid and the Portuguese, Mexicans, and mixed Spaniard at the bottom. The spectators, most of whom organized and took part in the rabbit hunt, knew that after the "fun," someone had to do the dirty work. Their reaction when this is being carried out, however, is one of looking down upon those they perceive as subordinate and uncivilized. In other words, the "degenerate" and colonized that Bhabha refers to. When writing about this episode, Hussman notes that:

> the young boys from the ranches club the thousands of corralled rabbits to a fleshy froth. Presley presumably shrinks in "disgust" from this slaughter, along with the other "Anglo-Saxon spectators," while the "hot, degenerated blood of Portuguese, Mexican, and mixed Spaniard boil[s] up in excitement"…. (This kind of regrettable stereotyping sprang from Norris's conviction that Latins were undisciplined, anticivilization, and lazy, all vices that contrasted with the devotion to the world's work that he had valorized as the greatest virtue in *A Man's Woman*.)[72]

The allusion to the "degenerated blood" further attests to the idea of moral and biological decline. Presley's heart is most certainly closer to the characters of Anglo-Saxon stock, for his typical attitude is to praise them. He does, nevertheless, acknowledge a certain frugality, industriousness, and beauty in most of these Portuguese,

Mexican, and mixed Spaniard immigrants, but his view is that they cannot be left unchecked. Their fate, Presley argues, is to remain under the firm control of the Anglo-Saxons:

> Presley was delighted with it all. It was Homeric, this feasting, this vast consuming of meat and bread and wine, followed now by games of strength. An epic simplicity and directness, an honest Anglo-Saxon mirth and innocence, commended it. Crude it was; coarse it was; but no taint of viciousness was here. These people were good people, kindly, benignant even, always readier to give than to receive, always more willing to help than to be helped. They were good stock. Of such was the backbone of the nation – sturdy Americans every one of them. Where else in the world round were such strong, honest men, such strong, beautiful women? (355)

This passage also hints at the dangers Norris saw in Gilded Age civilization – that it might render men effete, weak, and worthless. These workers embody a primitive strength Frank Norris found admirable. While acknowledging America's need for these workers and their strength, in *The Octopus* Norris shows that they could not be left on their own, but, instead, remain under the scrutiny of the dominant culture. It should be finally mentioned that while Norris expressed a certain distaste for Portuguese immigrants in this novel, his closest friend, Ernest Peixotto, was descended from Sephardic Jews who emigrated from Portugal.[73] This friendship began in their college days at the University of California and was to last until the very end of Norris's life. Not only one of Norris's correspondents, Peixotto was also someone he could confide in. It is now difficult to trace Peixotto's Sephardic Jewish ancestry. While Norris may have been unaware of

Peixotto's Sephardic background since Peixotto had been fully assimilated into the mainstream, Norris had mixed feelings about the agricultural poor since they lacked refinement.

For contemporary readers, *The Octopus* might suggest that Norris had little or no esteem for ethnic minorities, and the Portuguese in particular. The point is that nowhere in the novel is there an underlying clue or justification for such a jaundiced glance at the Portuguese. What is most challenging when reading *The Octopus*, one may argue, is to find such a hint.

In a time when social Darwinism was sweeping through America and most Anglo-Saxon writers were in control of the narrative, it was impossible for Norris to remain indifferent to these realities. A century has elapsed since the publication of *The Octopus* and, fortunately, most writers are more realistic and unbiased in terms of how they depict those minorities still living on the fringes of the American mainstream. A century later, those ethnic minorities whom Norris looked down upon are shaping American culture in ways that were unforeseeable back then.

Evolutionary ideology and social Darwinism were also important issues for Jack London. Although his views on race and belief in Anglo-Saxon supremacy may not be as apparent in, for example, *Martin Eden* (1909) and *The Valley of the Moon* (1913) as is the case in Norris's *The Octopus*, they are, nonetheless, present. There is much to be learned about London's feelings about ethnic minorities by tracing the changes in the manner in which he depicted the Portuguese from *Martin Eden* to *The Valley of the Moon*. Compared to Norris, however, the overall picture that

emerges in both works by London is that of a writer less concerned with racial matters. Whereas Norris had expressed mixed feelings towards the Portuguese (he admired their strength and vitality but looked at them in a patronizing manner), London portrays his Portuguese American characters (Maria Silva and Antonio Silva) in both novels as hard-working individuals. Unlike Norris's skimpy outlining of the Portuguese, London's Maria Silva is depicted as possessing an understanding and kind heart. A fully fleshed out character, Maria Silva is capable of expressing compassion towards her fellow beings, Martin Eden, in particular. But let us dwell for a while on London's faith in Anglo-Saxon superiority and then show how it is reflected in the literary works already mentioned. Meanwhile, it is worth focusing on London's depiction of the Portuguese so as to trace the changes in his attitude towards this ethnic minority.

In *Jack London: American Rebel*, Philip Foner argues that London's reading of Spencer, Haeckel, and Kidd may account for his belief in the

> pseudo-scientific justification for the most serious flaw in his thinking – the doctrine of white supremacy, a doctrine that was to remain with him to the end of his life. One of the persistently recurrent themes in London's stories is the supremacy over all other peoples of the white man….And white man meant Nordic, and still more specifically, Anglo-Saxon….He never altered the doctrine that the white man was superior and that the earth belonged to him.[74]

Perhaps his most radical racist tirades were voiced during the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 when he was sent to Japan as war correspondent. There, he expressed his disbelief at how a "'yellow, inferior race' like the Japanese could

defeat the Russians, a white people."[75] In his war correspondence London also considers the Koreans an inferior breed. In a particular passage, London claims that the Koreans he saw "were spiritless, the most inefficient of human creatures, lacking all initiative and achievement, and *the only thing in which they shine is the carrying of burdens on their backs*"[76] (emphasis mine). Moreover, during the Mexican-American conflict in 1911, London described a meeting between a Mexican lieutenant and an American lieutenant and is reported to have claimed that "The Mexican Lieutenant strove to add inches to himself by standing on top of a steel rail. But in vain. The American still towered above him. The American was – well, American."[77] One may argue, however, that such overt jingoism at an international level may have been motivated by the emergence of imperialistic feelings in the American consciousness if we take into account the historical context of the turn of the century. When London focuses on domestic issues, his views on race are somewhat toned down. In addition, the burden of his plebeian origins clearly shaped the course of his life. Not only a tramp at a given point in his life, London had also experienced the stifling and alienating work schedule at a laundry. Since London reflected in many of his writings the struggles and suffering of the working classes, racist feelings seldom emerge in a work such as *Martin Eden*, which attempts to capture the struggles of a self-educated writer in the process of wooing the disdainful literary magazines. Who is, then, the ethnic other in this novel and how does Martin Eden interact with him or her?

Jack London states that at a given point in his life he had for a "landlady, a poor widow woman whose imperative necessities demanded that I should pay my rent

with some degree of regularity."[78] It is highly probable that this very woman may have been fictionalized through the character of Maria Silva, a Portuguese immigrant residing in North Oakland, since there is much in common between the real woman and the fictional one. They are both widows who take in a boarder. In addition, both London and his character, Martin Eden, were lodgers when they were desperately trying to make a career as writers. Not only these instances but many others in *Martin Eden* attest to the fact that *Martin Eden* is Jack London's most autobiographical novel. While Russ Kingman claims that this is a "partially autobiographical novel,"[79] Earle Labor and Jeanne Campbell Reesman in *Jack London: Revised Edition* consider this to be "London's most intensely personal novel," noting further in their discussion that

> *Martin Eden* cannot be taken for Jack London's spiritual autobiography – unlike Martin, London was fully aware of "the collective human need" and lived for much more than himself. London believed the book to be an indictment of individualism and a testament to the need for a socialist philosophy.[80]

As Labor and Reesman have noted, there are, undoubtedly, differences between the real man and his fictional self in *Martin Eden*, but the similarities are, nonetheless, abundant. Although Martin Eden may have at first disliked this woman, he, nonetheless, came to admire her stoicism and perseverance in raising a large family all by herself. As to this moment in Eden's life, the narrator tells us that

> He paid two dollars and a half a month for the small room he got from his Portuguese landlady, Maria Silva, a virago and a widow, hard working and harsher tempered, rearing her large brood of

> children somehow, and drowning her sorrow and fatigue at irregular intervals in a gallon of the thin, sour wine that she bought from the corner grocery and saloon for fifteen cents. From detesting her and her foul tongue at first, Martin grew to admire her as he observed the brave fight she made. There were but four rooms in the little house – three, when Martin's was subtracted. One of these, the parlor, gay with an ingrain carpet and dolorous with a funeral card and a death-picture of one of her numerous departed babes, was kept strictly for company. The blinds were down, and her barefooted tribe was never permitted to enter the sacred precinct save on state occasions. She cooked, and all ate, in the kitchen, where she likewise washed, starched, and ironed clothes on all days of the week except Sunday; for her income came largely from taking in washing from her more prosperous neighbors. [There] Remained the bedroom, small as the one occupied by Martin, into which she and her seven little ones crowded and slept. It was an everlasting miracle to Martin how it was accomplished, and from her side of the thin partition he heard nightly every detail of the going to bed, the squalls and squabbles, the soft chattering, and the sleepy, twittering noises as of birds. Another source of income to Maria were her cows, two of them, which she milked night and morning and which gained a surreptitious livelihood from vacant lots and the grass that grew on either side of the public sidewalks, attended always by one or more of her ragged boys, whose watchful guardianship consisted chiefly in keeping their eyes out for the poundmen[81] (241-42).

In this depiction of Maria Silva, Jack London proves to be a keen observer of the culture which has nurtured this woman. Even though she may be physically in a new country, the United States, she is, nonetheless, spiritually and culturally connected to her native land. In touching upon

death and personal fate through the character of Maria Silva, London has attempted to understand the culture which has shaped this fictional woman. Having her boys take the two cows to graze in the vacant lots and sides of the streets was a very common practice in the rural areas of her native country up until quite recently. What is worth noticing is, on the one hand, how this family preserves the ways of the old country on American soil even if these are, on the other hand, dictated by her peculiar situation as a widow who must face the hardships of life without a providing husband.

Although Ruth Morse might have been in love with Martin Eden, she was totally unperturbed by his poverty and hunger. For her and for those of her middle-class background, poverty "was salutary…it was a sharp spur that urged on to success all men who were not degraded and hopeless drudges" (258). In the light of Allport's discussion of caste and class, Ruth is a *bona fide* example of an individual whose "personal sense of worth is maintained by virtue of *looking down* on other people." His model, one may argue, fits her well. Briefly, because she belongs to the upper middle-class, she has a strong "sense of status superiority." That is why throughout the novel she looks down upon ethnic minorities and immigrants like Maria Silva and her family. This attitude can be seen in, for example, the passage where Martin Eden takes the Silvas to the local confectioner's. Once there, we learn, "he encountered Ruth and her mother. Mrs. Morse was shocked. Even Ruth was hurt, for she had some regard for appearances, and her lover, cheek by jowl with Maria, at the head of that army of Portuguese ragamuffins, was not a pretty sight" (368). Another "indicator of social class," Allport notes when elaborating on the overall theme of

caste and class, is “place of residence. Every community has regions that are known as ‘better neighborhoods’ and regions where only ‘lower class’ people live.” Once again, Allport’s words apply to Ruth and the personal satisfaction she extracts from contrasting herself with those whom she views as living squalidly, namely Martin Eden and the Silva family.[82] Once again, this attitude is reflected in chapter twenty-six when Ruth visits Martin Eden in Maria’s house:

> The steamy smell of dirty clothes, which had entered with her from the kitchen, was sickening. Martin must be soaked with it, Ruth concluded, if that awful woman washed frequently. Such was the contagiousness of degradation…. Now he would continue on in this horrible house, writing and starving for a few more months (275).

For someone of a working-class background such as Maria Silva, however, poverty meant living on a very tight budget. She could identify with Martin Eden, for she understood his plight and misfortunes. It is worthwhile noting how both women reacted to Eden’s hunger. Ruth’s reaction is insensitive and typical of her bourgeois background:

> Ruth never read hunger in Martin’s face, which had grown lean and had enlarged the slight hollows in the cheeks. In fact, she marked the change in his face with satisfaction. It seemed to refine him, to remove from him much of the dross of flesh and the too animal-like vigor that lured her while she detested it (258).

While this passage highlights her class prejudices, it also sheds additional light on her sexual attraction/repulsion to Martin Eden. Maria Silva, on the other hand,

> read a different tale in the hollow cheeks and the burning eyes, and she noted the changes in them from day to day, by them following the ebb and flow of his fortunes. She saw him leave the house with his overcoat and return without it, though the day was chill and raw, and promptly she saw his cheeks fill out slightly and the fire of hunger leave his eyes.
>
> In the same way she had seen his wheel and watch go,and after each event she had seen his vigor bloom again (258-59).

It is precisely the insensitivity and inability to look beyond the prejudices of her social class that will make Martin reject Ruth at the end of the novel once he has established himself as a successful writer while Maria's understanding and support will be rewarded. When Maria realized that

> hunger pinched hardest, she would send him in a loaf of new baking, awkwardly covering the act with banter to the effect that it was better than he could bake. And again, she would send one of her toddlers in to him with a great pitcher of hot soup, debating inwardly the while whether she was justified in taking it from the mouths of her own flesh and blood. Nor was Martin ungrateful, knowing as he did the lives of the poor, and that if ever in the world there was charity, this was it (259).

As a woman who is fond of wine, Maria invites Martin in for a drink and both end up making revelations about their past lives. It is at this point that both learn they have more in common than just their misery and poverty. Maria is reported to have been

> amazed to learn that he had been in the Azores, where she had lived until she was eleven. She was doubly amazed that he had been in the Hawaiian Islands, whither she had migrated from the Azores with her

> people. But her amazement passed all bounds when he told her he had been on Maui, the particular island whereon she had attained womanhood and married. Kahului, where she had first met her husband, – he, Martin, had been there twice! Yes, she remembered the sugar steamers, and he had been on them – well, well, it was a small world (260).

What is relevant about this passage is the revelation of her place of origin – the Azores – and the fact that she had originally emigrated with her parents to the Hawaiian Islands. This detail is historically accurate in terms of the documented routes of Azorean emigrants since – as noted earlier – many Portuguese individuals from the Azores islands who had emigrated to the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century did, in fact, settle in large Portuguese communities in the New Bedford or Fall River areas in Massachusetts; Providence, Rhode Island; California; and Hawaii as well.

Meanwhile, while both characters are still enjoying the cheap wine, Martin tries to find out what Maria's innermost desires are. Reluctantly, yet dreamingly, she says to him that her wish is to have "'Shoe alla da roun' for da childs – seven pairs da shoe...I like da house, dis house – all mine, no paya da rent, seven dollar da month.'" Finally, she tells him that her greatest dream in life is to be the proud owner of

> one milka ranch – good milka ranch. Plenty cow, plenty land, plenty grass. I like da have near San Le-an; my sister liva dere. I sella da milka in Oakland. I maka da plentee mon. Joe an' Nick no runna da cow. Dey go-a to school, Bimeby maka da good engineer, worka da railroad. Yes, I lika da milka ranch" (260-61).

To all these dreams, Martin responds with a "You shall have them" and eventually ends up granting them at the end of the novel once he has become a successful, well-paid writer. Maria Silva's version of the American dream – like that of many Portuguese in California – was to own a dairy farm because this activity allowed for economic ease, while enabling them to hold on to a way of life they were familiar with and good at in the old country. Unlike what happened to other Azoreans in Massachusetts caught in the world of industrial strife, it was precisely the dairy industry that produced the relative wealth of the Portuguese in California. In addition, what has caught my attention in this passage is the fact that London has given Maria a voice of her own, despite her broken English. In most depictions of the Portuguese in American literature this seldom happens. In most of the writings analyzed in this study, these individuals are seen through the eyes of mainstream characters who make racist comments about them. This is the case in, for example, Norris's *The Octopus* and, to a certain extent, in London's *The Valley of the Moon*. As Labor and Reesman have noted, " *Martin Eden*, in addition to its universal appeal, has special impact upon the American reader because it involves one of the most potent myths in the American culture, the Dream of Rags-to-Riches, and because its hero so clearly represents the values of that culture even while ostensibly rejecting them."[83] She falls into the typical pattern of most pioneer immigrants who arrive in the United States with the intention of making the lives of their children much sweeter than their own.

Although in this novel the narrator does not express any dislike of the Portuguese characters as is the case in Norris's *The Octopus*, they are, nonetheless, unappealing

to snobbish and prejudiced bourgeois families like that of Ruth. Once, she gets to express her true feelings about the Silvas when she encounters Martin (who is now a successful writer) who has taken them to buy shoes and toys. The narrator tells us that

> it was not that which hurt so much as what she took to be his lack of pride and self-respect. Further, and keenest of all, she read into the incident the impossibility of his living down his working-class origin. There was stigma enough in the fact of it, but shamelessly to flaunt it in the face of the world – her world – was going too far. Though her engagement to Martin had been kept secret, their long intimacy had not been unproductive of gossip; and in the shop, glancing covertly at her lover and his following, had been several of her acquaintances. She lacked the easy largeness of Martin and could not rise superior to her environment. She had been hurt to the quick, and her sensitive nature was quivering with the shame of it (368).

Because of his working-class background, Martin Eden feels that he has more in common with those who belong to his background. His feeling for Ruth, we learn, will abate before the end of the novel. What disturbs him the most is the false values of the bourgeois families such as that of Ruth who immediately praise him once he becomes a famous writer. While Ruth Morse's social class allowed her to marginalize the underprivileged, in London's later work, *The Valley of the Moon*, we are exposed to a novel where issues of race gain a more prominent role.

One of the issues that galvanized London scholars in the late nineteen nineties is the theme of race. While a few scholars claimed that London was a racist, others, however, stated that he was not. While older critical studies and biographies attest to London's ethnocentric

and racist views, in contrast, contemporary scholarship – especially the one focusing on London's Pacific and South sea tales – argues that the voice in these writings is deeply concerned with the plight of the dispossessed and colonized. As I hope to prove, London's portrayal of the Portuguese in his fiction allows us to witness such conflicting views on race.

Even though the overall portrait of Maria and her children is positive, it is necessary for the purposes of contrast with his racially charged novel, *The Valley of the Moon*.

Andrew J. Furer notes in his article, "'Zone-Conquerors' and 'White Devils': The Contradictions of Race in the Works of Jack London," that London valorizes the non-Anglo-Saxon in some of his Pacific tales, more specifically the peoples of Chinese and Hawaiian ancestry. While supporting such an argument, Furer also makes it clear that "London is unquestionably attracted to ideals of white superiority," that he often "created a series of Anglo-Saxon supermen, such as Wolf Larsen of *The Sea-Wolf*," and that London's views on race are "a bundle of contradictions."[84] Furer is suggesting that London's position on racial matters has been inconsistent throughout his career as a writer. While noticing some sympathy on London's part towards ethnic minorities in some of London's fiction, in my view, this is absent in his portrayal of the Portuguese in *The Valley of the Moon*.

In *A Pictorial Biography of Jack London*, for example, Russ Kingman's assessment of London's position on matters of race is undoubtedly a more balanced one, but he does not dwell on the reasons that have led him to such a view. Kingman says that:

> While Jack must be considered an advocate of racial purism, it is incorrect to call him a racist in the modern sense. In many of his short stories he demonstrated his sympathy for an understanding of the oppressed of all races. In 'The Mexican,' 'The League of the Old Men,' 'The Chinago,' etc., he reveals his own race as brutal oppressors and portrays minorities with sympathy and understanding.[85]

But as Kingman has also pointed out, it is difficult to believe that London completely erased from his mind the belief that "all other races were inferior,"[86] a view which his overbearing mother had instilled into him.

In "'The Way Our People Came': Citizenship, Capitalism, and Racial Difference in *The Valley of the Moon*," Christopher Hugh Gair also touches upon issues of race. His analysis, however, focuses exclusively on Saxon's and Billy's Anglo-Saxon origin and their anxiety "about race 'purity' and the decline of the 'original' settlers in California." While distinguishing between those who qualify for full American citizenship, Gair has also shown that certain first-generation ethnic minorities are only "permitted…a kind of associate citizenship."[87] It is exactly these individuals who are only entitled to an "associate citizenship" that this study of mine is concerned with.

Although recent scholarship has dealt with London's views on race more favorably, this has not always been so. Johnston, for example, has pointed out that although *The Valley of the Moon* "is not without merit, London's Anglo-Saxon supremacist preachments take on an almost mystical character; apparently the more London sought to put down his roots in California soil, the more his own uncertain

heritage led him to racist outpourings."[88] London's biographer, Andrew Sinclair, adds that

> *The Valley of the Moon* fails to be a great novel because it is too personal. It loses its poignant sense of quest and regeneration in the trivial descriptions of how to make money out of the land, and its propaganda destroys its art. Its major flaw, for many readers, is that it seems to deal with blood, race, and soil. Billy and Saxon are forever saying that their birthright is the land, and that foreigners have pushed their families off the soil into the slums. "We're the losers. We've been robbed," one character says. "We're the white folks that failed." Yet finally, Billy and Saxon come to admire the labor of the recent arrivals in America, which does enrich the soil. Those of old American stock were robbed by their own kind. They were not pushed off the land, they gave it up because they did not want to work it. "We wasn't wised up to farming. We played at it."[89]

In this quote, Sinclair is referring to the period in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries when many Americans abandoned their farms to work in factories. Through time, they came to the conclusion that they had made a big mistake in that they were being exploited. What both quotes also show is that in this novel we see London delving into matters of race. London's biographer also points out that there is much of London in the character of Billy because "By taking Billy Roberts for his hero, Jack seemed to be answering critics of his propaganda for the return of poor whites to the land. Billy is Jack without education."[90] As this passage also shows, racism tends to crop up in times with high unemployment rates and economic distress and is widely accepted by the ill-educated. Although Jeanne Campbell Reesman has conveyed to

me in an e-mail dated June 16, 1998 that “a number of other scholars have pointed out that London is quite critical of Billy,” in my view, however, Billy, as Sinclair has suggested, is the character whom London uses to express his own views on race and ethnic minorities. Billy simply delights in saying such things as: “Say, we old Americans oughta stick together, don’t you think? They ain’t many of us left. The country’s fillin’ up with all kinds of foreigners” (15) or “All our folks was a long time in America, an’ I for one won’t stand for a lot of foreigners tellin’ me how to run my country when they can’t speak English yet” (54). Although Saxon may say to Billy and her friends that “We’re Saxons, you an’ me, an’ Mary, an’ Bert, and all the Americans that are real Americans, you know, and not Dagoes and Japs and such” (14), she, of the two, is the one who is less prejudiced in matters of race throughout the course of the novel.

It is during the period in which Saxon is at her lowest – Billy is imprisoned, she has no financial security and is on the brink of seeing her marriage become a shambles – that she encounters an old Portuguese woman, who, like her, is gathering driftwood on the Oakland estuary. From her Saxon learns more about the inequality of the distribution of wealth in America. The melons that wash up on the shore, the old woman tells her, have been dumped into the sea by

> The people that have too much. It is to keep up the price. They throw them overboard in San Francisco….They chop each melon so that the poor people cannot fish them out and eat anyway. They do the same with the oranges, with the apples. Ah, the fisherman! There is a trust. When the boats catch too much fish, the trust throws them overboard from Fisherman Wharf, boat-loads and boat-loads and boat-

> loads of the beautiful fish. And the beautiful good fish sink and are gone. And no one gets them. Yet they are dead and only good to eat (93).

Unlike Maria Silva in *Martin Eden*, this old woman seems to have no problems in expressing herself in English. It is possible that London may have wanted her argument to shine through clearly, but compared to Maria Silva, she has been living longer in the United States. London may have chosen pidgin-English for Maria Silva for the purposes of realism since the date of publication of *Martin Eden* is closer to the Realist movement than that of *The Valley of the Moon*. Like other Realist writers who tried to record on the written page the sounds of ethnic minorities and the colloquial speech patterns of the lower social classes – for example, Joel Chandler Harris in *Nights with Uncle Remus* or Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – London is not doing so to ridicule Maria since his perception of her is sympathetic. In addition, Saxon's status in life at this point seems to be no better than that of this old woman and, at times, she cannot help pondering why she should be experiencing such hard times. Later in the novel, she and Billy become envious of the successful Portuguese farmers in San Leandro because they feel it is unfair that these immigrants should enjoy a better living than they.

After Billy is released from prison, Saxon and her husband go to the movie theater. This is clearly the turning-point in their lives because the farming scenes they see projected on the screen make them feel an urge to search for a farm. It is during this moment of extreme happiness that Saxon, at home, is reported to have taken her "long-neglected ukulele from its case and strummed it

into tune" (102). The irony in this passage is that although Billy delights in listening to his wife playing, he does not know that those towards whom he later in the narrative directs his racist feelings – the Portuguese – are the very ones who introduced this instrument in the United States. According to *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the ukulele is a "small guitar derived from the *machada*, or *machete*, a four-stringed guitar introduced into Hawaii by the Portuguese in the 1870s."[91]

While Billy and Saxon are passing through San Leandro, Billy says "Gee! This must be the Porchugeeze headquarters," adding a little further, "It looks like the free-born American ain't got no room left in his own land." Saxon tries to be more reasonable whereas Billy keeps up with his ethnocentric commentary: "I reckon the American could do what the Porchugeeze do if he wanted to. Only he don't want to, thank God. He ain't much given to livin' like a *pig* offen leavin's" (emphasis mine). Saxon, however, immediately retorts, saying: "but I've seen an awful lot of Americans living like pigs in the cities." Since Billy cannot understand that neither the Portuguese nor any other group of immigrants has anything to do with the labor struggles and strikes he and his fellow Americans had experienced in Oakland, he, out of ignorance, puts the blame on them. Upon seeing the children of the Portuguese farmers being dismissed from school in the afternoon, Billy goes as far as to say: "They never wore glad rags like them in the old country….They had to come over here to get decent clothes and decent grub. They're as fat as butterballs" (106).

Billy and Saxon are dismayed to learn that the price for an acre of land in San Leandro is way beyond what they

can afford. A lineman whom they meet on the road tells them that this is so

> "Because they worked the land overtime. Because they worked mornin', noon, an' night, all hands, women an' kids. Because they could get more out of twenty acres than we could out of a hundred an' sixty" (107).

He then goes on to tell them about Antonio Silva who has amassed a fortune:

> Look at old Silva – Antonio Silva. I've known him ever since I was a shaver. He didn't have the price of a square meal when he hit this section and begun leasin' land from my folks. Look at him now – worth two hundred an' fifty thousan' cold, an' I bet he's got credit for a million, an' there's no tellin' what the rest of his family owns….Forty years ago old Silva come from the Azores. Went sheep herdin' in the mountains for a couple of years, then blew into San Leandro (107-10).

The lineman also tells Billy and Saxon that Antonio Silva is the owner of a "town house in San Leandro now. An' he rides around in a four-thousan'-dollar tourin'-car. An' just the same his front dooryard grows onions clear to the sidewalk. He clears three hundred a year on that patch alone" (110). Although Silva may be perceived as a greedy businessman because of his tendency to maximize whatever piece of land he owns, this is not true in the sense that we must try to understand the culture and geography which have shaped this man who had emigrated from the Azores. In this novel, Antonio Silva is a good example of the immigrant farmer who has brought his old farming mentality to America. This is evident when the lineman is showing Silva's farm to Billy and Saxon:

> "Look at that, though you ought to see it in summer. Not an inch wasted. Where we

> get one thin crop, they get four fat crops. An' look at the way they crowd it – currants between the tree rows, beans between the currant rows, a row of beans close on each side the trees, an' rows of beans along the ends of the tree rows. Why, Silva wouldn't sell these five acres for five hundred an acre, cash down" (111).

This farming technique, however, leaves the land totally exhausted after a few years. These Portuguese farmers are acting much in the same way as, for example, Ishmael Bush and his family do in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Prairie* who have gone West deliberately to skim "the cream from the face of the earth" and get "the very honey of nature."[92] This is what Mr. Hastings means when he says:

> "And the same thing is going on, in one way or another, the same land robbing and hogging, over the rest of the country… I know a ranch in my county where the land was worth a hundred and twenty-five an acre. And it gave its return at that valuation. When the old man died, the son leased it to a Portuguese and went to live in the city. In five years the Portuguese skimmed the cream and dried up the udder. The second lease, with another Portuguese for three years, gave one-quarter the former return. No third Portuguese appeared to offer to lease it. There wasn't anything left" (152).

As this passage shows, these Portuguese farmers are denuding the land for quick returns. This comment by Mr. Hastings, however, takes place before he has made the acquaintance of Billy and Saxon. As soon as they leave San Leandro, Billy says to her:

> "It's all well enough, these dinky farmlets. They'll do for foreigners. But we Americans just gotta have room. I want to be able to look at a hilltop an' know

> it's my land, and know it's my land down the other side an' up the next hilltop, an' know that over beyond that, down alongside some creek, my mares are most likely grazin', an' their little colts grazin' with 'em or kickin' their heels" (113).

There are clear resonances of the author himself in this comment, for this is the very mentality of London during his ranching years at Glen Ellen. As Sinclair has pointed out, "He could never be content with being a small rancher and improving the land slowly. He had to become a large rancher and improve the land at speed. It was in his nature to run full tilt at a challenge."[93]

Frank Norris's prejudice towards the Portuguese can be explained through his belief in social Darwinism and his middle-class status which influenced his way of viewing the ethnic other as inferior. In the case of Jack London, however, his outspokenness on matters of race seems to have blossomed mostly during the period after he had already secured a sound professional and financial status. This is evidently the voice of the outspoken London in *The Valley of the Moon*, whereas in *Martin Eden* it sounds humbler and is closer to his working-class origins. Even though his belief in social Darwinism and Anglo-Saxon superiority stayed with him throughout his life, *The Valley of the Moon* predates some of his more enlightened views on ethnicity and represents a certain lack of sympathy with the daily exigencies of the immigrant sharecroppers.

New England Revisited: Gloucester Fishermen, Cape Cod Cranberry Pickers and Farmers

In this section, I aim to show how Rudyard Kipling, a writer complicit with the ideology of the British empire, has applied the colonial model to his representation of the Azorean fishermen of Gloucester, even though these fictional characters were not in a colonial situation. While *Captains Courageous* may be seen as Kipling's contribution to the local color movement in American literature, which had emerged after the Civil War thanks to William Dean Howells, this novel about America's fishing industry in Gloucester, Massachusetts, is – like the pieces by Norris and London discussed earlier in this chapter – saturated with social Darwinist discourse. In John Albert Macy's story, "Aunt Foster's Cranberries," however, the author rejects endorsing such an ideology, arguing that racist beliefs flourish mostly in individuals who are blatantly parochial and ill-educated.

Whereas Martha Stanley's *My Son* reiterates the overall attitude of ignorance and indifference native-born New Englanders have shown towards the Portuguese, it is an interesting play in the sense that it dwells on an important situation which Portuguese Americans, at some point in their lives, are confronted with: whether they should or should not assimilate into the mainstream. *Cranberry Red*, a book which, among other matters, should be defended for its stance against racism, sheds some interesting light on the prevailing confusion concerning the identity of Capeverdeans and Azorean farmers. As I hope to show in my analysis, New Englanders were not very adept at discriminating between ethnic minorities. They

believed that since these two groups spoke the same language and had “swarthy” complexions, Capeverdeans and Azoreans could be grouped in the “Portygee” category. Like Melville, in this novel, Edward B. Garside calls our attention to issues centering on racial purity so as to focus on the atrocities committed in its name.

Finally, LeGrand Cannon’s *Look to the Mountain* is the sole piece of writing that I have come across in which the Catholic beliefs of its Portuguese fictional characters are subject to prejudice and rejection by native-born American fictional characters, in a region marked by Protestantism and Puritanism.

After having focused on a few pieces with Californian landscapes, I shall return to a few texts with a New England setting. A work of literature which also touches upon issues related to race – even if not as forcibly as the texts by Melville, Norris, and London – is Rudyard Kipling’s *Captains Courageous*, published in 1897, a time when social Darwinism was a forceful presence in American and British letters. Although Kipling is a British writer, the novel is essentially American in its scope for it aims at depicting the way of life of Gloucester fishermen, whom he had observed first-hand during the 1890s while he briefly lived in Vermont. George Monteiro rightly points out that this work was “written to exalt the common fisherman. If Herman Melville had written in *Moby-Dick* the epic of the dying industry of whaling, in *Captains Courageous* Kipling wrote the romance of commercial fisherman.”[94] When discussing another novel written by Kipling, *Kim* (1901), Edward Said has, while noting the complexity of this work set in India, also shown the ways in which its author subscribed to the ideology of Empire. Kipling believed that people at the

top are better and that the world is properly ordered. Kipling looked down upon the colonized Indians, who, at the time, were struggling to break free from British rule. For the purposes of understanding Kipling's patronizing and disrespectful views of black people, especially the "nigger" cook and his representation of the Portuguese in *Captains Courageous*, it is worth taking a look at what Said has to say about Kipling's perceptions of the Indians and Empire:

> Two factors must be kept in mind as we interpret *Kim*. One is that, whether we like it or not, its author is writing not just from the dominating viewpoint of a white man in a colonial possession but from the perspective of a massive colonial system whose economy, functioning, and history had acquired the status of a virtual fact of nature.
>
> Kipling assumes a basically uncontested empire….The second factor is that, no less than India itself, Kipling was a historical being as well as a major artist. *Kim* was written at a specific moment in his career, at a time when the relationship between the British and Indian people was changing. *Kim* is central to the quasi-official age of empire and in a way represents it. And even though Kipling resisted this reality, India was already well on its way toward a dynamic of outright opposition to British rule…A remarkable, complex novel like *Kim* is a very illuminating part of that history, filled with emphases, inflections, deliberate inclusions and exclusions as any great work of art is, and made the more interesting because Kipling was not a neutral figure in the Anglo-Indian situation but a prominent actor in it.

How are we, then, to read this novel today? Said states that:

> When we read it today, Kipling's *Kim* can touch on many of these issues. Does Kipling portray the Indians as inferior, or as somehow equal but different? Obviously, an Indian reader will give an answer that focuses on some factors more than others (for example, Kipling's stereotypical views – some would call them racialist – on the Oriental character), whereas English and American readers will stress his affection for Indian life on the Grand Trunk Road. How then do we read *Kim* as a late nineteenth-century novel, preceded by the works of Scott, Austen, Dickens, and Eliot? We must not forget that the book is after all a novel in a line of novels, that there is more than one history in it to be remembered, that the imperial experience while often regarded as exclusively political also entered into the cultural and aesthetic life of the metropolitan West as well.[95]

These quotes show that in *Kim*, Kipling expressed his complicity with the ideology of Empire and adopted a patronizing attitude towards Otherness. Moreover, Said does not hesitate to note that an Indian reader will immediately be drawn to – and eager to discuss the "stereotypical views" of those pertaining to his or her ethnic background. Would not a Portuguese American reader react in much the same way with American writings, especially those that patronize this ethnic minority?

Basically, the story line in this novel highlights the changes a rich and spoiled Anglo-Saxon boy (who fell off a cruise ship and was rescued by Gloucester fishermen) undergoes, that is, his transformation into a mature young man thanks to the valuable experiences he is exposed to on the schooner *We're Here*, fishing out of Gloucester. In this story, Kipling celebrates the hard work of a multi-ethnic group of fishermen. These characters from a humble

and “low” background are uneducated, but deeply civilized and they teach the spoiled boy values of hard work, loyalty, endurance, and duty. It is interesting to observe that this process of metamorphosis occurs within a milieu where these fishermen are struggling against the overpowering forces of the unpredictable and indifferent sea. These are features typical of the literary period to which this work of fiction rightly belongs, that is, Naturalism. In this piece of writing, Kipling, much like Norris in *The Octopus*, is, as stated in *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*, interested in foregrounding the perilous lives of “the lower – almost the lowest – classes.” For Norris, this “is not romanticism – this drama of the people, working itself out in blood and ordure. It is not realism. It is a school by itself, unique, somber, powerful beyond words. It is naturalism.”[96] This perception of life as an arena of struggle at the end of the nineteenth century has also been eloquently rendered in Jack London’s, *The Call of the Wild* and, in many ways, it is similar to the prevailing keynote of danger on board the *We’re Here*, especially in such moments as when the fishermen fight against the overpowering forces of Nature: the unpredictable sea, the torrential rain, the hooked and struggling codfish or even in the few instances when the crew members disagree or clash with one another. While the changes Harvey Cheyne undergoes are important, I am particularly interested in Kipling’s portrayal of Manuel, an ordinary Portuguese fisherman who is originally from the island of Madeira.

When we first meet Manuel, he is “clothed in a blue jersey” and when he turns his head towards Harvey, who is gradually gaining consciousness after almost drowning in the sea, Manuel was “showing a pair of little gold rings

half hidden in curly black hair" (4). The image of Manuel that remains – from the very outset – on the reader's mind is that of associating Manuel with a pirate. Furthermore, throughout most of the narrative, Harvey cannot help suspecting Manuel to be the one who had stolen his money. Even though Harvey's mother later on tells her son that the missing sum had been found, Manuel – as everyone else – has been thought of as a potential thief.

Although this character is now living in America, trying to cope with a new language and values, he is still holding on to his native culture, especially his Roman Catholic upbringing. Unlike other Portuguese fishermen in American writings, Manuel invokes the Virgin Mary for a safe voyage. Such a tradition has also been brought to Gloucester, a fishing town where many Portuguese fishermen have settled and where much of their lifestyles and customs are an extension of what they used to be in the old country. At some point, Manuel says this to Harvey:

> "If I was you, when I come to Gloucester I would give two, three big candles for my good luck."
> "Give who?"
> "To be sure – the Virgin of our Church on the Hill. She is very good to fishermen all the time. That is why so few of us Portugee men ever are drowned."
> "You're a Roman Catholic, then?"
> "I am a Madeira man. I am not a Porto Pico boy. Shall I be Baptist, then? Eh, wha-at? I always give candles – two, three more when I come to Gloucester.The good Virgin she never forgets me, Manuel" (48).

One cannot help wondering what Manuel means when he asks: "Shall I be Baptist, then?" Does this point to his unwillingness in embracing this – or any – Protestant religious denomination and, by extension, the cultural

values of the American mainstream? Or is it simply poor English for 'What, do you think I'm a Baptist or what?'

In this novel, Manuel is singled out from the other fishermen, especially those of an Anglo-Saxon background. In this story there is a tendency to portray ethnic minorities with individual idiosyncrasies. Dan, for example, is reported to have said the following to Harvey when pointing to Manuel somewhere on the sea: "Manuel rows Portugoosey; ye can't mistake him" and when Manuel's loaded dory draws alongside the *We're Here*, the "Portuguese smiled a brilliant smile that Harvey learned to know well later" (18-19). It is possible that Dan is alluding to Manuel's particular way of rowing, that is, outwards, instead of bringing the oar towards himself. If that is the case, this way of rowing is possible when he is all by himself. But when he is in the company of others, this is impossible. In addition, whenever Manuel is speaking to the Portuguese fishermen, his "countrymen jabbered at him in their own language" (90). At a given time, Harvey "found himself in hot argument with a gentle, hairy Newfoundlander on one side and a *howling Portuguese* on the other" (91; emphasis mine). This Portuguese character is portrayed as a "howling" animal when speaking. As Fanon has noted,[97] this practice is typical of colonialism but it also reflects the dominant culture's ways in a *fin-de-siècle*, naturalist context.

Unlike the other fishermen, Manuel relishes in chopping up the codfish and drenching his hands with blood:

> "Hi!" shouted Manuel, stooping to the fish, and bringing one up with a finger under its gill and a finger in its eyes. He laid it on the edge of the pen; the knife-blade glimmered with a sound of

> tearing, and the fish, slit from throat to vent, with a nick on either side of the neck, dropped at Long Jack's feet (24).

While this passage indicates that Manuel is a skilled and practiced fish-gutter, and although the situation is here different, I detect several parallels between this scene and that of the slaughtering of rabbits in Norris's *The Octopus*. Manuel picks up the codfish with a delightful "Hi!" and the Portuguese in Norris's novel were depicted as "more eager" to slaughter the rabbits than the dogs. What both passages have in common is that the Portuguese characters are portrayed as primitive people who enjoy situations involving blood. It is not always clear whether in these passages Kipling and Norris are, in fact, simply making extensive use of features which we often encounter in Naturalist fiction, or, instead, if their choice of Portuguese characters to carry out the entire affair is, indeed, a biased one.

At the end of the narrative, Mrs. Cheyne gets to meet the man who had rescued her son. She longed "to have Manuel for a butler; so silently and easily did he comport himself among the frail glassware and dainty silver" (121). This passage shows how precise Manuel's manners are and how he had developed these skills in such a confined space as is a ship's hold. She does not express her thankfulness to Manuel, the man who had rescued her son, but she admires his skills with the cutlery and glasses while regarding Manuel as a subordinate – a butler – given her upper-class status. And Harvey wraps up his friendship and appreciation of Manuel by way of saying this to his father: "Manuel saved my life. I'm sorry he's a Portuguee" (116). While shiploads of people die in *Captains Courageous*, the reader learns that it is not worth crying

over spilled milk, especially if the loss involves a few drowned Portuguese fishermen. After all – the narrator notes – "Only a couple of Portuguese and an old man from Gloucester were drowned, but many were cut or bruised" (95). It is impossible to read this passage and not recall the answer given to Aunt Sally about the number of blacks who had either perished or were injured on a particular steamboat travelling on the Mississippi river in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Although Harvey Cheyne had been exposed to perilous situations and humble characters, at the end he returns to his well-to-do parents and comfortable life. His interaction with Manuel and the other fishermen did not modify his ethnocentric and patronizing ways towards ethnic minorities. While in most American naturalist fiction the protagonist usually experiences a radical change in the course of the novel as, for example, the protagonists in Norris's *McTeague* or Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, in this story this does not really occur. In this piece, Kipling is questioning some of the tenets put forth by Émile Zola. His message is that ethnocentrism does not vanish in a situation as the one on display in *Captains Courageous*. In this novel, Kipling reiterates his belief that the world is properly ordered. For Kipling, this means that the upper-middle class should be in control and in roles of leadership whereas minorities and the "nigger" cook should unquestioningly follow them.

John Albert Macy's "Aunt Foster's Cranberries" (1904-5) is yet another sketch with corrosive, prejudicial overtones. It is an intriguing piece not only because of its discussion of the Portuguese and their darker complexion – when compared to New Englanders of an Anglo-Saxon or Northern European background – but also because

it highlights the native fear towards the “darker” ethnic other, a feature of the early twentieth-century New England mind as we have seen at the outset of this chapter. The story’s plot is a simple one in the sense that it focuses on the type of arrangements that its two characters – Aunt Foster and Captain Ben – have made in order to pick their cranberries. Although at first sight this seems an innocent and inconsequential tale, it reflects, nonetheless, the angst of New Englanders towards the olive complexion of the Portuguese immigrants who had settled in the Cape Cod, Fall River, and New Bedford areas of Massachusetts and around about Providence, Rhode Island. Macy shows that this feeling usually occurs because of ignorance and parochialism.

Aunt Foster and Captain Ben own two adjoining bogs with cranberries that need to be picked since harvest time has come around once again, and the story revolves around the manner in which both characters accomplish this. It is precisely during the conversation that takes place between Captain Ben and Jerome Harbour (Aunt Foster’s nephew) that the reader can understand why many New Englanders have shown distaste towards the Portuguese. Captain Ben, a well-traveled man who had spent most of his life on the sea, can only attribute these feelings in his fellowmen to their general lack of knowledge of the world and its peoples, in essence, to their parochialism. Captain Ben says this to Mr. Harbour:

> “I suppose them Portuguees and Dagoes come along in a week or so, ‘bout the middle o’ the month.”
>
> “My aunt doesn’t like ‘em, you know. She wants what she calls white folks.”
>
> “They be white folks. Least they ain’t so far from white. I’ve seen blacker ones in the south seas. Ye see, it’s like this: there’s all color o’ white folks; I be as

> dark as an old sail, but I ain't a nigger nor yet a Chinee. 'Cause I am originally white. Now some o' them here Spaniards an' Dago-Eyetalians get dark livin' near the waist o' the earth where the equator is, an' their skins get tanned, but they are born white as the under part of a fish."
>
> "But my aunt thinks that American girls pick the crop cleaner."
>
> "Maybe, maybe, but they gets half a cent more a measure, an' that makes up. Now last year Mis' Foster got two barrels more'n I did, but it cost even ten dollars more for pickin'. So she really lost, 'cause there weren't two barrels difference in the haul o' the gals from 'round here and the haul o' those dark-eyed folks. The trouble is, for all her grit and git-up, Mis' Foster is a little mite scared o' them outlandish. She wouldn't be if she'd et, slep' an' swapped yarns with Fijis same as I have. Mis' Foster is plumb scared, that's all they is to it" (204).

Because of her inbred fear, Aunt Foster is willing to sacrifice some of the extra income she would receive for her cranberries, whereas Captain Ben would not think twice when hiring the Portuguese since he is receptive of ethnic minorities but also because they would do his work for less pay. What is rather ironic in this woman's behavior is that she is constantly nagging the old man about how careless and unwise he is in the management of his money and affairs. The narrator implies that this woman's feelings are a reflection of the New England fear of Otherness and that it was uncalled for since all that the Portuguese immigrants desired was to work in peace and bother no one:

> It was true. The narrowly-bred New England woman, frightened by their unfamiliar speech was in foolish terror of these soft-eyed peaceful Portuguese who had

> settled in Cape Cod. They molested no one, and asked only work and a place to live, but in Aunt Foster's mind they were mysteriously related to predaceous gypsies (204).

Again, while the narrator reiterates the peacefulness of the Portuguese in that they are generally a sweet, law-abiding, and hard working people, this woman was suspicious of them to the point of viewing them as "predaceous gypsies."

As in Melville's short story "The 'Gees," the narrator in this story, too, wishes to argue that some New Englanders are narrow-minded. The argument in both "The 'Gees" and "Aunt Foster's Cranberries" is that racism can only be attenuated or, ideally, eradicated from American society through education and open mindedness.

Meanwhile, Captain Ben has fallen sick, and Aunt Foster is obliged to hire the cranberry pickers. And this is – we are told – what she did when

> the pickers came, Aunt Foster took charge of the bog, Captain Ben's part as well as her own. Being scrupulous in her sense of duty, she hired for Captain Ben a group of Portuguese. For herself she engaged American girls and boys.
>
> Then she did a thing both ingenious and generous.
>
> When a cranberry field is picked, it is laid off in lanes separated by cords three or four feet apart. Each picker must stick to his own strip, and thus fares equally well with his fellows, for the strips are likely to average the same, and no one can monopolize the best parts of the bog.
>
> The survey line across the bog which divided Aunt Foster's part from Captain Ben's was first marked by a line of string; this became the equator, and the other strings lay parallel to it on each side. When Will Gregerson's boy and Aunt

> Foster had cut the field into its sections, Aunt Foster gave orders.
>
> She indicated to one of the Americans the strip he was to take and then she pointed out to one of Captain Ben's Portuguese his section. These two were the vanguard of America against Portugal, of Aunt Foster against Captain Ben. The other pickers strung out on both sides of the equator, each in a zone, and the picking began (206).

Because she is such an austere and proud woman, the only way she gets the old man to accept her generosity is by carefully placing

> the first picker of Captain Ben's dark people three whole strips inside her own line. So that year the equator lay on the tropic of Capricorn, and of the bog, which had been so equally divided before, the part which yielded fruit to Captain Ben's barrels was much larger than the part which was left for Aunt Foster.
>
> The crop for the whole bog was a hundred and twenty barrels. Of this, Captain Ben was credited on Gregerson's books with seventy-five barrels and Aunt Foster with forty-five. The net profit that year with cranberries at seven dollars and a half a barrel was about six hundred dollars. It was evident to Gregerson that the Captain had three hundred and seventy-odd dollars and Mrs. Foster less than two hundred and fifty.
>
> It was also evident to Gregerson that Mrs. Foster must have done some foolish thing to her bog, though it looked all right to him the last time he passed it. Probably she had put in too much sand (206).

Although she has a generous heart in the sense she makes it possible for him to make more money, without his knowing, this character feels racial prejudice in her heart towards a group of people with slightly darker,

Mediterranean complexion. As a whole, however, this story expresses the innate decency of these people, even in the face of racial conditioning. In this story, as in many others that we have discussed so far – or that we shall analyze further ahead – the Portuguese are seen through the eyes of an uneducated and provincial New Englander of Anglo-Saxon descent but, fortunately, the story in itself seems to suggest that it is through education and exposure to the world at large (here symbolized by Captain Ben) that bigotry may be attenuated or, hopefully, eradicated from America. Macy's point is that one's exposure to the world at large will make us more open-minded and accepting of difference.

In Agnes Edwards Rothery's novel, *The House by the Windmill* (1923), Mrs. Ryder, an educated woman with idealistic dreams for her children, represents that particular sector of American society with a weak knowledge of world geography and of the numerous ethnic groups which have come to America from all the different parts of the world. To her, the Portuguese character named Manuel, an Azorean, looks like a black man. It is not uncommon, however, to come across Portuguese citizens of African descent, but such is not the case with the character under consideration. But before we move on to her perception of the Azoreans – as well as that of the New Englanders with whom she and her family spend their summers – it is worthwhile contextualizing the representation of the Portuguese within the novel itself.

Briefly, the novel is divided into five pivotal periods in time, namely 1890; 1895; 1900; 1903-1909 and 1913-1919. These phases capture the changes within the Ryder family and how Mrs. Ryder grapples with them. The story is basically about the pleasures of encountering

tranquillity and a wholesome way of life in the Cape Cod countryside during the summers – at an old windmill that had undergone major renovations – after this family has spent the long winter months around Boston while school was in session. Imbued with the spirit of Romanticism, Mrs. Ryder acknowledges the importance of raising a family in a rural setting – the only place, she believes, that can provide her children with sufficient sustenance for the growth of their minds and imaginations. She wants them to grow up among the farm animals and even learn how to grow a vegetable garden. Not only does she harbor high intellectual expectations for her children, this woman also injects some restlessness and bustle into the Cape Cod community at Clovelly. Over the years, she successfully manages to get her neighbors, who are reported to "hate work and are proud as Lucifer" (53), excited about growing a vegetable garden and holding annual fairs where they could proudly exhibit the produce that came from their gardens. Moreover, she injects some life into the moribund local economy and into the inert men on Cape Cod who spend their time hanging out at Reuben Nye's store. These men, we are told, were the

> descendants of sea captains – men of brains and bravery who had sailed the seven seas, and had had a vision of the world beyond the Cape Cod sand dunes. And these sons and grandsons of theirs had the same native sagacity, the same decent standards of morals and of living. They were as well spoken and perhaps better educated than their ancestors – for every town in the Cape has its public schools and its public library – but unlike their ancestors they were neither generous nor energetic….They were thrifty, God-fearing, a little suspicious of newcomers, and a little too eager to charge two dollars for a dollar's worth of labour (83).

Mrs. Ryder even tells them that they do not prosper because they are too proud to grow a garden and dirty their hands in the soil, a view which she confirms when she meets Manuel.

This novel succeeds in shedding some light on life at a regional level. In this sense, *The House by the Windmill* is a piece of local-color writing. Although the term is – as we shall see ahead – more appropriate to some writings of the latter part of the nineteenth-century, the novel itself seems to come out of this tradition, for it provides us with a snapshot of life on Cape Cod before and after the turn of the century. As suggested earlier, in post-Civil War America, more specifically in the 1870s and 1880s, William Dean Howells encouraged writers to focus on their own particular parts of the country, instead of the customary New England region. Whereas Boston had been the cultural center of the nation up to the Civil War, Howells felt that the nation as a whole – as the frontier was gradually moving westward – was underrepresented. The writings of, for example, Ambrose Bierce, Kate Chopin, Bret Harte, and George Washington Cable address this need to represent these geographical regions. Apart from stemming from the local color movement in American writing, the novel also deals with a mother's disappointment at her children's failure to fulfill the professional and educational goals she had envisioned for them. An ambitious woman, she dies in her sixties completely heartbroken, thinking that she has been a failure as a mother. But we learn that one of her children eventually receives a degree from Harvard, another one owns an important automobile factory, and her daughters prosper through marriage. But what I am concerned with

here is how such an idealistic and educated woman who delights in reading Melville's *Moby-Dick* – a work containing characters from practically all the different nations in the world on board the *Pequod* – fails to understand Melville's message of racial tolerance since she, instead, is uncomfortable with Manuel's "blackness." Unfortunately, Macy's insight on how education and exposure to the world will foster an individual's open-mindedness are nowhere to be seen in this character. One day, she is working in her garden and as she looks up, she sees

> *A black face with gleaming white teeth* [smiling] ingratiatingly at her.
>
> "You want man to work?"
>
> "I certainly do. Where did you come from?"
>
> "From the Azores. I Portugee."
>
> His stammering English was supplemented by his brilliant smile.
>
> "Do you know," said Mrs. Ryder, leaning on her hoe and surveying him, "that you are the first man that has come asking for work during the five years we have lived here? I certainly am glad to see you."
>
> Manuel, for such was his name, smiled vaguely. He could not follow her remarks, but her cordiality he could not doubt.
>
> "I work hard," he suggested.
>
> "Then come with me: I've a job for you this minute" (56; emphasis mine).

The image her retinas were "trained" to capture – to paraphrase Jacobson – as well as her immediate reaction upon seeing Manuel was to view him as someone with a possible African descent. And this was motivated by the darker color of his skin. Unlike the New Englanders, Manuel does not mind working in the fields since this is what he did back on the Azores islands. And it was not too long ago that he had emigrated to America because his

mastery of the English language was still weak – and yet it was not that bad either, considering that many older generation Portuguese seldom get to learn the language at all. What is worth keeping in mind, however, is that this brief passage stresses the man's willingness to work and prosper. This notion is further emphasized when Mrs. Ryder walks into her bedroom and watches Manuel "through the window digging furiously" (61). Even her husband, an educated man, responds in the same way to Manuel's "blackness." This can be seen when he asks his wife while they are out on a stroll:

> "Who was the big *black fellow* I just passed?"
> "A Portuguese from the Azores. He's the first foreigner I've ever seen in Clovelly" (62; emphasis mine).

Neither character makes a racist remark about Manuel, but they both seem unsettled by his difference and his 'foreignness' to which they draw attention. What they explicitly convey is their inability to regard Manuel as one of them.

References to Manuel's "darkness" are made every now and then. We learn that it is now the cranberry picking season, which used to be a "social, neighbourhood affair, in which the minister and the scalloper, the postmaster and the pump mender mingled democratically." But this, the narrator tells us, "was before the *dark flood* of Portuguese labour had inundated Cape Cod" (112; emphasis mine). The image of the "dark flood" has implanted a feeling of dislike in the minds of those who are unwilling to have these people move into the Cape. Moreover, the Portuguese represent a threat to mainstream American culture and, for that reason, they should be isolated if

not ostracized. This is exactly what Manuel experiences while he is busy picking cranberries:

> Somewhat apart from the others kneeled a figure larger and brighter than any of the rest. It was Manuel at a respectful distance from the white folks who looked at him with indifferent, although not hostile, eyes (114).

As in Macy's short story, "Aunt Foster's Cranberries," Manuel, too, is depicted as a "black" man who should keep a "respectful distance from the white folks." The people in this community preferred isolation rather than hostility because, after all, the local economy needed these immigrants badly. Such an attitude re-emphasizes the way in which the ethnic other is kept at the margins. After all, the Jim Crow policy was in effect and widespread in America when this novel was published. But the irony here is that he is, nonetheless, a Caucasian even though his complexion is not as pale as that of those who are on the other side of the bog. The issue of marginality and "segregation" is further emphasized in the passage where Sidney, Mr. Ryder's daughter, goes for a walk and eventually comes upon a Portuguese settlement somewhere in the backwoods of Clovelly. Here, we learn that

> From the shacks by the cranberry bogs, where the Portuguese lived, floated the sound of music. Once upon a time *black Manuel* had been the only *coloured person* in Clovelly. Now in these hastily built shanties dozens of his *dark brothers* from the Azores had gathered. There were even a few women and children, and every tiny roof sheltered half a score. Someone was playing on a mouth organ, and there was a queer sound of singing in chorus, and the rhythm of heavy feet dancing on rough board floors. It had become quite foreign,

> this end of Clovelly, and Sidney paused a moment, listening to the echoes of merriment (168; emphasis mine).

While this young lady's impressions on the merriment of the Azoreans attest to the mainstream's customary reaction in being invaded by foreigners and their strange customs, at a more profound level they are indicative of New England's attitude towards life in general: activities marked by seriousness, plainness, and sobriety are preferable to wasting one's time with merriment. And that is why such an alien culture, people, language, and way of life – at least in the eyes of New Englanders – cannot easily accommodate itself within the mainstream. Hence, in this novel this notion is rendered through a physical barrier that separates the Portuguese from the native Yankees: they live in the backwoods, at the other end of Clovelly, because of the cultural and linguistic barrier but also because of the real estate prices the first generation could not afford. Furthermore, such integration was literally impossible to achieve, at least during the period of the mass movement of first generation Portuguese immigrants into the United States. And this is precisely the phase that this novel focuses on. It would take decades for the Portuguese to make their way, gradually, into a more central position within the American mainstream. In this novel, the stress on blackness is stereotyping and reductive, but it is matched by an effort to see it as difference rather than inferiority.

A play that shows the Portuguese at the crossroads, torn between holding on to their native culture while others are adopting American values is Martha Stanley's *My Son*, published in 1924, just one year after Rothery's *The House by the Windmill*. This play's Portuguese fictional

characters, Ana Silva, her son Brauglio (a name that has a dubious Portuguese origin and sounds more like Italian), and Felipe Vargas are reported to have been in America much longer than Manuel in Rothery's novel. The characters in this play are representative of those waves of Azoreans who sailed to America some time around the 1850s when the New England whaling industry was prospering. And this view is substantiated by the reference to Ana Silva, a widow, who had already attended school in America as a child and is fluent in the English language. Moreover, these language skills are also reflected in her American-born son, whose identification with his native Portuguese culture is minimal and whose relationship with American culture and values is one of complete assimilation. Since they have been in America much longer, the ties connecting them to the old country are not as strong, a fact which makes American culture more appealing to Brauglio. In this play, Stanley succeeds in portraying the tensions between the first-and second-generation Portuguese living in America. This is reflected in the way both characters view marriage, that is, whether one should marry someone of the same ethnic background (Ana Silva prefers a Portuguese husband) or – as Crèvecoeur has encouraged – merge with other ethnic backgrounds (Brauglio prefers an American girl). An issue that Werner Sollors has dealt with in *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, it, too, is paramount in this play. The overall depiction of the Portuguese on this seacoast town of Cape Cod needs to be dealt with in some detail so that we may understand, as we shall see ahead, why this New England community resists the assimilation of the Portuguese. Or, for that matter, why the first- generation Portuguese – here

represented through the character of Ana Silva – try to convince their children to avoid such an assimilation.

As in the other works of fiction under review, this play, too, is replete with references pointing to an overall dislike of the Portuguese. In a short conversation between Brauglio and Ellery – who has come to court Ana Silva for reasons other than love – we learn that the Portuguese are people with whom the New Englanders do not wish to mix. While Brauglio, of course, does not mind Ellery marrying his mother, Brauglio conveys the mainstream's prejudices in a sarcastic and ironic manner:

> Brauglio. Everybody's talking about it.
> Ellery. About what?
> Brauglio. They say you're hanging around here for my mother!
> Ellery. (*Calmly*) In a way – I am.
> Brauglio. (L.C., *back to audience. Sarcastically*) Aren't you afraid they'll talk about you Americans mixing with us?
> Ellery. (*Meaningly*) Oh, *some* of you Portuguese are all right.
> Brauglio. Meaning – my mother. You bet she's all right.
> Ellery. Yes – your *mother* was just who I meant! (7)

Since Ana Silva owns a store and, supposedly, has some money that her deceased husband (a fisherman) had left her, Ellery finds her a good bargain and does not mind a marriage with a Portuguese woman even if the local Yankee community disapproves such a move. In yet another revealing conversation between Betty Smith (the girl Brauglio is dating) and Captain Bamby, we find out that Betty's mother rented the store to Ana Silva in a patronizing manner, feigning amiability. Betty interrupts Captain Bamby's recollections of her mother – Hattie Smith – by way of saying to him:

> You used to hold her on your knee, tell her stories, saw her married, went to sea with Uncle Cyrus, who owned this place, and now mother rents it to Ana Silva, because they used to go to school together, otherwise she wouldn't rent it to a Portuguese because she doesn't like 'em! (14)

Knowing her mother's tastes, why does Betty Smith go against her mother's dislike of the Portuguese? Besides being a good dancer, she finds him sexually appealing. She is fond of spending time with him in his room. As bell hooks has argued in her chapter "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance," such an attitude is typical of a situation involving the longing for contact with the dark ethnic other. Even if this play does not state it directly (at the time, "Victorian" taboos concerning the representation of sexuality in art had not completely disappeared) Betty, a white native-born American is erotically aroused by the possibility of having sex with someone who – as this chapter shows – belongs to a "darker" ethnic minority.[98] From her conversation with Captain Bamby and Ellery, the general attitude of dislike of the Portuguese is further emphasized. The New Englanders find it rather unfortunate that Cape Cod is becoming infested with Portuguese immigrants:

> Betty. Gee! I'd die if I had to live in this town all the year round!….Mother wants to sell on account of the Portuguese that have crowded in here, but where we see them only three months of the year, I like it (17).

Further into the play, Ellery tells Ana Silva about a "woman from Michigan somewhere [who] had five hundred

dollars taken out of her room while she was downstairs in the ballroom dancing" (26). Ana's response to this piece of information strikes the nail on its head. The Portuguese are always the scapegoats, the ones to blame for everything bad that happens in this town:

> Oh, dear – I suppose we'll have to hear it all again now!….About the theft being by some of our people. Whenever there are any windows broken or any little mischief going on, the people in this town always say, "*Some Portuguese*," just like that – as if we were dirt. They don't trust us! (27)

Moreover, Brauglio is depicted as not only a young man who wastes his time as a dancing instructor but also as one who has stolen Hattie Smith's emerald chain and bracelet. This behavior is rather strange considering that this woman might become his mother-in-law. The point is that he wishes to elope with her daughter, Betty, and this young lady's tastes and lifestyle are expensive. As the play shows, he does not really need to steal anyone's personal belongings since he is making good money with his dancing lessons and his mother is excessively fond of him and clearly not a miser. In portraying Brauglio as a thief, Stanley is pointing to the dangers involved when one is lured by a flashy, superficial lifestyle represented by Betty – something which Ana Silva wishes to get across to her son.

Another important aspect that needs to be addressed in this discussion is the fact that Stanley's command of Portuguese culture, language, and way of life is minimal. And this can be seen in Act I where Ana Silva is reported to be wearing a "costume that suggests the Portuguese and their love for bright colors" (23). One should not forget that although she is about forty years old, she is a widow

and is socially expected to be in mourning either until she marries another man or until she dies. If even nowadays some older Portuguese widows still embrace this tradition, obviously in the first quarter of this century – the period this play depicts – this belief was much stronger and more widespread. Further evidence within this play that Ana Silva would think in such a way is the fact that Stanley portrays her as someone who completely embraces the Portuguese way of life even though the author has "dressed" her, so to speak, in the wrong clothes. Perhaps Stanley may be referring here to the multi-colored regional costumes that Portuguese women usually put on during some cultural festival in order to dance – and that Stanley may have witnessed during her observations of the Portuguese in New England. But to me, at least, it is difficult to imagine Ana Silva dressed in one of these costumes for the reasons just pointed out. The point is that the play itself has enough evidence to support this viewpoint because at a given moment, when Hattie Smith asks Ana Silva for some advice as to what she should wear on a particular occasion, Ana says to her: "Wear one of your fine dresses, Hattie – the shiny black satin I saw you wearing to church one day" (38). Whether Hattie has lost a husband, too, the play does not specify. Although there are other reasons for her suggestion of a black dress, in my view, given her status in life, Ana Silva pictures the world through dark colors. Moreover, the fishing community she belongs to and its subculture indicate that it is appropriate for widows to dress in black.

Although Stanley may also wish to authenticate her play by sprinkling *My Son* with a word or two of Portuguese every now and then, the words she actually uses sound or

look, most of the time, like Spanish. Clearly, a Portuguese American reader cannot help questioning Stanley's knowledge in these passages and this is what Mary V. Dearborn means (in the passage quoted earlier in chapter one) when she argues that it is the ethnic group on the edges of the mainstream who can best "represent what it means to exist within American culture"[99] and not the other way around. Moreover, this brief exposition reinforces my view that when Stanley – like so many other American writers – attempts to diagnose and discuss the Portuguese living in the United States, she often does so unconvincingly. Within popular texts such as *My Son*, we witness a perpetuation of ignorance of the ethnic other.

During a conversation between Ana Silva and Hattie Smith in which they openly discuss the dating of their children, Mrs. Smith lets slip that she believes the Portuguese belong to a different race from that of Anglo-Saxon people since she does not feel very comfortable with their darker complexion and often equates them in her mind with blacks. She says the following about her daughter, whom she wishes to distance from Brauglio: "You know Betty has had *everything money can buy…* all her life, besides – *she's a different race – their religions are different*" (42). Notice how the text undercuts her assumption of superiority by linking her assertion to her sense of her own social position and affluence. We might therefore infer that such prejudices were shared by her social equals in religious observance and economic power. It is a fending-off gesture on the part of one of the privileged. In my view, Ignatiev draws the same conclusion in respect of how and why racial identities are ascribed:

> The only logical conclusion is that people are members of different races because

> they have been assigned to them. Outside these labels and the racial oppression that accompanies them, the only race is the human.[100]

What also emerges from this passage is this woman's refusal to embrace the melting pot which, at the time, was considered a fundamental part of American social mores but, as the passage suggests, may have had more substance in ideology than in historical practice. Mrs. Smith's views on this issue are rendered more explicitly when she makes the acquaintance of Rosa Pina:

> Hattie...Who is that pretty girl?
> Ana. Oh, just a little school friend of Braulie's.
> Hattie. (Flatly) That's the kind of a girl he should marry – when he's old enough (73).

To her, this is the kind of girl Brauglio should marry – someone of his own ethnic background – and not her daughter.

These feelings, however, can also be discovered in the Portuguese characters in this play. Felipe Vargas and Ana Silva are representatives of the first generation of immigrants who are more at ease in their own language and culture – and that is precisely why Ana rejects Ellery's courtship. Brauglio, who was born and raised in America, does not wish to follow in his mother's footsteps. And yet the play ends with the possibility that his mother's wishes may come true because Brauglio ends up with Rosa Pina on the same boat, which will be at sea for two years, and the reader can imagine how hard she will strive to engage his attention. In this play, the metaphorical "flames" writers often attribute to passionate lovers, however, are not of the type Crèvecoeur had envisioned as the ideal "fuel" for his melting pot and in this sense

Stanley's desire to discourage the melting of different ethnic groups in this play is at odds with Crèvecoeur's postulations.

A somewhat different approach towards race in the Portuguese-speaking communities in New England – specifically on Cape Cod – is taken in relation to the black or half-breed Capeverdean characters in Edward B. Garside's novel, *Cranberry Red* (1938). Although Garside points out that most of these characters are Bravas, a detail which points to their island of origin, for most New Englanders, as Leo Pap has shown, they are all classified as "Portygees." As we shall see ahead, this practice is substantiated in this novel. Even though the Cape Verde islands were still a Portuguese colony at the time this novel was published, the language most Capeverdeans speak is not standard Portuguese, but rather, a creole dialect. Various passages of *Cranberry Red* illustrate this dialect. But who were these people, and why and when had they come to America? José da Silva Gonçalves points out that:

> Já para os fins do século XVIII e princípios do século XIX, apresentou-se ao marinheiro cabo- verdiano a oportunidade de fazer parte da tripulação nos navios baleeiros da costa da Nova-Inglaterra que frequentemente faziam escala nas Ilhas de Cabo Verde, mais especificamente na Ilha Brava. E assim se explica o nome «os Bravas» que por muito tempo designava os primeiros Cabo-Verdianos na Costa Leste dos Estados Unidos.[101]

Within the context of American literature, these are precisely the Capeverdeans who also appear as fictional characters in, for example, Melville's *Moby-Dick* and "The 'Gees." With the gradual eclipse of the whaling industry

in the United States towards the end of the nineteenth century due to the discovery of petroleum and the invention of the steamboat, the Capeverdean community had to search for other employment opportunities – and found them in cranberry picking and the fruit canning industry associated with it. Whereas during much of the nineteenth century the Capeverdeans traveled back and forth between the United States and the Cape Verde islands, after the beginning of the twentieth century most of them had settled "nas diversas cidades da Costa Leste, assim como New Bedford, Providence e Boston."[102] The process of cohabitation with the Azoreans and New Englanders of Anglo-Saxon descent, however, was not an easy one for these Capeverdeans because they were often discriminated against and ostracized by both groups due to their African origin – an argument which Gonçalves set out rather convincingly:

> Ao passo que para a maioria dos Portugueses imigrantes brancos ali radicados a dificuldade principal era a de se integrarem dentro da cultura anglo-saxónica do novo país, para o Cabo-Verdiano, a sua condição de raça com fortes laivos africanos, representou um problema imediato insurmontável. Para o Cabo-Verdiano, nem a adopção dos artefactos culturais com o domínio da língua nem a maneira de se portar ou a americanização do apelido Matos para Mathews ou Woods nem de Rodrigues para Rodgers, como frequentemente acontecia entre os Portugueses, representavam para os ilhéus opções viáveis. A condenação por razões rácicas não era só percebida pelo próprio Cabo-Verdiano mas também por outros Portugueses que tinham de calcular os riscos de uma associação íntima com esses Portugueses da África e a consequência da sua própria aculturação e aceitação no meio ambiente das cidades da Costa Leste dos Estados Unidos.[103]

Leo Pap's discussion of these matters also sheds further light on the racist treatment of the Capeverdeans:

> the nonwhite Capeverdeans constituted only a small fraction of the total "Portuguese" immigrant population. But since their presence in such places as New Bedford and along Cape Cod was very noticeable, and since the Capeverdeans tended (until fairly recently) to identify themselves as "Portuguese," the popular impression arose among many New Englanders earlier in this century that the Portuguese ethnic group in general, including the Azorean majority, was more or less "colored." What also may have contributed to this confusion is the fact that the Capeverdean immigrants, especially early ones from Brava, included quite a few light-skinned individuals along with Negroids, and that, on the other hand, the non-Capeverdean Portuguese were perceived as relatively swarthy anyway, compared to the pink-white Nordic type.[104]

It is no wonder, then, that the Capeverdean characters were the target of racial prejudice in this novel.

Contemporary readers of *Cranberry Red* cannot assess the impact this piece of writing may have had on its readers when it was published. My estimation, however, is that this document is an important piece of writing for at least three reasons. On the one hand, it succeeds in describing the work involved in the cranberry canning industry and, on the other hand, it shows how ethnic minorities have been the victims of prevailing theories of race. Furthermore, it focuses on the idiosyncrasies of Capeverdean settlement in the United States. The action in this story revolves around Keith Bain, who has been hired to work at Symmes Cannery, at Pawtuxett. His job is to assist in the cooking of cranberry jelly or to help out

with the ditching of cranberry bogs. In the meantime, Mr. Symmes, the owner, who is a rude and aggressive man, tries to get as much work out of Bain and the other workers – many of whom are Capeverdeans – for as little money as possible. And the story as a whole focuses on the hostility of Mr. Symmes and the Pawtuxett community towards the Capeverdeans living in the backwoods, in particular, the Gonsalves family.

The confusion of New Englanders, who wrongly view the Portuguese as "colored" people is illustrated in the following passage where we see Joe Gonsalves and his colleagues at work together:

> The four of them were hard at it now cleaning up the slowly congealing mass of sauce with shovels, brooms, and the fire hose. There was Bain, O'Shea, and the two Joes – Joe Scanni, Giuseppini as he liked Bain to call him, and Joe Gonsalves, *the black Portygee* who was the handy man around the canning and packing room (55; emphasis mine).

This passage, like many others in the novel, does not specify exactly the ethnic and geographical origin of Joe Gonsalves. It simply states that he is a "black Portygee." What is yet more perplexing is that to the narrator of this novel, Gonsalves resembles a monkey:

> Joe Gonsalves, on the other hand, was a stunted Portygee from the Cape Verdes, a negro of the old school, the son of the original Gonsalves by his first wife, the late, woody fruit of a worn-out tree. He was neither chicory nor cocoa in color, but fairly close to *café au lait*. His set face, as mute as a soapbox, was quite unrefined by the Portuguese blood simmering in his veins. Like a small, stooped *monkey* he poked around, trying hard, but not getting much done. His *heavy jaw* hung forward, drawing down the hollow

> cheeks liberally pitted with smallpox, and the bluish lips, like cuts of frozen veal, were forever pursed neatly, gently, just touching, as if he were about to bestow a trembling kiss of gratitude on the world at large. He wasn't very good at the English language, but he could be voluble enough in the *creoula* when he had swallowed a couple of bottles of bay rum bought at Woolworth's on a Saturday night at twenty cents a bottle (56; emphasis mine).

The depiction of Joe's face as being "quite unrefined by the Portuguese blood simmering in his veins" means that the Portuguese have refined blood. This passage hints at racism, but not against the Portuguese. To this black man, however, it is insulting. Unlike other writers, the author of *Cranberry Red* is knowledgeable about Portuguese differences from the African stock. But Joe Gonsalves is a hard working man who, unfortunately, dies at work because the storeroom at the Symmes cannery had caved in while he was working there and this due to the owner's lack of concern for safety rules. When Symmes later tries to find out from Bain what had happened, the reader learns that the Chief of Police had made a few racist remarks about Joe and that he is not worth the money that will be spent on his funeral – especially if the town is to disburse it:

> "You say that the Chief didn't help pick up the body?" asked Symmes irrelevantly.
>
> "No, he didn't..." Bain spoke with so much bitterness that he began to stutter. He muttered something to himself.
>
> "What's that you say?" asked Symmes.
>
> "I've no good to say for the man..." said Bain.
>
> "For what man?"
>
> "That Chief of Police..."
>
> "How's that?" asked Symmes, contemplating the ash on his cigar.

> "He's made some remarks about the way Joe looked...about the size of his ears. He said, "Don't pick him up by the ears." And then he said, "I suppose the town will have to pay for this." Just as if the money were coming out of his own pocket." Bain's look became rapt. "A strange thing to say," he murmured, more to himself than to Symmes (148).

In yet another passage where a group of Capeverdeans is loading truckfuls of dirt to be carried away to the new bog that they are ditching, they are compared to slaves, that is, mindless bodies at work, caught in a web of endless toil and routine:

> ....these slender *mestiços* appeared utterly out of place in a naked, frosty Yankee gravel pit, like a gang of convicts doomed to perpetual hard labor on alien soil….But when the load was full and the springs of the old Brockway had settled so much that the floor of the body was almost scraping the double tires, they would jab their shovels into the sand, squat on their haunches, light their pipes with the hinged metal caps, and all begin to talk at once, without so much as a glance at the truck to see if it were properly filled. They always loaded it to the right level without paying the slightest attention to what they were doing (253).

Whenever the opportunity arises, they enjoy exchanging a few words with one another. The reference to the voice of one of these men is charged with racial prejudice:

> But the voice of one really black fellow, a short, bow-legged, powerfully built man with long flat feet and *a face like a baboon's*, was different from the rest. It was a husky, savage bass, the voice of a wrathful, discontented man…(253; emphasis mine).

Even Keith Bain, who comes across as the only character sympathetic to the Capeverdeans, could not help noticing, after work, that someone "was coming up after him. *He could smell the negro smell*. It was Gonsalves, all his pores opened up from his exertions" (62; emphasis mine). While this passage stresses the novel's social realism, in my view, it is not this black man's sweat that lingers in the air because he had toiled all day, but, instead, the meaningful "negro smell." Or even that time when he tells Anne (his girlfriend) about when he had gone to the undertaker's to see Joe's body, his comments about the type of smell emanating from the body are emblematic of the Jim Crow mentality this novel focuses on:

> "I even went in to see Joe at the undertaker's. He lay in a free coffin, a fresh one of pine boards. Compliments of the town of Pawtuxett. Not that it matters. Not a bit. They had a sheet around him. He just lay there. Shriveled up. *There was that fusty nigger smell*, for all the formaldehyde. He brought Africa into that neat little Yankee back room with the nickeled, rubber-wheeled table…" (173; emphasis mine).

As Johnny Symmes puts it, after he has just finished purchasing some home-made liquor from Leon Lopes, "They would forget, those Portygees. They had no brains, anyway" (225).

Terror is the word that would best describe what they feel. The Capeverdean community is often terrorized by both Symmes and the Pawtuxett Police Department. In the case of Symmes, he is reported to have gone once to Leon Lopes' house to gather information on his stolen ten dollar bill. Meanwhile, he terrifies the entire family and hurts Lopes' son-in-law badly. This passage stresses the innocence and docility of the Capeverdean characters and

how they are victimized and brutalized by certain powerful sectors of New England. This episode ends with the revelation that it was his own son, Johnny, who had stolen the money because his father kept him on such a tight rein.

Another episode of violence towards the Capeverdeans occurs when a group of policemen go one night to the local Capeverdean dance and start clubbing a group of men standing outside because they are watching Smoky Joe and another man fighting for fun, that is, just to see who would buy the next round of drinks. They spoil the entire evening, break a few teeth and a pair of eyeglasses; and the Chief, with an air of nonchalance, wraps up the occurrence like this: “It looks as if we’ll have to book this guy here for assault and battery” (304). Again, and in this particular instance, the white authorities in this novel abuse their position of power over the defenceless Capeverdeans, terrorizing them. Although the days of mob lynchings of blacks in the South had vanished, the culture of violence towards ethnic minorities had not completely disappeared. As a piece of fiction, *Cranberry Red* is a reminder of all the ethnic minorities who have been brutalized and terrorized in America because of the color of their skin, their different beliefs, language, and culture.

A slightly different perspective on racial matters is presented in LeGrand Cannon, Jr.’s *Look to the Mountain* (1942). In this novel, the Portuguese are avoided for two reasons: their darker complexion and their Catholicism are motives for prejudice. Before dwelling on these issues, however, a synopsis of the work is pertinent. The novel is initially set in the village of Kettleford, New Hampshire Province, in the year 1769 and it aims at depicting life

in colonial New England. In this work of fiction, the reader gets a fair grasp of life on what, at the time, was considered as the frontier, especially the survival skills that had to be mastered in order to confront the forces of Nature, isolation in the wilderness, and the harsh living conditions experienced by the pioneers. Moreover, this is a fascinating, stark representation of life from 1769 to about 1777 and a vivid rendition of the American War of Independence as seen from the perspective of ordinary people. As readers, we see these matters through the eyes of Whit Livingston and Joe (José) Felipe, the Portuguese character in this novel. Furthermore, this story is also about both characters' attempts to woo Melissa, the daughter of Captain Butler, who happens to be the owner of the local tavern. In this sense, one might perceive this basic plot as a re-writing or an American version of the "democratic" courtly love pattern in which one of the male characters – as in, for example, Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* – sets off to woo a lady and comes to the realization that, despite his strenuous effort, he shall be all alone at the end of the contest. A story with a colonial setting such as this one, for example, would be Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" with its contest between Ichabod Crane and Brom Bones over Katrina Van Tassel.

For a Puritan society, Catholicism raised a few problems and was even used as a scapegoat. Joe, the blacksmith at Kettleford, happened to be a dark-skinned Catholic – two traits that did not appeal to the characters in this colonial New England setting:

> He was a Portygee, and they knew he was Popish. But still he'd been allowed to remain when he first came to town, and now they were used to him….He was a squat,

> bull of a man, dark-complected – as anyone might be, but as not many in Kettleford were….The reason the town didn't take to him better, Joe laid to Whit Livingston. It was Whit who kept the talk going about what a smith Karr had been – a far better smith than this Portygee Joe had been or would be. If it hadn't been for that kind of talk, Joe had an idea, they might forget his dark complexion even in winter and about his being Popish, as well. Joe couldn't see that these things were important. He hadn't a drop of black blood in his veins, and if his being born Popish wasn't important to him, Joe couldn't see why it should be to anyone else (5-6).

While Joe and the narrator knew he "hadn't a drop of black blood in his veins," the people from this community believed differently. Anti-Catholic feelings towards the Portuguese have lingered up to more recent times as Mary Heaton Vorse's *Time and the Town: A Provincetown Chronicle* (1942) shows, especially in the chapter titled "The Portuguese of Provincetown":

> In Provincetown a fiery cross was burned in front of the Catholic church. This act of intolerance was one of the greatest tragedies that had ever happened here. The Ku Klux Klan was powerful in Rhode Island and demonstrated against the influx of French Canadians from Canada after the immigration from Europe had been limited. The dormant prejudice against foreigners awoke in this atmosphere of persecution….After the Ku Klux Klan burned the fiery cross, the Portuguese Catholics retaliated by organizing strongly in the Knights of Columbus….[105]

The Irish, too, were subject to the same type of religious intolerance and discrimination by elements of mainstream American society, especially when political issues were at stake, as Ignatiev has shown in the following episode in Philadelphia:

> In Philadelphia in 1854, Robert T. Conrad was elected the first mayor of the consolidated city. Nativists celebrated, while Democrats mourned. "I take it for granted," wrote one, "that hereafter, no foreigner or *Catholic* can be elected to any office in this city. At bottom this is a deep seated religious question – prejudice if you please, which nothing can withstand. Our party is made to bear the sin of *catholicism*."[106]

Allport has also noticed about a half century ago how prejudice against Catholics was typical in America, especially in the past:

> Anti-Catholicism in the United States today exists but in a less aggravated form than sixty years ago. At that time there flourished the so-called American Protective Association, a militantly anti-Catholic organization. Around the turn of the century the Association died out, and at the same time – for reasons that are not clear – anti-Catholic feeling seemed to subside. Even the great waves of immigration of European Catholics did not revive the persecutions of the 19th century.[107]

Even though Americans in general have been more tolerant towards other religious denominations such as Catholicism in the past few decades, these quotes show that intolerance and violence towards Catholics were rampant in the past. The passage quoted in the previous page introduces the reader to Joe Felipe's antagonist – Whit Livingston – and functions as a reminder that there are obstacles into being accepted by this community, especially when marrying an Anglo-Saxon girl. As stated earlier, although in *Letters From an American Farmer* Crèvecoeur may try to convince us that his melting pot theory is constantly being put into effect, when applied to the Portuguese, however, this does not ring true. But

Joe, who is on the verge of convincing Melissa's father through the offer of money to obtain his consent, is even willing to give up his Catholic beliefs and become a Protestant. Although he is in earnest, this example shows how some fictional ethnics have desperately tried to squeeze into mainstream culture and values: "Popish, eh? Not after their Mr. Gowan had married him in the church! And dark-skinned? Well, what of it? His wife's skin would be fair enough" (55). He even has the courage to suggest to Captain Butler the following: "'Your Mr. Gowan,' Joe muttered gently, 'he could baptize me – if t'at what you want. I don' mind'" (58). Melissa's father, however, reminds him that it may not be as easy as he might think. In an illiberal Protestant community of the 1760s, its members are expected to give up their personal freedom for the sake of the values endorsed by the majority, something he cannot go against even though the monetary offer may be a tempting one. The Captain does not wish to be ostracized by the community and experience an embarrassing and humiliating punishment. That is why he tries to point out to Joe, whose values and culture are different from those of this community, that he must conform to the rules set by this Protestant community:

> "You t'ink maybe I'm Popish?" he said very gently.
> "Well, you be, ain't ye?" Captain said shrilly.
> "Why?"
> "They all say you be."
> "Maybe. Who knows? What does it matter?"
> "And part black, too," piped captain. "That ain't so easy."…"If I was to marry M'lissa to you, Joe – not that I could, or that I'm a-goin' to – it mightn't set good with them – if she didn't want to, what I mean. See, Joe? 'Tain't nothin' against you, I don't mean it that way. Only

> there's a lot of 'em round here thinks high of M'lissa and wouldn't want to see me go against her when it come right down to marryin'. They're a strongheaded people. Of course I'm her father and I know my rights, but all the same I ain't lookin' for no tar and feathers, nor gittin' rode clean down the Merrimack River atop of a rail 'n' gittin' hove in. That's the way they'd be, Joe, you bein' Popish – or they think you be" (57).

In this quote, we witness an exposure of the prejudice of this period.

Another episode which puts Joe at a disadvantage is when he and Whit compete with one another at Captain Butler's field of hay. The rewards for the one to cross the finish line first are, on the one hand, spending the day raking it with Melissa and, on the other hand, enjoying her company. In the meantime, the Captain will get his work done for free. During the competition, Joe was in the lead for he was a good mower, but also because Whit was mowing too wide, which made him lag behind. Yet, both had agreed, beforehand, that the pace and width would be set by the one in the lead and that the one behind just had to follow what had been established. All along, Whit was not paying attention to the fact he was mowing too wide, therefore, Mr. Gowan intervened so that Joe would not reach the finish line first, thus showing favoritism towards Whit:

> Mr. Gowan, stalking and watching, finally thought he saw what he'd been looking for. Whit's swath seemed the wider. He paced them off carefully….Whit's showed a foot wider.
>
> Mr. Gowan had made up his mind beforehand that, if this happened, he'd tell Whit only. That was proper – whichever man led fixed the width and the

> other man matched it…"You listen to me, Whit. I'm Mr. Gowan."
>
> Whit nodded.
>
> "You're mowing too wide. Do you hear me? Cut down your swing some. You've about a foot wide. You hear me, now, do you?" (26-27)

Gradually, Whit manages to catch Joe up and eventually takes the lead. Those who had bet on Joe are so disappointed that they even insult him:

> "Mow, you black Portygee, damn you! Mow, can't you?" Joe heard it. "You fat, Popish bastard! Mow, damn you!" Joe heard it. There was more, too, not so gentle. They didn't like to lose money...."God damn you, Joe, you're no good!" (35)

But this is not the first time Joe is reported to have been called nasty names; some men had already referred to him as "this dog of a Portygee" (7).

What Joe yearns for is to be accepted by the people in this community, but, so far, he has always been rejected. And the irony is that Joe has been looking for acceptance and human warmth in a society that only has callousness and insensitivity to offer him. Everywhere, people avoid him, even at the local tavern:

> A little off to one side, and some ways from the fire, Jose Felipe was sitting alone. No one had said to him, "Pull up, Joe, with the rest of us!" – least of all, David Gillmor. But Joe didn't mind; he was watching Melissa. He called for a pipe, and the girl brought it to him.
>
> "Pull up by the fire, Joe," Melissa said to him. "You're way out in the cold there."
>
> That warmed Joe as no fire could (128).

While Melissa asked him to pull up by the fire out of politeness, what is worth considering is how the

majority of characters in this community avoid his company. This passage is a substantiation of what Julia Kristeva says about the foreigner's desire to be accepted, but, unfortunately, keeps on being rejected by most people. "No one better than the foreigner," Kristeva argues,

> knows the passion for solitude. He believes he has chosen it for its enjoyment, or been subjected to it to suffer on account of it, and there he is languishing in a passion for indifference that, although occasionally intoxicating, is irreparably without an accomplice. The paradox is that the foreigner wishes to be alone but with partners, and yet none is willing to join him in the torrid space of his uniqueness.[108]

Despite so much rejection, the novel ends in an unexpected way for Joe. In the very last chapters, the American Revolutionary War erupts and it is as if destiny has been working towards bringing Joe and Whit together once again after so many years. In a dramatic passage, Joe is killed on the battlefield after he has rescued Whit Livingston. The manner in which this scene is rendered seems to imply that Joe is a sacrificial lamb, much in the same way as Jim Conklin in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. Had it not been for Joe – the man despised and scorned by Whit and everyone else – Whit would not have made it back home. This is the insight he has learned at the end of the novel while he attempts to narrate to Melissa what had happened on the battlefield:

> "I'd ought to tell you," he said, "about Joe."…"I mean Joe Felipe," he said…and then he went on.
>
> "He was there, too – along with Lord and the rest. Well, what I was going to say about Joe: when I went down – in the fightin', I mean – it was Joe that stood

> over me. I guess he kep' 'em off. Someone did, anyhow, or else they thought I was dead. It was when I went down I got the blow on the head. Later on it was Joe the one lugged me off t' th' side of this brook. I never saw him again. He went back to the fightin' soon 's he heard it start up. Lord told me about it. He said Joe was took quick – he never suffered at all. A cannonball done it….You understand, do you? I want you to know: I wouldn't be here with you now if it wasn't for Joe. That is all I can do for him, is just tell you that" (544-45).

My belief is that what LeGrand Cannon, Jr. is questioning in this novel is the myth of equal rights each citizen is now granted by the Constitution. Writing in the 1940s about America's colonial past in the 1760s and 1770s enables the author of *Look to the Mountain* to cast a critical eye at America's past. This story contains, among a few issues, the author's way of showing that not everyone was accepted. The brotherly love and acceptance that so many Americans proudly attributed to their ancestors was – as the writers close to the middle of the twentieth-century started to question – a myth that applied only to those from the mainstream and hardly ever to those who did not come from Northern European shores. In addition, this novel also questions the widely accepted Crèvecoeurean belief that ethnic minorities in America, at all times, have been encouraged to assimilate into mainstream culture and society. This novel, at least, shows exactly the opposite. America did not begin with a rhetoric of assimilation and equal opportunity and the example of Joe Felipe is evidently a substantiation of such a viewpoint.

The same could be said about all the other Portuguese characters in the other novels analyzed in this

section. Although mainstream America needed these courageous Gloucester fishermen, the Cape Cod cranberry pickers, and farmers so as to bring fish and food to their markets, this does not necessarily mean that their presence was easily tolerated or welcomed.

The Dynamic of Race in the Sugarcane and Pineapple Plantations of Hawaii: The Portuguese Farmers among Asians and Latinos

Unlike the stories about New England and California with Portuguese fictional characters, in *Hawaiian Harvest*, the Portuguese farmers from the Azores and Madeira islands find themselves in the midst of other ethnic groups originally from Asian, South Pacific, and Latin American countries. In a more racially-diverse setting, it was inevitable that the mainstream's glance at these Portuguese fictional characters would be different. During the second half of the nineteenth-century and the first decades of the twentieth-century, the peoples who came from these parts of the world ranked very low in the estimation of those in control of American economy and culture. Whereas in some of the texts discussed earlier in this chapter writers exhibited a certain amount of subtlety when drawing upon the prevailing theories of race in America in the portrayal of the Portuguese – as was the case with Melville and Macy – in the text offered for review in the next few pages, *Hawaiian Harvest*, the language utilized tends to be crude and, at times, offensive.

As I hope to show, the novels depicting life in Hawaii, too, have not been immune to this discourse on

race, a good example being Armine Von Tempski's book, *Hawaiian Harvest*, published in 1933. At the outset, the publisher of the 1990 reprint edition of this novel has inserted the following note in the introduction:

> This work contains statements that are shockingly and repellently racist. They were the views of the fictional characters who uttered them. That they shock us so is evidence of how far we have come in an effort to understand each other. It is our hope that publishers of the future will not have to face these decisions in reviewing the books written today.

The Portuguese fictional characters, for the most part, along with other ethnic groups are the targets of the bigotry of other fictional characters that this publisher is cautioning the reader about. Before these matters are dealt with in this piece of writing, I must first discuss when and why the Portuguese from the islands emigrated to Hawaii as well as their contribution to life in their new country of adoption. According to Leo Pap, this exodus took place toward the end of 1876 when

> One of the Portuguese old-timers, a shop-keeper named Jason Perry (Jacinto Pereira?), who also acted as a kind of consular agent for Portugal, urged the importation of laborers from the Portuguese island of Madeira, off the West coast of Africa. (On Madeira sugar cane had been successfully grown since the fifteenth century, transplanted from Sicily; the Portuguese also grew it in the Azores for a while in the sixteenth century. In the Hawaiian kingdom itself, another early Portuguese settler by the name of Antone Sylva may have actually been the first to attempt sugar milling, on the island of Maui.) In 1877 Dr. Hillebrand happened to be staying in Madeira to study subtropical flora, and he enthusiastically confirmed to his Hawaiian contacts that that overpopulated island,

> climatically so similar to Hawaii, might indeed be an ideal source of plantation labor. Somewhere along the line official Hawaiian interest focused on the island of São Miguel, in the eastern Azores.[109]

Upon arriving in Hawaii, the Portuguese soon had to learn how to live among

> a multi-ethnic setting in which East Asiatics (particularly Japanese, along with Chinese, Koreans, and eventually Filipinos) were increasingly predominant, as against Anglo American, "other" European, and aboriginal Hawaiian stock, and in which a growing proportion of people were of mixed ancestry.[110]

What is quite interesting about these Portuguese from the islands is the faithfulness with which they recreated their native lifestyles, their usage of similar agricultural techniques, and their ability to recreate in their country of adoption an agricultural landscape similar to the one in the old country. This is an issue which we have already discussed in relation to London's *The Valley of the Moon*. To support my point, this is what Pap has to say about those Portuguese then living in Honolulu:

> The particular section of Honolulu that the Portuguese, and particularly the Madeirans, selected for residence as early as the 1880s exemplifies vividly the dream dreamt by so many immigrants from anywhere: that of being able to recreate in the new environment some cherished aspect of the old. For just as Funchal, the capital of Madeira, skirts and slopes up a volcanic mountain, so Honolulu spreads at the foot and up a hillside topped by a volcanic crater known as the Punchbowl. The Punchbowl district of Honolulu became the residential core of the Portuguese islanders, who soon converted this arid rock into productive

> gardens. By 1896, 4,000 of Honolulu's 28,000 inhabitants were Portuguese, clustering around the central hilly slopes, the majority living in their own homes. By 1902, there were over 5,000 Portuguese living in Honolulu, as against a total of about 5,500 still living on the plantations and about 5,000 located elsewhere in the islands.[111]

The impression one gets about the Portuguese on reading *Hawaiian Harvest* is that of honest, hard-working people who are busy in the sugar cane and pineapple plantations. Don Garrison, the protagonist in this novel, however, is perhaps the only character who is decidedly unenthusiastic about the agricultural changes that these immigrants are making on the island of Maui. Basically, Don Garrison had been crippled in a plane crash during World War I and has finally returned home after spending ten years abroad. He learns that his plantations have been completely transformed by the Portuguese and other white immigrants who had emigrated to Hawaii to work on them. He is appalled by the air of commercialism that has invaded what formerly looked like an edenic island. Instead of pastures, cattle raising, and woodland, more and more acres of land are being cleared for the mass production of pineapples and sugar for the market. These changes had taken place while he was away and are the responsibility of his brother Glenn, who is also involved in other dubious business transactions such as the production of illegal booze in a joint partnership with a fellow by the name of Morse. The novel also tries to capture the way of life before the shift to a market economy in Hawaiian agriculture, in contrast to the pointless parties, drinking bouts, and shopping sprees, all of which are provided by the money amassed through the over-production

of these lands. In this piece, most of the racist remarks are made by Don. It is possible that he has chosen this type of language so as to express his discontent and opposition due to these changes in the Hawaiian economy. As noted earlier, this type of discourse was typical of novels written, say, prior to the 1950s, a time when ethnic minorities were not taken into consideration as was the case with, for example, Frank Norris's *The Octopus* or Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon*. Such a discourse was only possible when American writings were essentially Anglo-American. Fred L. Gardaphé argues that:

> we are now witnessing the descent of Anglo-American literature into a *ricorso*…American literature, as traditionally defined, has reached its period of decadence. It has become, in John Barth's words, a 'literature of exhaustion.'[112]

Contemporary American literature, produced mostly by ethnic minorities, regards its own contributions to America differently compared to earlier Anglo-American writings. The most basic difference, I would argue, is that ethnic literature does not adopt what I would call "the looking down upon attitude" that is so prevalent in Anglo-American literature as we have witnessed earlier in my analysis of, for example, Norris's *The Octopus* or Stanley's *My Son*. This attitude, once again, can be found in this novel, as well, and is epitomized in the protagonist's way of seeing the world around him.

Although the explicit racist rhetoric in this novel is not as extensive as in the aforementioned examples, when it does surface in *Hawaiian Harvest* it is shocking, especially for contemporary readers. Take, for example,

the episode when Don has gone to inspect the ranch and was trying to listen “instinctively for the voice of the land” but, instead, it was

> replaced by the noises of civilization, the endless rumble of trucks coming and going, the roaring of tractors, *the chattering of monkey-like Filipinos*.The smell of gasoline, exhaust, dust, sweating, humanity, fermenting pineapple tops, had replaced the fragrance of trees, cattle and grass (215; emphasis mine).

Later he refers to his servant Ah Sam as that “tight-mouthed Chink” (220). The passage containing the most racist discourse of all, however, presents Don’s impressions when he goes to the cannery and encounters a medley of ethnic minorities working together. He assumes that the Portuguese in general are not white Europeans or Caucasian, but, instead, belong to some other race. Apart from coming across as ignorant, Don is also the most racist character in this novel as the following quote demonstrates:

> He decided that it would be pleasant to wait until work stopped and watch rest come to the spot. Seating himself on a box, he watched Filipinos, Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese bustling and hurrying about….Don studied them thoughtfully. Most of the older folk and certainly all their parents had come to Hawaii in the noisy bowels of ships. From the rice fields of Japan and China, from far-off Portugal and Porto Rico, from the jungles of the Philippines, they had been imported by white men, who, with a magnificent disregard for posterity, indifferent and without sense of responsibility for the future, continued to contract for labor races diametrically opposed in origin, characteristics and caliber, to till sugar plantations, pick coffee and work in pineapple fields and canneries. And over

> this motley mass the veneer of a hurried civilization had been thinly spread….He noted the delicate, slender features of a young Chinese of the student type, the blunt dogged face of a Japanese peasant, the shifty eyes of a swarthy Porto Rican, the coarse loose mouth of an unwashed Portuguese, and everywhere Filipinos, jabbering, chattering ape-like creatures, alternately impudent and resentful, cunning and bold…(295-96).

In his mind, these ethnic groups should be avoided, especially the Filipinos. What strikes him the most in relation to one of the Portuguese workers is that he is dirty. But would anyone expect these fictional characters to be dressed in their best Sunday clothes while working in the fields? Is Don's reaction a fair and unbiased one? The Filipinos, however, are the target of the most explicit racist comments. In Don's mind, all these workers are irrelevant mindless bodies. In the light of Hawaii's unique blend of ethnic minorities – most of which from Asian cultures too foreign and strange for acceptance by an all-suspecting American mainstream – the Portuguese in Hawaii were affected by such a pattern of ethnic settlement, and subject to racial stereotyping.

From the exposition offered in this chapter, we can conclude that the discourse on race prevalent in American writings with Portuguese characters is prompted by many factors. As I have shown in the works discussed throughout this chapter, racial prejudice has been woven into the texture of much of the fiction written in the United States and it has also been directed at the Portuguese. But is it different compared to the one aimed at Irish-Americans, the Italian-Americans, and the Jewish-Americans, for example, and in what ways is it similar? Is

there such a thing as a specific racist discourse directed at the Portuguese?

From an historical perspective, the Spanish-American war at the end of the nineteenth century along with the debate on social Darwinism on matters of race in the United States can be viewed as two mechanisms which legitimated America's military interventions abroad or justified its rhetoric of superiority. This is the time when most mainstream intellectuals viewed American society and the different ethnic minorities that composed it as neatly structured, that is, all groups placed within a hierarchy with the Anglo-Saxon race at the top of the racial pyramid. As noted earlier, this is the structure we can grasp in such works as, for example, Norris's *The Octopus* and London's *The Valley of the Moon*, where the Portuguese and other ethnic minorities occupy the bottom of the American social ladder.

Racist impulses also tend to emerge mostly in times of economic distress, especially when the ethnic groups who have been living longer in the United States view the recently arrived immigrants as taking jobs away from them, jobs which they would have scorned in times of economic prosperity. This can be seen, for example, in London's *The Valley of the Moon*, where Billy uses the Portuguese as scapegoats to vent his frustration for having been exploited and left unemployed by the industrial tycoons. He envies the Portuguese (embodied in the character of Antonio Silva) who have prospered in the San Joaquin valley. Racist comments in situations like these are usually expressed by characters or individuals with poor educational backgrounds. In other words, this situation stems from ignorance and provincialism – as can be seen in

Billy from London's *The Valley of the Moon* or through the parochial Aunt Foster in Macy's "Aunt Foster's Cranberries." As I have argued throughout this chapter, it is a difficult task to discriminate between works in which its authors are trying to be realistic in creating racist fictional characters and those where the writer himself is a racist. In my view, the most obvious example of the former is Melville's "The 'Gees" whereas the latter would include, for example, Norris's *The Octopus*.

Another major reason why the Portuguese are treated in such a racist manner is the confusion and ignorance as to who the Portuguese as a people really are. This is an issue that theorists Karen Brodkin and Matthew Frye Jacobson have focused on and which I have also addressed in chapter one and at the outset of chapter two. *Cranberry Red*, discussed earlier in this chapter, is a fictional rendering of this issue. In specific works, the Portuguese are not depicted as predominantly white Europeans but, instead, are mistaken for South Americans or even blacks. This is most evident in specific New England writings such as *Cranberry Red* and "Aunt Foster's Cranberries" because of the writer's inability to discriminate between the Portuguese and the Capeverdeans. This is due to the weak knowledge of the average American as to where Portugal and the Azores and Madeira islands are. It is not uncommon even nowadays to hear many Americans state that Portugal is located somewhere in Spain, perhaps as a province in Spain or simply somewhere else in the world. Another erroneous view is that the Portuguese people are Hispanics and that the differences between the Portuguese language and Spanish are minimal or non-existent. Racial prejudice tends to flourish in the minds of those with a weak

understanding of another people's ethnic, geographical, and linguistic background. But this may also occur with educated writers, as is the case in Martha Stanley's *My Son*. The racist attitudes in this play can be attributed to this writer's assumptions about Portuguese culture and language, some of which are manifestly incorrect. Not only do such mistakes make the reader or "insider" suspicious, they may have also been responsible for having sent wrong messages to those audiences in the past whose knowledge of Portuguese culture and language is not proficient.

A recurrent motif in practically all the works of fiction discussed in this chapter is the darker complexion of the Portuguese. The issue of race is at the heart of American culture and in these novels it is expressed through racial prejudice towards people who do not have a pinkish-white complexion or a Northern European look. In American fiction, it is comparatively easy to use this 'darkness' to suggest a more threatening or subversive ethnicity than the industrious and law-abiding Portuguese could fairly be assigned in view of their history and conduct.

The Portuguese have also been victimized because of their Catholic beliefs, especially in Protestant New England, where – as Mary Heaton Vorse has noted – they have been the victims of religious intolerance, discrimination, and several reported instances of the Ku Klux Klan practice of burning crosses.

Most of the authors referred to in this chapter have not given a voice to the Portuguese fictional characters they have created. Without a voice of their own, they cannot defend themselves from racial and cultural slurs.

The only characters discussed in this chapter who are not voiceless are, respectively, Maria Silva in London's *Martin Eden*, Ana Silva in Stanley's *My Son*, Manuel in Kipling's *Captains Courageous*, and Joe Felipe in Cannon's *Look to the Mountain*, but what they have in common with the other speechless characters is that they have all been created by writers predominantly from an Anglo-Saxon background. Most of the time, the treatment of them is merely external or superficial, which supports my argument that a non-Portuguese author is incapable of providing an informed or sympathetic account concerning the culture he or she purports to examine. If the Portuguese have any yearnings or feelings of their own, we as readers never learn about them. Empowerment and writing go hand in hand. The Portuguese, who are under the control of the writers discussed in this chapter are, so to speak, in a vulnerable position. They are defenseless whenever racial prejudice is directed at them or, at times, unaware of why they are viewed as barbarians or "lower" than the dogs alluded to in *The Octopus*.

Another conclusion that can be established is that the exploration of the theme of race in American fiction tends to be far more sophisticated and detailed in writings produced by canonical writers as opposed to the ones produced by non-canonical voices. A good example of this, for example, is Melville's quarrel with racism in his short story "The 'Gees." But both the fictional characters in canonical and non-canonical writings patronize the Portuguese.

There are marked differences in the portrayals of the Portuguese depending on the geographical locations where they have traditionally settled. In New England, the

racist attitudes that come to the surface are due to the non-acceptance of the ethnic other, especially if the individual in question is not from a Northern European background. Since Puritanism flourished mostly in New England, it is understandable that New Englanders disliked those ethnic minorities who endorsed Catholicism, as is the case of the Portuguese and the Irish. Moreover, much of the racism typical of this geographical area has been motivated by the typical attitude of looking at otherness with suspicion, a legacy dating back to the Founding Fathers. To illustrate my point, in "Aunt Foster's Cranberries," Aunt Foster tends to be proud, haughty, and considers herself superior to just about any other ethnic group. In addition, Aunt Foster tends to be cold, distant, and very suspicious of ethnic minorities who do not live, think, or act like her.

In California, an attitude of hostility was encountered by the Portuguese farmers who arrived in America completely destitute and illiterate. Over the decades, however, and as these farmers prospered, a racist discourse also began to emerge out of envy. Compared to the other Portuguese communities scattered throughout the entire United States, the farming communities in the San Joaquin valley have witnessed the emergence of wealthy Portuguese businessmen and entrepreneurs in the dairy and cattle-breeding industries. They have slowly acquired an important economic position and influence in the local and state economies and, for this reason, they seem to have aroused jealousy on the part of the Anglo community – an aspect which can be seen as early as London's *The Valley of the Moon* in the character of Billy Roberts.

In terms of the discussion of race in the fiction produced in or about the Portuguese in Hawaii, there are not as many literary works as one may have wished for and on which one can base a sound and fair assessment of the phenomenon there. It is unsafe to offer too many generalizations because of this. That is why the following remarks must be taken as tentative. In *Hawaiian Harvest*, the Portuguese are measured against ethnic groups originally from Asian, South Pacific, and Latin American countries and clearly, at the time, people from these latitudes ranked very low in the estimation of mainstream Americans. It was not uncommon, at the time (or even later), to refer to the Chinese as the "yellow peril" and other derogatory epithets along these lines. Because of such a peculiar huddling of peoples in Hawaii from these areas of the globe, along with the darker complexioned Portuguese, they were also affected by this racial prejudice in America.

The racist rhetoric analyzed throughout this chapter, however, has been increasingly toned down, especially after the social Darwinist movement gradually began to wane in the first decades of the twentieth-century. In other words, the language utilized to refer to any particular ethnic group – and in this particular case to the Portuguese – was not as offensive by the nineteen thirties, forties or fifties as it had been at the turn of the century in the fiction of Norris or London. The 'blackness' or otherwise of the Portuguese ceases to be an issue of any weight by the mid-century. In Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* (1946), for example, there is a recessive Portuguese character who is the owner of a bar. The text stresses his paleness, his "dead-white

hands" (70), in moody passages of writing where the ethnicity of the bar owner is much less important than the chiaroscuro effects of playing with black and white imagery. The Portuguese man becomes iconic, a sort of *film noir* bartender/confessor. Nowadays, at a time marked by ethnic writing, explicit racist comments have practically disappeared from American literature. Whether it is Latino/a writers (Richard Rodriguez or Sandra Cisneros), Native American writers (Louise Erdrich or Leslie Marmon Silko), or even Portuguese American writers (Katherine Vaz or Frank Gaspar), contemporary writers, instead, prefer to explore the literary possibilities offered by their ethnic roots.

Having looked at how prevailing theories of race have impacted on the representation of the Portuguese, I would now like to turn in the following chapter to some specific traits which have been ascribed to them. By these, I mean violent behavior, bloodthirstiness, mysteriousness, and unpredictability.

Notes

[1] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 47.
[2] Gates, p. 147.
[3] David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), p. 222.
[4] Goldberg, p. 94.
[5] Goldberg, p. 95.
[6] Goldberg, pp. 125-26.
[7] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 91-93.
[8] Young, p. 54.
[9] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), p. 2.
[10] hooks, p. 10.
[11] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York and London: Verso, 1995), p. 23.
[12] Roediger, p. 95.
[13] Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1993), pp. 3-4.
[14] Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 21.
[15] Allport, p. 108.
[16] Allport, p. 111. For more on this issue, see pages 111-15.
[17] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, ed. Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), p. 4.
[18] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1999), p. 4.
[19] Jacobson, p. 5.
[20] Jacobson, pp. 272-3.
[21] Fred L. Gardaphé, *Italian Signs, American Streets: The Evolution of Italian American Narrative* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1996), pp. 48-49.
[22] Gardaphé, p. 56.
[23] Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1993), pp. 261-62.
[24] Jacobson, p. 57.
[25] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 148-49.
[26] Roediger, pp. 133-34.
[27] Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1999), p. 26.
[28] Brodkin, p. 60.
[29] Brodkin, p. 71.
[30] On this misconception, Melville writes the following in vol. 9 of the Northwestern-Newberry edition of *The Writings of Herman Melville: The Piazza Tales and other Prose Pieces 1839-1860*, ed. Harrison Hayford et. al. (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern UP and Newberry Library, 1987), p. 348: “The word ‘Gee (g hard) is an abbreviation, by seamen, of

Portuguee, the corrupt form of Portuguese. As the name is a curtailment, so the race is a residuum. Some three centuries ago certain Portuguese convicts were sent as a colony to Fogo, one of the Cape de Verds, off the northwest coast of Africa, an island previously stocked with an aboriginal race of negroes, ranking pretty high in incivility, but rather low in stature and morals. In course of time, from the amalgamated generation all the likelier sort were drafted off as food for powder, and the ancestors of the since called 'Gees were left as the *caput mortuum*, or melancholy remainder."

[31] Forbes, p. 167.

[32] Young, p. 6.

[33] Young, p. 19.

[34] Merton M. Sealts, Jr., "The Chronology of Melville's Short Fiction, 1853-1856" in *Pursuing Melville 1940-1980* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1982), p. 231.

[35] Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville* 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, 1951) 2: 513.

[36] *The Letters of Herman Melville*, ed. Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (New Haven: Yale UP, 1960), p. 172.

[37] Sealts, p. 229.

[38] Samuel Otter, "'Race' in Typee and White-Jacket" in *The Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Robert S. Levine (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998), p. 12.

[39] Sidney Kaplan, "Herman Melville and the American National Sin: The Meaning of 'Benito Cereno'" *Journal of Negro History* 42 (1957) 31.

[40] Young, p. 123.

[41] Young, pp. 123-24.

[42] Young, p. 124.

[43] Young, p. 144.

[44] Otter, pp. 13-14.

[45] William B. Dillingham, *Melville's Short Fiction 1853-1856* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1977), pp. 358-59.

[46] Sundquist, p. 22.

[47] Otter, p. 13.

[48] Otter, p. 15.

[49] Leyda, 2: 501.

[50] Leyda, 2: 511.

[51] This "confession" is contained in a letter sent to Hawthorne probably on June 1, 1851. See *The Letters of Herman Melville*, pp. 128-30.

[52] Melville possessed a copy of *Poems, from the Portuguese of Luis de Camoens. With Remarks on his Life and Writings* translated by Lord Viscount Strangford with many annotations. He had also read *The Lusiads* by the same author. For more information on Melville's reading of Camões see Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading* (n.p.: U of South Carolina P, 1988), pp. 50; 57; 118; 162.

[53] Herman Melville, *White-Jacket*, vol. 5 of the Northwestern-Newberry edition of *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford et al. (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern UP and Newberry Library, 1970) 14. On page 270, Chase quotes somewhat erroneously from Mickle's translation of the *Lusiads*. Chase's opinion of Camões is a highly commendable one.

[54] Herman Melville, *Omoo*, vol. 2 of the Northwestern-Newberry edition of *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford et. al. (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern UP and Newberry Library, 1968), p. 45.

[55] See chapter 40 in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, vol. 6 of the Northwestern-Newberry edition of *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford et. al. (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern UP and Newberry Library, 1988), pp. 173-78.
[56] George Monteiro, *The Presence of Camões: Influences on the Literature of England, America, and Southern Africa* (Lexington, KY: The UP of Kentucky, 1996), p. 51.
[57] I am here indebted to Karcher for having pointed out this biblical allusion. See Carolyn Karcher, "Melville's 'The 'Gees': A Forgotten Satire on Scientific Racism" *American Quarterly* 27 (1975): 438.
[58] Young, p. 127.
[59] Young, p. 128.
[60] Otter, p. 15.
[61] Laurie Lorant, "Herman Melville and Race: Themes and Imagery" Diss. New York University (1972) 174.
[62] Franklin Walker, *Frank Norris: A Biography* (New York: Russell, 1963), p. 174.
[63] Walker, p. 199.
[64] For more background on this discussion see Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (New York: George Braziller, 1969), especially chapter 9.
[65] All citations are taken from Frank Norris, *The Octopus: A Story of California* (New York: New American Library, 1981).
[66] Walker, p. 261.
[67] Lawrence E. Hussman, *Harbingers of a Century: The Novels of Frank Norris* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 128.
[68] Leo Pap, *The Portuguese-Americans* (Boston: Twayne, 1981), p. 68. See also Manoel da Silveira Cardozo, *The Portuguese in America 590 B.C. - 1974: A Chronology and Fact Book* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana, 1976).
[69] Pap, p. 70.
[70] Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols, and David Reimers, *Natives and Strangers: Ethnic Groups and the Building of America* (New York: Oxford UP, 1979), p. 137.
[71] Pap, p. 142.
[72] Hussman, p. 132.
[73] A piece of information Joseph McElrath shared with me in an e-mail he sent to me on March 2, 2000.
[74] Philip S. Foner, *Jack London: American Rebel* (New York: Citadel P, 1947), p. 36.
[75] Foner, p. 58.
[76] See Carolyn Johnston, *Jack London – An American Radical?* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood P, 1984), p. 93.
[77] See Foner, p. 116.
[78] See Foner, p. 31.
[79] Russ Kingman, *A Pictorial Biography of Jack London* (California: David Rejl, 1979), p. 184.
[80] Earle Labor and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *Jack London: Revised Edition*, ed. Nancy A. Walker (New York: Twayne, 1994), pp. 76; 81.
[81] All subsequent quoted material is taken from Jack London, *Martin Eden* (New York: Penguin, 1984).
[82] Allport, pp. 319-24.
[83] Labor and Reesman, p. 80.

[84] Andrew J. Furer, "'Zone-Conquerors' and 'White Devils': The Contradictions of Race in the Works of Jack London" in *Rereading Jack London*, ed. Leonard Cassuto and Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1996), pp. 159-60.
[85] Kingman, p. 24.
[86] Kingman, p. 24.
[87] Christopher Hugh Gair, "'The Way Our People Came': Citizenship, Capitalism, and Racial Difference in *The Valley of the Moon*" in *Rereading Jack London*, ed. Leonard Cassuto and Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1996), p. 145.
[88] Johnston, p. 165.
[89] Andrew Sinclair, *Jack: A Biography of Jack London* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 181-82.
[90] Sinclair, p. 180.
[91] *The New Encyclopaedia Brittanica* 12 (1988), p. 112.
[92] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie* , Ed. Henry Nash Smith (New York: Rinehart, 1949), p. 311.
[93] Sinclair, p. 119.
[94] George Monteiro "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese" in *Proceedings of the Fourth National Portuguese Conference: The International Year of the Child*(Providence, R.I.: The Multilingual/Multicultural Resource and Training Center, 1979)*, p. 172.*
[95] Said, pp. 162-64.
[96] See Donald Pizer, *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1984), p. 109.
[97] For an understanding of the colonizer's use of animal imagery, see Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 32-33.
[98] See hooks, pp. 21-39.
[99] Mary V. Dearborn, *Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), p.4.
[100] Ignatiev, p. 1.
[101] José da Silva Gonçalves, "A Comunidade Cabo-Verdiana nos Estados Unidos: Um Caso de Ambiguidade Cultural" in *Portugueses na América do Norte: Comunicações Apresentadas no Colóquio da Universidade da Califórnia / 1983* Ed. Eduardo Mayone Dias (Lisboa: Peregrinação, 1983), p. 112.
[102] Gonçalves, p. 113.
[103] Gonçalves, p. 114.
[104] Pap, pp. 113-14.
[105] Mary Heaton Vorse, *Time and the Town: A Provincetown Chronicle* (New York: The Dial Press, 1942), pp. 160-61.
[106] Ignatiev, p. 162.
[107] Allport, pp. 246-47.
[108] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), p. 12.
[109] Pap, p. 74.
[110] Pap, p. 77.
[111] Pap, p. 78.

[112] Gardaphé, p. 13. Such a viewpoint is also corroborated by the changes in American demographics, the alterations made to the canon, and recent trends in multiculturalism.

CHAPTER THREE

VIOLENCE AND THE PORTUGUESE

Homi K. Bhabha's discussion of the effects of stereotyping on colonized peoples in *The Location of Culture* obviously points to India and its neighboring countries, as well as to others like South Africa – countries which have experienced the process of British colonization. Bhabha's argument centering on "colonial" and "imperialistic" issues cannot readily be applied to the United States – especially in terms of how its mainstream culture has been imposed on the ethnically diverse cultures that have flocked there. As mentioned earlier, the Portuguese were not colonized by long-time residents of the United States since they, out of their own free will, emigrated there. But the dominant WASP culture in the United States – as the British in the aforementioned countries – has looked at its margins with mistrustful eyes. This is especially true of the tendency of most human beings to embrace stereotyping – a powerful weapon that keeps the outsider or marginalized under control while asserting cultural superiority over them. Stereotypical representations by those in control, Edward Said maintains, aim at "keeping the subordinate subordinate, the inferior inferior."[1]

For the purposes of this study, my contention is that the Portuguese have experienced the stereotypical representations Said is referring to. As the victims of stereotypical images, these people have also been depicted as violent and bloodthirsty creatures by a handful of writers who, in my view, substantiate Bhabha's contention

that in colonial discourse the “stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy” are precisely “the signal points of identification and alienation, scenes of fear and desire, in colonial texts” (72). In other words, the parallel that can be established here is that the practice of stereotyping the Portuguese as violent and unpredictable individuals is clearly a mechanism through which the writers from the dominant culture – and in the works under review – have exerted their power and superiority over the silenced, marginalized ethnic minorities. The difference between both, however, is that America did not need to justify its power as the colonizer does. Save for Native-Americans, no ethnic minority questioned the dominance and authority of the WASP culture during the period this work focuses on whereas the same was not true for the British presence in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and even South Africa. In the various texts that will be discussed in this chapter, the Portuguese are depicted as a group of people whose instincts are still in a primitive state of being, that is, “uncivilized,” brutal, where the law of club and fang (to paraphrase Jack London) tends to prevail. As Bhabha has pointed out, images such as these have been imposed on the oppressed, the “colonized.” In the particular case of the United States and its mainstream culture, in my view, Bhabha’s discourse in *The Location of Culture* suggests how traditional, mainstream, canonical and non-canonical Anglo-American writers have manipulated their narratives, much in the same manner as the British so as to broadcast British colonial discourse. As Bhabha puts it, the “objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to

establish systems of administration and instruction" (70).[2] Thus, the aim of this chapter is to see how far this theory can reasonably be extended to represent the ways Portuguese immigrants have been registered in writings dealing with New England and, to a lesser extent, California. In addition, this chapter aims at arguing the following: Portuguese fictional characters appear in stories where they are depicted as being responsible for the scenes of violence, most of which are not prompted by them. At times, however, the texts suggest otherwise. Contrary to what some of the texts under review suggest, the Portuguese do not engage in violent behavior for the sake of violence. Whatever violent attitudes the Portuguese adopt, these are motivated by situations beyond their control such as unemployment, economic exploitation, and women being treated as someone else's sex object. In addition, this behavior has emerged due to the poverty and ghetto-like situations which some of these immigrants – especially those residing in industrial New England – had to bear.

Before a detailed analysis of their involvement in scenes of violence is attempted, it might be pertinent, beforehand, to quote a passage in Leo Pap's book, *The Portuguese-Americans (*in my view, compared to Wolforth's study, Pap's is the most reliable study on Portuguese immigration and socio-economic conditions of the Portuguese living in the United States). It provides a faithful assessment of the Portuguese in America dating back to the earlier decades of the twentieth-century, the period to which the majority of texts dealt with in this study belong. Pap states that the personality traits attributed to the Portuguese have been agreed upon with "near-unanimity by American and other observers" but that

these characteristics “are subject to change, in response to changing environment.” He then goes on to claim that the following epithets that are “most commonly encountered in the literature” produced in the earlier decades of the twentieth-century refer to the Portuguese immigrants who have settled in New England, California, and Hawaii. These epithets, we learn, come from comparative studies in psychology applied to ethnic minorities published in the 1920s and 1930s. And according to his research findings, we learn that the Portuguese are:

> (1) “Law-abiding,” “obedient,” “peaceful,” “orderly.” Sometimes a negative connotation is added: “docile,” “subservient,” “lacking in initiative.” In this connection, also, crime statistics are cited showing the Portuguese ethnics to have a very low crime rate.(But a rise in juvenile delinquency among the second generation was noted on some occasions.) A low incidence of drunkenness is likewise pointed to in support of the notion of orderly restraint. (2) “Hard-working,” “industrious” - particularly in relation to farm work. They rarely turn to public welfare or charity.
> (But some American-born descendants show less industry and do apply for relief.) (3) “Thrifty,” “frugal,” “sober.” (4) “Honest,” “loyal.” They don’t like to go into debt and they pay promptly. (5) “Cleanly,” “neat.” They keep their homes clean despite poverty and slum conditions. (6) “Quick-tempered,” “impulsive”; “melancholy,” “gentle”; “generous,” “hospitable.”[3]

As I will show, the novels by native American writers, however, reflect a radically different view of this ethnic group. Pap’s conclusions are simply at odds with the images presented by canonical and popular writers of American fiction. Fred Gardaphé, too, has noticed a

similar portrayal of Italian-Americans as violent by native-born American writers. By 1930, he claims,

> various stereotypes of the Italian immigrant in American culture had been well established as the myths through which the Italian American presence would be read. If the Italian was not seen as a gangster or a knife-wielding, mustachioed foreigner who had taken away American jobs from the earlier immigrants, then he was depicted as "a restless, roving creature, who dislikes the confinement and restraint of mill and factory," "very slow to take to American ways," "volatile, and incapable of effective team work"…In spite of the quotas established on Italian immigration in the mid-1920s, restrictionists in Congress pointed to the Italians as a major reason for unemployment and crime.[4]

It is obvious but I cannot forbear to point out that there was no high-profile analogous Portuguese equivalent to the notorious Italian Mafia. But let us review these canonical and popular writers of American fiction and their texts so that we may grasp what their peculiar vision of the "violent" Portuguese really consists of.

Longing for Contact with the Ethnic Other; Economic Exploitation and Hardship: The Violent Responses in New England Writings

Before a more thorough analysis of the books dealing with these matters, a brief overview of the texts discussed in this section will, I hope, assist me in my presentation of the issues. Briefly, Thomas Wentworth Higginson's short story, "The Haunted Window," allows us to enter the protagonist's guilty conscience so as to

ascertain the motives for his violent death. The episode narrated in this story is framed to treat the issue of sexual attraction for the ethnic Other. A similar pattern prevails in Frank Shay's, *Murder on Cape Cod*, a story focusing on an episode of sexual arousal between individuals of opposite ethnic backgrounds, more specifically, a white, native-born American man for a dark-complexioned female. Contemporary cultural studies critics such as, for example, bell hooks, argue that this desire for sexual contact circulates around an ambivalent axis of desire and resistance, with the whites longing for sexual gratification with individuals belonging to darker ethnic minorities. I would argue that in stories such as this, when sexual contact is rebuffed and desire thwarted, it is not uncommon to find violent consequences ensuing. This is in line with classical Freudian ideas about repression, where frustrated desire turns easily to anger. In both stories, the unfulfilled sexual desires of the male characters lead to violent situations.

In Charles Reginald Jackson's novel, *The Lost Weekend*, the alleged violence of the Portuguese is a narrative strategy used for the purposes of exploring the behavior of an alcoholic and how he perceives – and reacts to – the world around him. Wilbur Daniel Steele's story, "Footfalls" denounces the Yankee eagerness in pointing its finger at ethnic minorities so as to accuse them of whatever misdeeds that may have occurred. In this story, Steele asks mainstream Americans to relinquish such a practice. Edward McSorley's novel, *The Young McDermott* explores the issue of the exploitation of Portuguese textile workers in New England and why they rebel against it. The violence attributed to the Portuguese erupts because of this situation. In this story, McSorley

denounces America's fear of organized labor. Finally, in *Evil Under the Sun*, the ambiance of violence is prompted by the changes in the economic conditions in America after World War II and how they affected the Portuguese fishing communities in New England.

With this brief synopsis in mind, it is now worth looking at these stories in greater detail. Thomas Wentworth Higginson's short story, "The Haunted Window," published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1867, contains an intriguing depiction of a young Portuguese female character. This story has strong resonances of Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* and Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," texts which are renowned for their gothic elements. The narrator and Severance have gone to spend a few days at Oldport, a seaside resort now known as Newport, because the protagonist feels dejected, even though he has just arrived from a long voyage taken in hopes of recovering his health. But once at Oldport, Severance feels gloomier than ever, because the surrounding environment makes him feel that way. At night, he and the narrator witness the old cats prowling about an old, ivory-laden house which is also said to be hiding a secret. It is exactly in this house where the secret of Severance's life is hidden. In the course of the story, it is gradually revealed. After a few strolls through the streets in this seaside town, they are struck by a face staring at them through one of the windows of this house. A few days later, they learn that this house is inhabited by a man named Paul, a Bavarian married to a Portuguese woman who had come from the island of Fayal (Faial) in the Azores, and their children. A few days later, the narrator is reported to have called upon this family to retrieve a handkerchief he had forgotten there and, as the lady of

the house is looking through a drawer, he sees a black cloak (referred to as a *capote*) and is stunned to learn it is exactly like the one he and Severance had seen on the visitor at the window. Not only does this episode add to the aura of mystery the cloak creates throughout the entire story, it also sheds some light on Higginson's interest in and knowledge of the Azoreans living in New England as well as those in the Azores, which he had once visited. Furthermore, the cloak is a motif which has caught his attention and about which he has written elsewhere.[5]

On a stormy night, we learn that there is, in fact, someone else living at this house besides this family. Severance has been feeling restless and happens to be out on such a night. Meanwhile, the narrator, who has just returned from Boston, does not find him at the inn where they had been staying and goes out to search for him at the haunted house, where he finds people assisting Severance, who had been struck by a fallen tree. He stares at a young woman standing in front of a window,

> statue-like, the hooded figure, but with the great *capote* thrown back, showing a sad, eager, girlish face, with dark eyes, and a good deal of black hair, — one of those faces of peasant beauty, such as America never shows, – faces where ignorance is almost raised into refinement by its childlike look. Contrasted with Severance's wild gaze, the countenance wore an expression of pitying forgiveness, almost of calm; yet it told of wasting sorrow, and the wreck of a life (436).

The little girl who belongs to this couple claims it is Aunt Emilia, the "magnet"-like woman who has drawn Severance there. The story ends with the disappearance of

the entire family and the revelation of the secret that existed between them. The narrator

> afterwards learned all the remaining facts from the only neighbor in whom they had placed confidence. Severance, while convalescing at a country-house in Fayal, had fallen passionately in love with a young peasant-girl, who had broken off her intended marriage for love of him, and had sunk into a half-imbecile melancholy when deserted. She had afterwards come to this country, and joined her sister, Paul's wife. Paul had received her reluctantly, and only on condition that her existence should be concealed. This was the easier, as it was one of her whims to go out only by night, when she had haunted the great house, which, she said, reminded her of her own island, so that she liked to wear thither the *capote* which had been the pride of her heart at home. On the few occasions when she had caught a glimpse of Severance, he had seemed to her, no doubt, as much a phantom as she seemed to him. On the night of the storm, they had drawn near each other by a common impulse, while their respective friends had sought them with a common solicitude (437).

These details indicate that Emilia is not a violent person and, clearly, not the one to blame for this death. In deserting her, Severance had neither kept his word nor fulfilled the expectations he had aroused in her, and because of that, his guilt was consuming his life. In this story focusing on an instance of repression of guilt, Higginson – whose writings no longer enjoy a wide appeal as they did in the nineteenth-century – evinces a more complex mind than the contemporary specialist in the field often gives him credit for. As an individual, he was sympathetic towards the downtrodden – blacks in particular. A firm believer in abolitionism, his concern for this ethnic minority was manifest during the Civil

War. Moreover, he is reported to have once had an affair with a black woman. In this story, Higginson is looking at Emilia much in the same way since she, too, belongs to a minority culture. Throughout the entire sketch Higginson treats her sympathetically. What is unusually contemporary about Higginson's story is that it exposes us to a writer who shies away from using the typical model of the time – that of most novelists and readers from the dominant WASP culture who look at the margins with biased, prejudicial eyes. Emilia is a good example of a woman from a minority culture who is subjected to the stereotypes and prejudices of, say, Nathaniel Hawthorne's "dark ladies." She, too, is portrayed as possessing dark hair and dark eyes, elements which in the minds of writers like Hawthorne contained an aura of mystery, evil, and promiscuity. As will be seen in chapter four, in this story Higginson exposes the sexual prejudices towards the non-Anglo-Saxon woman as Leslie Fiedler has argued in his discussion of Hawthorne's female characters in his influential study, *Love and Death in the American Novel*. In this sense, Emilia is regarded as a temptress who "murders" her estranged lover. Richard B. Sewall, however, provides an interesting reading of what this Emilia represented to Higginson in his biography, *The Life of Emily Dickinson*. He states that

> It is tempting to see the two Emilias who appear in Higginson's fiction as reflecting his experience with Emily Dickinson. Emilia in the short story "The Haunted Window" (*Atlantic*, April 1867) is beautiful but withdrawn, with a "childlike look" that told of "sorrow, and the wreck of a life." The Emilia in his novel *Malbone* (1869) is passionate, sorrowful, with a "pathetic lost sweetness in her voice." Both have only a shadowy resemblance to Emily Dickinson, but there is just enough mystery and enigma about

> them to suggest the frustrations of his attempt at understanding her.[6]

To this reader, however, the character of Emilia contains a plurality of perceptions which Higginson has woven into the texture of his story. As Sewall explains, Emilia represents Higginson's attempt to fathom an elusive, mysterious personality such as Emily Dickinson's, but she also represents the author's fascination with a foreign and strange culture. And yet, to Higginson, this "exotic" culture is like a pool from which he obtains the materials for a gothic story while Emilia's physical traits and garb intensify the aura of mystery typical of such a genre of fiction. The violent denouement in this story originates in Severance's decision not to keep his word to Emilia. In a way, his violent death may be seen as a means of making reparation for this misdeed. The uncertainty in Emilia's life, we should not forget, originated in a mutual passion and longing for contact between a white, Yankee American man and a "dark" ethnic female from the Azores. The model that bell hooks has proposed can, I believe, be applied to this story since it includes a white Yankee and a "dark" ethnic Other, both longing for contact with each other. This desire for contact with an ethnic other is further substantiated by Higginson's biography. In my view, this story is a good example of a piece where a Portuguese fictional character does not induce the violent situation prevalent in the story under consideration.

A later story also involving violent behavior motivated by sexual longing is that of Frank Shay, *Murder on Cape Cod*, published in 1931. The story-line revolves around the murder of Elk Snow, a man who is killed on his wedding night before consummating his marriage to

Philomena Dutra, a Portuguese-American girl who is about twenty years old. Elk Snow is in his sixties and has been married previously to three women. Mena, as she is called, married him out of obedience to her parents, as the reader is told in chapter three:

> She was probably not insensible to the honor that was offered her in marriage with a man of Elkanah's family and position. Certainly her parents were not. And filial obedience is a characteristic of the Portuguese…. She made a big step up in life when she married Elkanah Snow (43).

To Mena's parents, this marriage would not only represent financial security for their daughter, it would also mean further integration into the American mainstream since, at the time, Americans believed, more than now, that a female ethnic married to a white native-born American male would be more easily assimilated. And in the case of Mena, the process of integration into the mainstream culture was already much easier because she, as we are told, "like most of the second generation here, is very much American" (42). As Pap also points out, Portuguese parents were fully aware that a means to "achieve 'Americanization'… was for Portuguese girls to marry 'Nordic' men so as to acquire an English-sounding surname."[7] Mena, however, is horrified because she sees Elk Snow as a Bluebeard figure with whom she would have to live:

> "That man, he was terrible. Twice he was married and each time he killed his wife. I've heard that he just slowly poisons them to death. Each day they get worse and he sits and laughs at them. All night long they scream while he sits on a chair beside their bed and laughs. Think I want to die, to be killed by an old man? Why should I be picked out? Why didn't he get a woman his own age. Pah, an old man. I am

> young. I want to dance and sing. He did not care for singing and dancing. His house was always like a funeral…" (138).

In addition to his old age, Mena can sense that this man is sexually depraved. She is so scared of his strange sexual fantasies and tastes – which will be discussed ahead – that her father even has to escort her to her new house on their wedding night. But as soon as her father leaves, she runs away and, in the meantime, Elk Snow is murdered and the marriage left unconsummated. Mena, however, is not the first woman with foreign blood whom Elk has been attracted to. His earlier wife had been fathered by an American sea captain and a native of South America and Elk simply could not resist her physical appearance. We are told that:

> She was one to fire the admiration of all men: dark, tawny, full-breasted and voluptuous, so unlike our women here. She was tall and strong, her father's build with her mother's fire (53).

Elk is now attracted to Mena for she, too, does not have a pale look as New England women of an Anglo-Saxon background do. As has already been mentioned, bell hooks maintains that this urge for sexual contact with the ethnic other, that is, this need for "Eating the Other" and "Fucking…the Other"[8] is typical of narratives where whites fantasize about going to bed with the "dark" ethnic other. It also seems evident that Elk's late wife was, most likely, frustrated with her husband's sexual breakdown and, for that reason, ends up committing adultery with Elk's brother, Shabnah Snow. We learn that:

> the foreign blood in the wife soon showed itself and she became rather wild…she dressed in outlandishly gay colors, went to dances in the Town Hall, and conducted herself generally as no decent wife

> should. She took up with her husband's brother, and it became an open scandal in the town (56).

After having lived for about twenty years in Boston, banished by his brother, Shabnah has returned precisely around the time Elk was murdered. As a possible suspect, while he is being interrogated, he explains why he had come back. He talks about Elk's previous marriages and how his brother made his wives feel miserable. Upon learning that he was about to marry once again, he has come to reason with him. This is what he says to the police on this matter:

> He was unable to give her the love she needed. After she died, he tried to marry again and then he knew what I had always known, that he was biologically unfit for marriage. I told him so. When I learned that he was about to try again, I came back to plead with him, to show him that he had no right to marry and to keep him from wrecking another woman's life (107).

Even though she is forced to marry Elk Snow, Mena is really in love with a Portuguese school teacher by the name of Mannie Ramos. However, it was Gonnie Soiza who murdered Elk Snow, because Soiza could not accept the fact of Snow's snatching her away from him. Since Soiza had been a rum-runner during Prohibition, he knew Elk's whereabouts on the dunes of Cape Cod. One night, while he was on board the *Ellen V* anchored off Peaked Hill Bars, he left the ship and under cover of the fog he rowed to shore to murder Elk Snow. He could not come to terms with the fact that Mena had left him for a much older man. Soiza cannot understand why she had sacrificed her youth for an older man and, in the process, rejected someone of her own ethnic background.

In this novel and – as we have already seen – in Higginson's short story, the repression and guilt associated with a longing for contact between a WASP male and a "dark" ethnic other can lead to violent situations. In both stories we witness the violent deaths of native-born American men for which the Portuguese involved are not directly responsible nor accounted as such.

A radically different snapshot of the "violent" Portuguese can be found in Charles Reginald Jackson's novel, *The Lost Weekend* (1944). Although it became a best-seller, the story is best known through the Paramount motion picture version, starring Ray Milland as the drunkard Don Birnam. It won an Academy Award as Best Film of 1945. Both the novel and the movie were, at the time, ground-breaking in the sense that they explored a taboo subject and contained a fascinating psychological study of an alcoholic's five-day binge.

Although the movie, which eliminated the Portuguese altogether, had the greater public impact, the book was, as I said, a bestseller and it does denigrate the Portuguese. It is only the novel that includes about three pages in the entire narrative where the Portuguese in Provincetown are associated with violence. It is also unclear why Jackson chose the Portuguese – and no other ethnic group – to play the role of violent people since the novel is cast in New York City and, at the time, neither the city nor its metropolitan area had attracted a significant number of Portuguese people. The references to the Portuguese, however, occur when Don Birnam's mind is sporadically flooded by images of summer vacations he had spent on Cape Cod, more precisely in Provincetown, a fishing town where numerous Azoreans lived. In addition, these recollections most likely date back to the time when

the writer himself worked at a jigsaw factory in Boston, where he could not avoid bumping into a Portuguese person every now and then.

Whether Jackson is capable of drawing a convincing portrait of the Portuguese as violent people is a matter worth pondering. The first time the Portuguese cross Don Birnam's mind is when he has no money to buy a bottle of booze and is on his way through the streets of Manhattan to the pawnshop with his typewriter. Meanwhile, he is afraid that someone will look at him straight in the eye. Through the technique of stream-of-consciousness, Don Birnam recollects an episode in Boston where he successfully avoided looking at a man who was walking past him. If only he were in Provincetown – he thinks to himself – he could get his booze and sneak away:

> Starting out along Commercial Street in Provincetown to find one of the Portuguese fishermen and buy a pint of the grappa-like drink they called *prune*, what a haven the little alleys that ran off to the right, away from the sea, alleys in which he could idle or rest a moment till the approaching stranger or strangers, on their way into P-town, had gone by (101).

Whereas in this passage he views the Portuguese fishermen and their home-made liquor as his "salvation," the only ones who could cater to his alcoholic cravings, in another passage they appear to his imagination as ruthless, bloodthirsty, and violent people. On this particular occasion, he had stayed on in Provincetown after the season was already over. Penniless, depressed, and too exhausted to leave, his mind would often begin to hallucinate. It is precisely under spells like these, usually lasting a good three or four days, that we learn that:

> His only visitors were a group of violent Portuguese fishermen who, drunk and predatory, began now systematically to terrorize him. Out of an absolutely silent night…they would come thundering along the wharf at two in the morning shouting his name, demanding money, demanding to be let in, yelling for booty, clothing, drink, his very person. They would pound on the flimsy walls and curse him with laughter, calling him names he didn't dare listen to or think of the meaning of….He was the more terrified because he knew he had brought this on himself, it was a kind of grotesque retribution, he and he alone was solely responsible for their wrath. He had carried on wastefully, wantonly, with all kinds of people, for weeks, throwing money away, drinking up more money in a week-end than the Portuguese made in seven days of hard work…and now that he was left behind alone and the others had abandoned him, all their hatred and contempt came out in these night maraudings, these ineffectual but terrifying raids (205).

This passage shows that his drunken response is a guilty fantasy which, obviously, exposes him, not the Portuguese. But the very next day, after having considered suicide as a way to put an end to his addiction, he goes out on the pier to bask in the sun, since he was too weak to walk much further. This is precisely when the reader learns that:

> During the morning he saw the fishermen. They came along Whoopee Wharf to look over their idle boats and nets. They nodded politely to him, saying quietly, "Good morning, Mr. Birnam." He looked at them and answered hello. He knew that these same men, now so mild and respectful, would be back again in the night, derisive, ribald, dangerous, shouting the obscenities that were as much a part of their nature as these shy and gentle daytime manners (206).

The point of the story is, in essence, to show his severe derangement, his *delirium tremens*. The Portuguese are unfailingly polite, decent, civilized people. Obviously, what this episode – and much of what happens to him in the course of the entire novel – tells us is that his mind is usually clouded by the effect of too much alcohol. Since his perceptions of the Portuguese are often contradictory and because his mind is totally confused, this reader can only conclude that his equating the Portuguese with violence is untrustworthy. As a reader, I am struck by Jackson's deliberate choice of the Portuguese, and no one else, when New England had so many ethnic samplings. I can only attribute this choice to the author's needs for a narrative device meant to explore the meanderings of an alcoholic's mind and the author's possible familiarity with someone from such a background. In this story, the truth is that Birnam is an alcoholic and the scenes of violence where some Portuguese men from Provincetown appear are not realistic, but imaginary.

Wilbur Daniel Steele's short story entitled "Footfalls" (1946) dwells on the representation of the Portuguese as a group of violent people, but from a radically different perspective. At the very outset of the sketch, the author himself cautions his readers that we are in the presence of a piece of writing in which the plot is out of the ordinary: "This is not an easy story; not a road for tender or for casual feet" (38). In other words, it is rather uncommon in the sense that Steele's goal is to criticize New Englanders of Yankee stock and their penchant for scapegoating other ethnic groups whenever something evil occurs. In this story, Steele wishes to remind Americans of this attitude so that they

may reconsider their eagerness and promptness in pointing the finger at other minorities.

Not only is this story original in its message, I was also struck by this writer's ability to vividly portray how blind people function and grapple with their handicap. Basically, this story contains three characters. The protagonist, Boaz Negro (a name which does not strike me as essentially Portuguese) is said to have come from the island of St. Michael (S. Miguel) in the Azores. He is a blind man and makes a living as a cobbler. Not only is he a hard-working individual, he has also raised four sons all by himself after losing his wife. Currently, it is only his youngest son, Manuel, who is living with him since the other three have either married or become economically independent. The third character who rents Mr. Negro's rooms on the upper floor is a young man named Campbell Wood who works at the local bank. The cobbler is very fond of his son and even spoils him to the point of not encouraging him to work and by giving him perhaps too much pocket money. Although the other Portuguese people in this community may express their disapproval of this among themselves, Campbell Wood happens to be the one to verbalize it to the blind man. This upsets him and makes him feel more and more suspicious of Mr. Wood, whom he does not believe to be honest. What is fascinating about the sightless man and what has also caught my attention, however, is the author's ability to capture his impressions, puzzlements, and the gaining of awareness through his other senses, namely his skills in "reading" sounds and smells.

One day, Campbell Wood comes home from work and before going upstairs, he talks to the cobbler for a while on the ground floor, where his shop was located, and as he

was climbing the stairs a while later, Boaz Negro noticed that:

> Something was happening. Boaz heard exclamations, breathings, the rustle of sleeve cloth in large, frantic, and futile graspings – all without understanding. Immediately there was an impact on the floor, and with it the ummistakable clink of metal. Boaz even heard that the metal was minted, and that the coins were gold. He understood. A coin sack, gripped not quite carefully enough for a moment under the other's overcoat, had shifted, slipped, escaped, and fallen.
>
> And Manuel had heard! (42)

Although Campbell Wood tries to patch up the situation, Mr. Negro was well aware of what was going on even though Mr. Wood may think the opposite. For Campbell Wood, however, the real problem lay with Manuel who had heard and witnessed the entire scene. One day, Mr. Wood invites Manuel upstairs for a game of cards while the blind man, downstairs, tries to fathom the meaning of the sounds coming from the upper floor. Later on, the blind man recognizes Mr. Wood's footsteps – or, as the title of the story indicates, footfalls – down the stairs and out of the house. It is then that he learns that his own house has been set on fire. This episode ends with the realization that his son has been burned to death in a rather macabre and unusual way:

> The man whose incinerated body still lay curled in its bed of cinders had been dressed at the moment of disaster; even to the watch, the cuff buttons, the studs, the very scarf pin. Fully clothed to the last detail, precisely as those who had dealings at the bank might have seen Campbell Wood any weekday morning for the past eight months. A man does not sleep with his clothes on. The skull of the man

> had been broken, as if with a blunt instrument of iron (46-47).

But the entire community assumes it was Manuel, his son, who had murdered Mr. Wood and set his own house on fire. We learn that they “searched, laid their traps, proceeded with all their placards, descriptions, rewards, clues, trails. But on Manuel Negro they never laid their hands” (49). It will eventually take Mr. Negro a few years to unravel this mystery and redeem his son in the eyes of this New England community. The blind man waits for – actually lives for – the day when Mr. Campbell returns to the scene of the crime. A few years later, Mr. Wood does, in fact, return and the blind man manages to get hold of him. As he is avenging his son’s death, the blind man is confused for he feels something unfamiliar on Mr. Wood’s body: “Pushing himself from the arms of the chair, Boaz leaped. His fingers, passing swiftly through the air, closed on something. It was a sheaf of hair, bristly and thick. It was a man’s beard” (54). The blind man is afraid he may have killed an innocent man. He recognized Mr. Wood’s footsteps when he walked into the shop, the characteristic smell about him, but the beard which, supposedly, he had grown of late, left him in a state of anxiety and confusion. The only way he can learn if it is really his son’s murderer or not is to shave the dead body. Meanwhile, the group of people who were singing Christmas carols outside heard a scream and some moaning inside the cobbler’s shop; a while later they knock down the door to find out what is going on. As they are stepping inside, they witness the horrifying scene of a blind man shaving and touching the corpse’s face to make sure he had murdered the right person. He asks the crowd

if the dead man he was holding on to was the *cachorra* he so much despised:

> "Tell me one thing now. Is it that *cachorra*?…Not Manuel. Manuel was a good boy. But tell me now, is it that *cachorra*?"

Someone in the crowd says to him:

> "Say now, if it don't look like that fellow Wood, himself. The bank fellow – that was burned – remember? Himself."

But the blind man makes it clear that:

> "That *cachorra* was not burned. Not that Wood. You damned fool!…That *cachorra* was not burned. It was my boy that was burned. It was that *cachorra* called my boy upstairs. That *cachorra* killed my boy. That *cachorra* put his clothes on my boy, and he set my house on fire. I knew that all the time. Because when I heard those feet come out of my house and go away, I knew they were the feet of that *cachorra* from the bank. I did not know where he was going to. Something said to me, "You better ask him where he is going to." But then I said, "You are foolish." He had the money from the bank. I did not know. And then my house was on fire. No, it was not my boy that went away; it was that *cachorra* all the time. You damned fools! Did you think I was waiting for my own boy?
>
> "Now I show you all," he said at the end.
>
> "And now I can get hanged" (56-57).

No one presses charges against him because it suddenly dawns on the community as a whole that it reacted hastily in assuming that Manuel had been the author of such a horrifying and gruesome event. I believe that Steele's goal in this story is to criticize a common practice in the United States: the tendency to blame

specific minorities for baleful occurrences. In my view, America has not yet heeded Steele's message and the Oklahoma City bombing in April of 1995 is a good example of this. Right after the occurrence, the immediate reaction of Americans in general was to blame it on the Muslim fundamentalists when, upon closer inspection, Timothy McVeigh – who has been recently executed – was the perpetrator. In this particular instance – as well as in Steele's short story – evil is within the mainstream. And yet, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. have revived the attitude of suspicion of most Americans towards Otherness, especially those from the Muslim world.

Edward McSorley's novel, *The Young McDermott*, published in 1949, is an intriguing example of how the truth can be manipulated for the sake of convenience. What is really fascinating about this piece of writing is that it – unlike other narratives – discusses the alleged violent temper of the Portuguese from a new perspective, that is, violence associated with political activism. Just because the Portuguese are on strike protesting against the oppression and miserable salaries they earn at the New England textile mills, the police label them as communists, violent anarchists, and law breakers. Here as elsewhere, the rhetoric functions like a steam roller, annihilating anyone who attempts to call the attention of American society to injustices. As will be discussed in more detail ahead, some of these fictional characters (here embodied in the character of João Almiro) are portrayed by the WASP characters as immigrants who simply delight in riots, confusion, and communist ideology. What they desire the most is to work in peace and, consequently, assist in the prosperity of America. Because

no other justification can be found, they are depicted as being politically active when politics, at the time, was the least of their concerns. Since the novel is set during Prohibition, one may conclude that these Portuguese immigrants arrived in America some time before the introduction of immigration restrictions – the famous literacy tests or quotas –during the so-called age of conservative Progressivism. According to Richard L. McCormick in an essay titled "Public Life in Industrial America, 1877-1917," the ideals of Progressivism were expressed and could be

> found in the movements to "Americanize" European immigrants and to halt their continued entrance into the United States. The exclusionists, in particular, employed the quintessentially Progressive methods of organization, data gathering, education, and lobbying to persuade Congress to impose a literacy test for admission to the country. Enacted in 1917, the literacy requirement was followed during the 1920s by truly exclusionary quotas on immigration.[9]

In the particular case of the Portuguese, Leo Pap points out how they were affected by the

> so-called Literacy Test, introduced in 1917, [which] required all immigrants to demonstrate a minimal ability to read and write. According to the law, all aliens over sixteen years of age who could not read any language (subjects were given a test of thirty to forty words in their own language to read) were not admissible, with some exceptions for close relatives of United States residents. One immediate consequence of this innovation was that a very large number of Portuguese subjects were henceforth barred from immigration due to the extremely high degree of illiteracy then found in Portugal.[10]

What this quote shows is that their illiteracy was manipulated so as to justify the restrictions on immigration from Southern European countries. Moreover, it reflects the American mainstream's preference for peoples of a Northern European background, an issue which I have already addressed in chapters one and two. At the time, the conservative government in the United States was not seeking literate immigrants, but rather, justifying its exclusionary policies aimed at Southern Europeans. Although they favored Jews, for example, who were all literate, they also did so because of their wealth.

Even though *The Young McDermott* may give the impression these Portuguese fictional characters working at the textile mills were well versed in politics, most real Portuguese immigrants were illiterate and with little or no understanding of politics (except, perhaps, its direct effects on their lives). No doubt they understood why their lives had been marked by poverty. These immigrants belonged to the lower social classes and they had endured a political régime back in the old country that had done little or nothing to improve their situation, both during the monarchy or even during the tumultuous and economically unstable years after the proclamation of the Portuguese Republic on October 5, 1910. So as to fully understand the fictional characters in this novel, we cannot disassociate them from this historical context. The reason they rebel against exploitation has nothing to do with their alleged involvement in politics such as affiliation to a political party. It is their way of requesting decent salaries since they know that labor organizations are legal and legitimate. Before shedding more light on these immigrants, I shall give a brief synopsis of McSorley's

novel in order to clarify their location within the larger narrative and help the reader understand their position and attitude towards the host culture (or, rather, certain individuals who identify themselves with its values), which views them as objects for economic exploitation.

The Portuguese in this narrative should be seen within the context of a novel whose spotlight is directed mostly at the Irish community living in Providence, Rhode Island. Moreover, this non-canonical and regional text is an interesting document not only because it depicts a unique period in American history – the Prohibition Era – it also touches upon Irish culture and values. Briefly, this novel explores prevailing stereotypes associated with the Irish in America: the Irish fondness for booze and their role in smuggling it into the country, the feelings of guilt and impurity associated with sexual intercourse because of Catholic indoctrination, and the overall poverty with which the Irish community is afflicted. The protagonist in this novel, Willie McDermott, comes into contact with the Portuguese because of his job at the local newspaper, the *Herald*. Originally from a blue-collar background, Willie had been deprived of higher education due to the untimely death of his father. He settles for a job at this newspaper, spending his first two years writing obituaries and is later on promoted to the writing of articles about Ireland, the Irish cause, Sinn Fein, the IRA, etc. It is exactly during this phase that he witnesses the Portuguese strikers struggling against their low wages, an episode that proves to be a turning-point in his life. Although Monteiro detects a few racist remarks in this novel, he points out rather convincingly that

> one must not get the wrong impression from these cliched ways of viewing the Portuguese that McSorley is another of

> your ordinary racist writers. On the contrary. His hero, Will McDermott, does his very best to view the Portuguese objectively, and he attempts to do so in the midst of a racist population.[11]

What I am interested in, however, is an analysis of what actually prompts these characters to embrace what in America is often perceived as extreme behavior, going on strike – and yet which is legal and a supposedly acceptable practice in a democratic country like the United States. Why have they become so wrapped up in a strike and why is one of these strikers portrayed as a scab? Usually a docile and unquestioning people who, at the time, were not affiliated to any trade unions in Portugal or even when finding themselves in a country with a different culture and language – the Portuguese in this novel take part in a strike, an activity with which traditionally they were not associated in the 1930s. And it is exactly on such a day that Will McDermott happens to walk by the picket line:

> He heard a derisive, piercing hoot and looking over the heads of the policemen he saw a dark-haired woman at a window in the tenement above the grocery across from the gate pointing into the street at a girl scurrying along behind the policemen. The woman's cry subdued the noise in the street.
>
> "Mary Souza, you bitch!" she screamed, shaking her fist out the window….Willie saw a girl detach herself from the strikers, spurt through the policemen and race along the sidewalk after Mary Souza. The girl turned apprehensively and began to run but she was overtaken in a couple of steps by the striker who grabbed the scab's black hair and flung her to the ground beneath her before the police realized what was happening. Willie's

> heart was wrenched with pity for the scab as he saw the striker's hands clawing at the victim's face. A second later he saw the black club of a policeman descend on the neck of the striker and pound, pound until the girl slipped off the scab and saw her lie crumpled and bleeding beside her. A howl rose from the strikers and the ranks of the police pressed toward them.
>
> Sickened, Willie averted his eyes and when he looked again two of the policemen were dragging the striker by the arms inside the gate, her heels scraping until one scuffed shoe was torn off her foot. A policeman went over and picked the shoe up throwing it over the fence to the spot where the first two dropped the striker in the grass. The scab cringed against the pickets of the fence and a sergeant took her arm and escorted her, hysterically wailing, her face a bleeding, scratched mask.
>
> A lieutenant stormed up and down the line of the police telling them to club the Portugee bastards, smash their God-damned heads in if another one of them tries to get through (146-47).

Gradually, the tension increases and the entire scene is one of complete confusion and chaos: stones are thrown through windows, sirens are heard blasting everywhere, and the strikers are yelling and shouting. Meanwhile, as the mayor of Providence approaches them, we witness the strikers

> moving steadily back now, some of them even into the yards of the houses, when a man with burning eyes, gesticulating wildly, faced them and, it appeared, began to address them. He would swing his body around at and point accusingly in the direction of the mayor as he spoke. He tore himself away from the crowd and with his hands balled into fists at his sides advanced toward the mayor. The mayor saw him and pointed the paper he was reading at the man. The crowd surged into the

street behind the man. It seemed that the strikers would storm on and trample anything before them.

There was a deafening blast and Willie saw the man at the head of the strikers lurch and spin. His knees sagged and he fell on his face in the street.

The screaming, yelling strikers whirled and ran, into the yards, into the doorways, into the grocery and in a moment a shower of stones burst over the street. The police ran after the strikers, clubbing and kicking those they would reach. A detail of policemen surrounded the body of the fallen man with their clubs poised in their hands. Captain Mullady, his revolver gripped in the suede fist, joined them. Then the reporters, apprehensively watching for another stone shower, began to move toward the wounded striker. An ambulance, which must have been waiting somewhere around the corner, whipped down the street and a white-coated intern leaped from its back step when it stopped.

“Who is he, Captain?” Willie asked Mullady as the intern rolled the body over and took its left hand in his own to feel for a pulse. He put the hand down again in the street and taking the visored cap from his head bent over the man’s chest to listen for a heartbeat.

“He’s a troublemaker, a red, an anarchist we had all lined up for deportation. Name’s Joao Almiro. We’ve been keeping an eye on him for weeks now waiting – what’s the verdict, doctor?”

“You don’t need me,” the young doctor said with a shrug of his white shoulders. “Was anyone else banged up in this? Let me have that name, will you,Captain, for my own report?”

“Almiro,” the captain repeated, “Joao, J-O-A-O, A-L-M-I-R-O. They tell me he was one of the ringleaders in the strike. He worked in the mill for about two years, I think. Came here from New Bedford, Fall River. We had a tip he was one of a gang of slackers during the war. Hadn’t been

> for the strike we'd have grabbed him already" (148-49).

Willie is evidently upset because the police and the mayor are busy trying to figure out the best way to cover up what had just occurred:

> "This, this unfortunate accident, Captain, I hope you told the boys, Captain, that the accident happened after the reading of the riot act and that the, the crowd had already been ordered to disperse—"
>
> "That's right, your honor," responded Mullady, "they had been ordered to disperse and this maniac stepped out and began to threaten his honor when a gun in the hands of one of the deputies, be sure you don't say it was the police, now, when a gun in the hands of one of the deputies was accidentally…"
>
> "The mayor was still reading when that shot was fired," Willie said calmly. "I was standing right beside the mayor and he was still reading when the shot…"
>
> "No, no," the mayor interrupted, "you're wrong, young man. What paper are you from? The *Herald*? Oh, no, you're wrong. I had finished reading when the accident happened…" (150).

According to them, Almiro was not much of a loss. He is dismissed as "one of that bunch of anarchists. They're mostly wops and Portugees anyhow" (152). Monteiro sums up this occurrence by pointing out that:

> The culminating irony, however, is that the striker who attacked the scab is arrested and charged with disorderly conduct. But the deputy who shot and killed João Almiro is not charged at all. He goes off scotfree. One moral can be drawn from this: a good Portugee is one who will work in the mill and will not strike against the owners.[12]

Because Will is so disgusted with the manner in which the authorities handled this case, he ends up going to Almiro's funeral, which clearly upsets the owner of the *Herald*. Since he refuses to apologize for having taken sides with the deceased man, he loses his job and finds himself disoriented for the rest of the novel. McSorley exposes even as late as 1949 America's well-documented and hysterical fear of organized labor and tendency to resort to official violence and authoritarianism when confronted with it.

In order to understand this entire episode and the reasons that led the Portuguese to resort to extreme behavior and even violence, it is important to understand why it occurred in a New England industrial setting. Since the Portuguese have had an ancestral attachment to an agrarian way of life, now that they find themselves working in factories they realize they have no other choice but adapt to a completely different lifestyle. Whereas in the old country they were in control of themselves and their work schedule, in America, the factory system imposed a new set of rules. Not only had they to work long hours, they also became an easy target for economic exploitation. In this novel, they are depicted as the victims of capitalist oppression and civil corruption. And once again, Pap's study, *The Portuguese-Americans*, provides us with information on why the Portuguese strikers reacted in such a manner in McSorley's novel. Pap points out that:

> Although the beginnings of Portuguese settlement in New England are associated with the fisheries, an increasing proportion of Azorean and other Portuguese men and women arriving after 1870 were drawn into factory labor, particularly

> into the cotton mills of New Bedford and Fall River.[13]

As Pap has noted, the reason why these immigrants needed to strike is because

> the majority of the Portuguese workers (as of 1913) were found in the cotton mills of New Bedford, Fall River, and Lawrence, with the men earning an average of $8.71 per week, and the women $7.38…these factory workers were not only earning less than those in farming and in the fisheries; they also suffered from a high incidence of tuberculosis and other illness.[14]

Pap further adds that:

> These harsh working conditions in the cotton mills soon led to unrest and to the formation of labor unions – although the Azoreans, typically averse to any impersonal collective action, were slow to develop union spirit…. A nine-month strike wave in New England's textile industry in 1922 was followed by one in New Bedford, in 1928, lasting half a year. In this one, immigrants from continental Portugal, in contrast to the Azoreans, were very active.
>
> Many New England cotton mills finally moved south for a surer supply of cheap labor; of 153 mills in 1923, there remained only about thirty in 1937. The total labor force in this New England industry, so vital for Portuguese immigrants, shrank from 34,000 to 12,000 during that same period. The majority of the Portuguese textile workers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island had to find their way into other jobs, after much unemployment and hardship. Many managed to move into a variety of retail trades, or into municipal employment, etc., without relocation. But thousands eventually migrated to the Newark, New Jersey area, to industrially expanding Connecticut, or

> even to California – and some back to Portugal.[15]

In the particular case of McSorley's *The Young McDermott*, the changes that the New England textile industry was experiencing are rendered through the plight of those who were the most vulnerable in the entire process – the Portuguese. In this novel, the violent behavior of the Portuguese is motivated by economic exploitation and potential destitution. What is obviously at stake in this novel is survival, a decent salary, human dignity and human rights – values that all human beings in Western societies are entitled to and that the hard-working Portuguese are denied by ruthless factory owners and corrupt civic leaders who win in the end by relocation and cheap black labor presumably. Once again, we are in the presence of Portuguese fictional characters implicated in scenes of violence, which are obviously not induced by them. In my view, we can also conclude from this that the Portuguese are the victims of institutional violence.

Published in 1951, Anton Myrer's novel *Evil Under the Sun* depicts as unusually violent and hotblooded a few Portuguese living in Capetown (presumably Provincetown). Having returned not too long ago from the battleground in World War II, Manny da Rosa is disenchanted with the future that awaits him in this fishing town, especially after his successful military career. Uneducated and doomed to the trade of his deceased father – fishing – he vents his frustration on just about anyone who comes his way. His favorite target happens to be a group of gay artists who flock to this town during the Summer months to enroll in painting and writing classes or just simply to have a good time. Perhaps the source of whatever evil or, instead, insensitivity the author claims to exist under

the sun may lie within the thick wallets of these fellows from Greenwich Village: they are flaunted rather too often in the eyes of these Portuguese fishermen who can hardly make ends meet. As I have argued in chapter two, the racist treatment the Portuguese had to endure is not lacking in this novel either. Perhaps the most repellently racist remarks aimed at the Portuguese that I have ever come across are contained in this novel. And they happen to come from the mouth of a local Yankee landlady who makes a living renting apartments during these months. When she witnesses Manuel da Rosa passing by her door, she cannot help saying this to herself:

> Oh there's that da Rosa boy. Now just where is he going. Drunk as usual, I suppose, or going to get drunk as soon as he can steal enough money to buy it somewhere. Look at him will you. Filthy old dungarees and boots, hair down over his ears, needs a shave. Slouching along. Probably done something he's ashamed of and trying to get away with it.
>
> Such a nice little boy he was, too. When he used to come by mornings with a quart pail of blueberries and look up at you with such black little eyes and smile. And they were good ones, too, all berries and not twigs and green ones and sand in the bottom the way a lot of them do. Nice little boy he was. Goodness, what ever makes them all turn out this way. Seems at just a certain age they all turn into a pack of roughs and hoodlums, hanging out all day in front of that poolhall on Front Street and making nasty remarks at all the summer visitors passing by, or getting into trouble breaking-and-entering during the winter. It's things like that that hurt trade so. But then they've always been like that. Their Portagee blood I suppose. Loud and insolent most of the time, and decent human beings only when they want something; or when they just feel like it. I declare they're the curse

> of the town. Lord only knows it's hard enough having to make enough off the summer trade to last through the winter on, without having to bear the burden of them, too. What between the Portagees in the winter and the Jews in the summer there isn't much left for a decent Christian. But then, as Mama used to say, if it isn't spiders it's ants (26-27).

Whatever redeeming features this woman attributed to the boy are undermined by her perception of him – and the Portuguese in general – as an adult man. Without a doubt, her prejudice increased over the years. Both the references to the boy-become-man and the Jewish remarks at the end reveal her as an ageing bigot. In addition, the traces of a subtle analysis of racism as we have encountered in, for example, Melville's "The 'Gees," are nowhere to be found. This is racism in its crudest form. There is absolutely nothing in this passage to suggest a fair-minded analysis of Otherness.

Not all the summer visitors, however, have come there exclusively for artistic reasons. Reminiscent of Chaucer's Wife of Bath, a few New York City girls have gone there in hopes of finding the ideal husband or, if things do not turn out to be the way they had anticipated, they will settle for some romance. After a few unsuccessful attempts at dating someone among the visiting heterosexual male community, sex-starved Barbara Merrill will settle for almost anyone, even the local Portuguese fishermen who are despised by practically everyone in this predominantly Anglo town:

> A group of young men, fishermen, going home to supper, dressed in boots and with jackets slung over their shoulders, passed; and Barbara Merrill moved her eyes by them in the way she'd learned at college so that she could still, in the

> scan of her vision, be aware of their eyes upon her for the brief instant of their passing; large dark eyes, hot, sensuous, demanding…. How they walked along, these Capetown men, the way their shoulders stayed level and their feet moved along so rhythmically, like an Indian's; they were really very handsome in a dark sort of way, such lean faces and wide eyes and even black eyebrows, they were symmetrically beautiful really – not the fat-sausage ones, of course, they looked like greasy Italian fish-peddlers when they got like that, but the slim ones, the way the dungarees fitted their thighs and the sheathknives on their hips – it gave them such a romantic air, you could imagine them, backs arched in the sun, golden ropes of muscle, pulling at the lacy nets, cutting things away here and there, singing (160).

In acknowledging to herself that she finds them sexually appealing, Myer, like Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises*, is tapping from the myth about how some women from a Northern European background tend to fantasize about going – or actually go – to bed with those whom they view as darker, macho, and virile Southern European men.

In *Evil Under the Sun*, however, not all of these masculine, aggressive qualities are sought after, especially in the case of Manny, who is depicted as viscerally violent and with strong primitive instincts. But what actually makes him act in such a manner? Manny is the product of a time and society we would now consider homophobic. He and his friends react as typical gay-bashers because of what they view as an injustice: according to Manuel, wealth is distributed too unequally in America. Upon glancing at a gay painter on the wharf, Manny says the following to himself:

> Another one. Probably painting. Morales' Wharf always full of them. Christ. This

> town in summer. Lousy with ‘em. Nothing else to do but come down here and swab paint around on a piece of canvas and spend their evenings gulping down good liquor at the Lagoon Club or the Faralong or the Dory Bar and talking about the problem of the poor goddam artist. Jesus, that’s a good one. Why the stupid assholes don’t know what the Christ a problem is. Lousy with dough, running around, playing at ahhhrt. My ahhhrss. Bunch a fags, don’t know what the score is, never had to sweat their guts out for nothing at all, break their ass for nothing (44).

Manny’s mother tries to convince him to get a steady job and face life with more responsibility. He reacts violently to her suggestions, especially when he suddenly “seized her forearm and drew her to him with such sudden violence that she gasped” (95). He insists he is still trying to pull himself together and that there is simply no future in this town. Another similar episode occurs when he visits his former girlfriend, Helen Riordan, whom he wishes to invite to a dance. It is all over between them – she tells him – and the air of aimlessness and irresponsibility about him is starting to get on her nerves:

> For a whole year you talked about all you were going to do, and nothing ever came of it. Now don’t come around here any more. I believed you and thought you were going to get a good job and we’d get married …. You’re just – turning into a tramp, that’s what …you’ve had two years and you came home all full of promises and big plans and loans and all kinds of things and now you’re – you’re just…(209).

He reminds her that he still needs some more time to pull himself together, besides, he claims that he has “got a righ’ to take a little time on it; I done as much for my country as anyone in this town…Ain’ I got the bes’ war

record of anybody in this town – except maybe for Blinkie Consalves?" (sic). As soon as he hears her say "Oh damn your silver star!" (210), he slaps her full in the face, apologizes, and yet makes it clear he cannot stand women who tell him what to do or, more importantly, make fun of his war record. While this behavior is condemned nowadays, Manuel, I believe, would not be exempted from being considered a woman beater. Whereas he cannot be excused for such inappropriate behavior, his frustration and violence, we should not forget, are also motivated by the country's neglect of its veterans and the violence he witnessed during the war, aspects which will be dealt with ahead.

Once, a woman happens to look at him in a rather teasing manner and Manny, who is upset and frustrated most of the time, reacts mentally to this occurrence in the following manner:

> All the little teasers. Dressed to tease, the great American game of tease. Lead you on and on and then: smacko. Not nice, that's not nice, mister man …. Like to get one of 'em out by Faralong, see how long they'd tease away then. No. Another story then it'd be, beg like crazy, scared to death. *Please mister please let me go I'll give you anything I swear only please please let me go please.* Yes.
>
> Please Mister Fisherman. Jesus Christ (215-16).

Manny is here having fantasies of revenge, where intimidation and rape serve to compensate for his daily frustrations. His frustration is further expressed when he attacks a gay man, supposedly, because he saw him kiss his lover in public:

> The slight figure whirled about suddenly on the shrill cry as Manuel swung, plunging forward, bone on bone crunching

> out the cry of terror; swinging his arms, loosed finally in the now, the utter and absolute now of fury, fists rising and falling, the white face smearing, dirtying in the shadows, the cries muted, fading, silenced, the body fallen forward, groping with its fingers on the warm, black asphalt of the street.
>
> Gasping for air Manuel bent down over the figure, lifted him by the shirt, at the throat, brought him up to him. "You son of a bitch," he said with fury. "I'll make you kiss my ass! I will!" The face lolling, shapeless, moaned once and he struck it again, again, till the body fell backward raglike, loose to his blows, unsupportable. He straightened then and glanced both ways, turning. Empty and shadowed, the street sighed in the night, forsaken, desolate. Exhausted (226).

Even though he acts in a brutal manner because of his homophobic impulses, he will not allow any pickpocketing on his companion's part: "None of tha', you hear?…I haven' sunk tha' low, see? Going to play the thief, ah? Now none of *tha'*" (227).

The question any reader of *Evil Under the Sun* will inevitably ask is: What makes Manny respond to any given situation violently? In what ways is this fictional representation of violence a reflection of the economic, political, and social situation at the time? According to William H. Chafe in an essay titled, "America Since 1945," by the time American troops returned home from the war, the United States was not exactly the same country as when they had traveled overseas. The most significant change – according to Chafe – had occurred with American women because:

> More than six million took jobs during the war, increasing the female labor force by nearly 60 percent; their wages rose dramatically; and for at least some, a

> continued life of achievement outside the home became for the first time a viable possibility. At war's end nearly 80 percent of those who had taken jobs declared their determination to stay in their newly won positions.[16]

Most American men found themselves jobless and women resisted returning to a life centered exclusively on the home. But in most fishing towns like those on Cape Cod, the economic situation was far worse than in the rest of the country, especially for those whose jobs were the most vulnerable, as the number of Portuguese fishing fleets had diminished over the years. The reason why Manny served time in prison for having – in cold blood – attacked a gay man was, as he tells Paul Kittering, his sense of frustration and hopelessness. And this is precisely the gist of the message Paul Kittering tries to get across to the battered gay man, as a means of justifying Manny's actions and somehow redeeming the beastly image which he has earned for himself:

> Do you want to know what causes all this violence? What's at the bottom of it? Those long winters, so cold and lonely – that's what *starts* it going; one long agony of loneliness and cramped and seeping cold and wondering if there's enough money to get through on till spring…. But it does happen finally - the warm weather, in May; and in those first magnificent days everything that was endured before seems worth it – all the pulling at nets in the bitter gales and icy water, howling black savagery, the cracked hands and faces, the silvered and splitting shingles and drafty hallways, the puny prices for fish at Consolidated Wharf, the squeezing pressures and family wrangles over the last dollars in February and March…then down come the city people, the outlanders, in hordes, with money to spend and time to waste, hungry for the

> long white beaches to lie out on all day… And that's where the jilting gets really cruel; because the money of the tourists carries farther than the pitiful little mackerel and whiting hauls…(331-32).

There is absolutely no future for Manny or for any other Portuguese fisherman in this town since it is practically impossible for them to survive on the little money they earn on their catch. Reminiscing about the past, Manny tries to come to terms with the death of a way of life, which, inevitably, will force him and his fellowmen to give up another ancestral activity as his countrymen had done when the days of New England whaling came to an end:

> Forty captains in Capetown there were, yes, the old man knows, the days Grandpa sailed, with forty schooners running to the Banks every season, and whaling, too, and Old Man Cunningham's wharf going full blast all the time, the vessels coming down from the Banks, and even money with Gloucester and the whole North Shore then; God almighty, those were the days. Captain of a vessel was something then. When Grandpa married Grandma right after she'd come over, what a time that must have been, the whole town dancing and parties for two weeks they say, visiting weeks on end, music, God, I'd a loved to been there…
>
> Nothing left to this town now; rotten wharves ready to blow away come a good gale and a bunch of forty-foot gasoliners that can't pay their freight half the time. Refrigerator trawlers out of Gloucester what did it. Two-way radio and everything. *Hello, Boston, what you giving today?…Okay, we can make T-Wharf by eight-thirty*. All on ice, nice and fresh. Can't compete with that. Nobody can. All the Boston money they had, got in ahead with it. All the fish. Not on your life. Side-show freaks now, all we are – something moored alongside Atlantic Wharf for the queers and socialites to lean over and

> look down and say, *Oh how quaint, how picturesque*. Yeah. How quaint. Picturesque old salts…(214-15).

While his sexual rage and homophobia must not be ignored, in this novel, Manny is a symbol for that side of human nature which resists sudden changes, especially when people are accustomed, generation after generation, to doing things in exactly the same way. But when economic challenges become inevitable, people will struggle to keep things the way they have always known them. And that might mean fighting – using whatever means available. This is exactly the mood we notice in Manny during *Evil Under the Sun*. Pressed to change his way of life, he uses violent behavior to express his frustration and despair.

In Search of Excitement: California's Portuguese-American Youth and their Embrace of the Lynch-mob Subculture in America

Unlike the previous texts focusing on New England, *Against a Darkening Sky* focuses on California's youth and their fascination with the lynch-mob subculture in America. Published in 1943 and focusing on rural life in the Santa Clara Valley, in the San Francisco Bay, this novel is faithful to the patterns of immigration into this area. This setting has, in fact, attracted – among numerous other ethnic groups – crowds of Portuguese from the Azores. True as it is to the ethnography of the area, its author, Janet Lewis, only occasionally touches on the lifestyle and mentality of the Portuguese who have flocked there. Perhaps the reason why the Portuguese are associated with violent situations in the novels discussed

earlier and not – as much – in this one might be explained through the story's setting. The Portuguese in California have not been subject to the hard working conditions and the economic cycles of depression of the local economy as they have in New England. Because California has given them the opportunity to follow their traditional way of life – farming – these farmers and dairymen have prospered more than their fellow countrymen in the New England textile industry, as we have already witnessed in McSorley's *The Young McDermott*. In times of economic hardship, those unsuccessful Portuguese, as Pap has pointed out, returned to their native country, and yet, the number of those returning to "Portugal was proportionately less from California than it was from New England – partly because farming provided greater stability than factory work."[17]

In this novel, the Portuguese are peripheral to the narrative. Janet Lewis seldom casts the spotlight on them and when she does, it is merely to stress how different they are compared to the Perrault family, especially "Mary Perrault [who] was Scottish" (2). From this family's perspective, the Portuguese attitude towards life in general is alien and unorthodox. Even though Mrs. Perrault gets along fairly well with Mrs. Tremonti, one of the Portuguese characters in this novel despite her Italian name, she cannot stop stressing time and again how different the Tremonti children are compared to her own.

An interesting detail in this novel is that Portuguese young women of that time period married rather early in life. Unlike other first- and second-generation Portuguese-Americans, Mrs. Tremonti takes part in community affairs along with her female neighbors, and in this sense strives to associate with mainstream, native-

born Americans. She seems to have, nonetheless, instilled some of the old country rural mentality into the mind of her daughter, Pearl Tremonti. In a conversation between Eustace and Melanie Perrault, the latter expresses her shock at Pearl's untimely plans for marriage, saying to him: "Do you know that Pearl Tremonti's going to be married as soon as school's out?…She's not any older than I am. *Of course she's Portygee*" (emphasis mine; 76). As a matter of fact, Pearl is due to marry within a week of her graduation. Pap points out that this was typical behavior in the early 1940s, especially in California, where the Portuguese have retained a considerable amount

> of the old-world family pattern. The man is distinctly the head of the family…. Compulsory education is tending to break down family influence over children. In many Portuguese homes, however, the daughter is still merely an apprentice to the mother in the ways of being an obedient, faithful, diligent wife…. When her required school days are over, she is expected to remain in the home until she is courted and married.[18]

In my view, this novel focuses on the Portuguese way of life in California since it contains a few references to their agrarian lifestyle. We are sporadically offered glimpses of their turkey breeding and we hear about "the Tremonti's dairy," (229) an activity in which the Portuguese have prospered as we shall see in chapter five when discussing Ruth Comfort Mitchell's novel *Water*.

The violent behavior attributed to the Portuguese in *Against a Darkening Sky* surfaces at the very end of the novel, namely, in a passage where Joe Tremonti attempts to convince Duncan Perrault to join him in the lynching of some drunkards. Mrs. Perrault protects her son from any involvement in violent activities. It is fine for Joe

Tremonti to exhibit such a fondness for violent behavior, but not her son:

> "I'll not have it. I'll not have you joining any gang of speak-easy drunks to help kill any man, no matter how bad he is"…"But Ma…we're not going to kill anybody. We're just going to see the fun. You said yourself they ought to be lynched."
>
> "It's one thing to say it and another to do it …and you know me well enough to know I'd not let any one of you have anything whatever to do with a killing. Fun! I'll not have you standing and gawping at a murder. I'll not have you a part of any crowd that does any such thing. I've never before, since you were in long pants, forbid you to do any single thing, that I mind, but I forbid you now. You'll not go out of this house for any such purpose this night or any other night*. Joe, I don't know what's come into your head to think of such a thing!"* (emphasis mine; 296)

In my view, the highlighted passage stresses the extent to which Mrs. Perrault is upset with Joe Tremonti since he is the one responsible for convincing her son to take part in witnessing a lynching episode. Although both boys just want to witness the "fun" since it is typical of their age, Mrs. Perrault's reaction further supports my view that in the texts under consideration in this chapter, the Portuguese are often associated with violence, gruesome deaths, and blood.

The literary texts analyzed in this chapter do not contradict Pap's overall assessment of the Portuguese at the very outset as a peaceful and orderly group of people in the United States. While these texts associate the Portuguese with violence, they do not portray the Portuguese as an ethnic group imbued with a visceral

propensity to violence for the sake of violence. Whenever the characters in the novels discussed earlier exhibit some form of violent behavior, they are responding to economic conditions, unfair or inhumane treatment, repression of guilt associated with sexuality, etc. As we have seen in these narratives, violence originates in characters who belong to the American mainstream and who, through their actions, generate in the Portuguese or some other agent a desire to seek reparation for misdeeds committed. An example of this type of conduct occurs in, for example, Higginson's "The Haunted Window." The author of this story has written it in such a way as to imply the need for some kind of justice – whether it comes from nature or from God – for the deserted Portuguese fiancée who has lost her marriage prospects. The same applies to Elk Snow – a man like the mythical Bluebeard – in Shay's *Murder on Cape Cod.* He takes advantage of his social and economic position to convince the Portuguese parents who, in turn, use their own authority to compel their daughter to espouse – against her will – a man who does not love her.

Moreover, Jackson's rendition of the alleged violence of the Portuguese in *The Lost Weekend* from the perspective of a character whose mind is confused and constantly sedated by booze does not come across as convincing. This reader can only conclude that his equating the Portuguese with violence is untrustworthy, despite the novel's strength as an engrossing psychological study of an alcoholic's state of mind and behavior. Steele's "Footfalls," in contrast, is a rather peculiar piece in the sense that it focuses on the dishonest and murderous instincts of a Yankee character who manipulates the "scapegoat" mentality entrenched in

the consciousness of certain WASPs. In other words, after murdering a Portuguese-American young man, Campbell Wood knows that if he leaves no traces of his murderous deeds he can escape scotfree and even benefit from the Yankee community's assumption that only ethnic minorities – in this case, the Portuguese – are capable of committing such horrifying acts.

In both McSorley's *The Young McDermott* and Myrer's *Evil Under the Sun*, the Portuguese fictional characters are rebelling against the economic conditions and social changes which control and condition their lives. Whereas in the former violence stems from the economic exploitation in the New England textile mills, in the latter Manny's rebelliousness and frustration emerge as a response to post-World War II economic conditions in America, male joblessness and to the death of the Portuguese fisherman's way of life and his inability to adapt. Finally, the young man's eagerness to witness the lynching of a few drunkards in Lewis's *Against a Darkening Sky* seems to come as a way for the boys to have some "fun" in this rural community where nothing exciting ever really happens.

Clearly, what the pattern in these novels indicates is that based on my previous arguments on the response of the Portuguese to labor strikes, economic and sexual exploitation, these violent outbursts are, in a way, contextualized and justified. Much as a pot with boiling water needs to release some steam, so the Portuguese have had to vent some of their frustrations because of the price of social marginality. In these stories the portrayal of violence in texts with a New England setting tends to be far more brutal than the one set in California; and this, as has already been pointed out, is

due to the overall ambience of tension in a New England industrial setting as opposed to the more relaxed rural atmosphere on the farms of California.

Unlike the previous chapter where, through time, we witness the Portuguese being assimilated and not treated in a racist manner by, say, the middle of the twentieth-century, in this chapter, the issue of violence and the Portuguese cannot be represented in a similar manner. Mid-twentieth-century texts such as *The Young McDermott* and *Evil Under the Sun* are more graphic in their portrayal of violence, shooting, fist-fighting, and the shedding of blood, whereas in Higginson's "The Haunted Window," for example, these occurrences do not take place. In this mid-nineteenth-century story, the reparation for a man's misdeeds is resolved with a different type of violence.

The portrait of the Portuguese in American writings includes additional traits other than the issues of race and violence. As will be seen in chapter four, another provocative image in certain American writings is the one which has equated the Portuguese with sexual laxity and perversion – especially Portuguese women.

Notes

[1] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 95.
[2] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 72; 70.
[3] Leo Pap, *The Portuguese-Americans* (Boston: Twayne, 1981), pp. 118-19.
[4] Fred L. Gardaphé, *Italian Signs, American Streets: The Evolution of Italian American Narrative* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1996), p. 56.
[5] See chapter nine, "Fayal and the Portuguese (1855-56)" in Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *The Writings of Thomas Wentworth Higginson*, vol. 6 (Boston and New York: Houghton, 1900), pp. 270-326.
[6] Richard B. Sewall, *The Life of Emily Dickinson*, 2 vols. (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1974), p. 574.
[7] Pap, p. 227.
[8] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), pp. 21-22.
[9] Richard L. McCormick, "Public Life in Industrial America, 1877-1917," *The New American History*, ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990), p. 111.
[10] Pap, p. 79.
[11] George Monteiro "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese," *Proceedings of the Fourth National Portuguese Conference: The International Year of the Child* (Providence, RI: The Multilingual/Multicultural Resource and Training Center, 1979), p. 182.
[12] Monteiro, p. 185.
[13] Pap, p. 135.
[14] Pap, p. 137.
[15] Pap, pp. 139-40.
[16] William H. Chafe, "America Since 1945," *The New American History*, ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990), p. 145.
[17] Pap, p. 68.
[18] Quoted in Pap, p. 126.

CHAPTER FOUR

ASSOCIATIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE WITH SEXUAL LICENSE

In the chapter titled "Miscegenation and the Mulatto, Inheritance and Incest: The Pocahontas Marriage, Part II," Mary Dearborn discusses the situation of half-breeds (the union of white slaveholders and black female slaves) before and after the Civil War in American society as a means to point out the stereotypical and psychological burdens inflicted on them for not belonging to either the white or black communities in the United States. According to her, these individuals do not fit anywhere in American society, thus increasing their psychological discomfort, anxiety, racist treatment, and sexual stereotyping. And this occurs because their complexion is an indicator of their hybridity. Furthermore, Dearborn also believes that for most Americans, especially for "racial supremacists like Thomas Dixon, the mulatto is a vicious and lustful brute who represents the worst qualities in both races."[1] What Dearborn is claiming in this chapter is the uncomfortable position of people of mixed race (like Capeverdeans) and, in my view, of ethnic minorities with a darker or olive complexion as most Portuguese living in the United States: they have been depicted by a few writers as a degenerate breed, embodying the worst qualities in all the different races of the world.

Although the majority of Portuguese are a Caucasian ethnic group, in the minds of certain American writers, as I have argued in chapter two, these people's "darker" complexion evokes angst and fear in mainstream Americans.

And many of these dark figures in American fiction have been associated with sexual license and promiscuity. When in contact with Yankee characters, these dark Portuguese figures are often portrayed as enticing the Americans into what, I will argue, the latter view as promiscuity. In the texts that will be analyzed in this chapter, the authors create Portuguese fictional characters who possess a certain magnetism, tempting the Yankee characters into situations involving inappropriate behavior. Although evidently not half-breeds – except the Capeverdeans – the Portuguese fictional characters whose complexion happens to be slightly darker also appear to the minds of the writers under review as "lustful brute[s]," similar to the way white supremacists had seen the mulatto as Dearborn has shown. According to Leslie Fiedler in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Nathaniel Hawthorne made extensive use of this notion in many of his major novels. And since my goal is to show how this mindset and perception is prevalent in portrayals of the Portuguese in American writings, Hawthorne's short story entitled "Drowne's Wooden Image" (1846) is a good example to start with.

Before moving on to my analysis of these texts, my overall argument in this chapter is that the majority of texts under scrutiny depict Portuguese fictional characters as sexually licentious and promiscuous. Moreover, their "darkness" is an object of sexual desire. While addressing the issues of identity propounded by Leo Bersani, Judith Butler maintains that "Only the decentered subject is available to desire," especially when discussing how the mainstream figure is sexually aroused by or longs for contact with the marginalized, decentered ethnic other in *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* In addition, this marginal other, Butler

argues, is represented in literature in a "degraded form, but repeatedly repudiated and subjected to a policy of disavowal."[2] Such is the situation of most of the fictional characters I propose to analyze in this chapter. Moreover, since most of these characters are working-class women, it is worth keeping in mind the stereotypes they were assigned once on American soil. When distinguishing between working-class European immigrant women and respectable middle-class women, Karen Brodkin has noted that middle-class women in America refused to associate with immigrant women so as to claim class and economic superiority. Brodkin further maintains that

> Working-class European immigrant women were also stigmatized for nonconformity to bourgeois ideals of domesticity. In the aftermath of the 1912 Lawrence "Bread and Roses" strike by textile workers, Ardis Cameron notes, "women from Poland, Lithuania, Russia, southern Italy, and Syria, were increasingly associated with ignorance, backwardness, and low evolutionary development and frequently portrayed as 'loose women, poor housekeepers, and bad mothers.'"[3]

In the light of Brodkin's quote ahead, it is not, I would argue, difficult to ascertain where the Portuguese working-class women did fit in American society:

> Women of color and off-white working-class women were bad women. African American women were the antithesis of ladies in the popular imagination and in discourses driving public welfare policy. In varying degrees, and at various times, so too were Mexican and European immigrant working-class women. Since they were not supported at home by their husbands, they could hardly be respectable women or good mothers. They worked alongside nonwhite men in "unskilled," intensely supervised gang labor in the capitalist sector, took boarders and piecework into their homes in

> the early days, and conducted much of their household labor beyond their domestic walls, in their neighborhoods.
>
> Such women had no inalienable rights to motherhood. Put most baldly, bad women were not virtuous no matter what they did. Bad women did not have social problems, they were social problems. They were not supposed to be the mothers of the nation's citizens. Indeed, in the prevailing civic discourse then as now, their motherhood was a threat to national integrity.
>
> White women were by presumption good women; they either did not work for wages or they did so in ways that preserved their femininity and respectability – not least, by being separated from their male peers and nonwhites. White women were presumed to be good women and thereby deserving of male protection, but their virtue was contingent on the extent to which they fulfilled the ideals of dependence upon, and domestic service to, men and stayed in their proper place of heterosexual domesticity. If they left "home," they too risked losing their privileges.[4]

With such a way of thinking well ingrained in American society before the middle of the twentieth-century, immigrant, non-mainstream women could not avoid being stereotyped as promiscuous and "loose." Such was the case of the Portuguese women, as I will now try to show.

The Puritan Legacy and the Portuguese: New England's Response to Sexual Licentiousness

While, on the one hand, it is interesting to observe that the emphasis on sexual licentiousness and the Portuguese is, to my knowledge, nowhere to be seen in American texts other than those from New England, this

issue, on the other hand, invites us as readers to ponder the extent to which the New England Puritan legacy may have shaped the writers from such an environment. Save for Calvinism in Scotland and compared to other Western countries, the United States of America and its culture have been shaped profoundly by Puritanism. Within its boundaries, perhaps in no other part of the United States has its presence been felt as strongly as in New England. This legacy has inevitably molded New England writers and this, in turn, has affected the way in which they represented sexuality. My contention is that the Portuguese immigrants residing there were shaped by these religious beliefs. On the other hand, the texts discussed ahead – texts which deal with the allegedly promiscuous nature of its Portuguese fictional characters – fall into two categories. An example of the first category would be Joseph C. Lincoln's *Out of the Fog*, a non-canonical novel which, among other matters, aims at stressing the propensity of its Portuguese fictional characters to indulge in sexual misconduct. In more intricate texts such as Edith Wharton's fragment, "Beatrice Palmato," a text belonging to the second category, we witness the narrator in this story using hybridity and racial and sexual stereotypes so as to focus on the ethnic "other" as an object of sexual desire.

With these two categories in mind, let us now analyze the texts in question, more specifically Hawthorne's treatment of the Azorean aristocratic female character in "Drowne's Wooden Image." Before a discussion of this short story is attempted, one should look at what Leslie Fiedler, T. Walter Herbert, Nina Baym, and Frederick Crews – to name a few – have in general to say about Hawthorne's views on female sexuality and conduct.

Fiedler points out convincingly that there is a tension in Hawthorne's fiction between the figure of the "Nice Girl" or "snow maiden" and that of the "dark lady." The first category includes the pure and sexually inexperienced female characters such as Phoebe in *The House of the Seven Gables*, Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance*, and Hilda in *The Marble Faun*. These characters have a typical Nordic look – blue eyes and blond hair. The second group includes the black-haired seductresses and sexually experienced women such as Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance*, and Miriam in *The Marble Faun*. Surprisingly, as Fiedler has suggested, the portrayal of the first set of pale-looking, porcelain maidens is "prompted by a secret hate" and the author of these novels – ironically – ends up marrying "an ethereal ice-lady." Fiedler then goes on to argue that:

> Hawthorne excelled in imagining all his life dark figures which have the irreality and queasy appeal of masturbatory fantasies. How exotic they are, how *gorgeous* (it is Hawthorne's ambivalent adjective), and how poisonous: non-Anglo-Saxons, all of them, Mediterraneans, Orientals, Jews – or at least given to an oriental lushness in dress and in the flesh, not considered quite decent in New England society.[5]

It is precisely towards this type of "exotic," dark-complexioned woman that Hawthorne is drawn in "Drowne's Wooden Image."

More recent scholarship dealing with this issue is available in T. Walter Herbert's work, *Dearest Beloved: The Hawthornes and the Making of the Middle-Class Family*. According to Herbert, Hawthorne viewed his wife, Sophia, who had "internalized the conventional wifely role," as

“superangelic. She embodied an immaculate purity.”[6] Not all the other women he had befriended during his life, however, were seen in such a way. Such was the case of, for example, Louisa Lander, who had made a bust of the author. She had been accused of improper conduct while in Rome, supposedly having modeled for men in the nude. Upon learning this, Herbert notes that Hawthorne immediately viewed her as a “fallen” woman and later avoided receiving her in his parlor.[7] Moreover, Herbert is of the opinion that if Hawthorne suspected an episode involving Ada Shepard (the teacher of his daughter Una) and Dr. Franco (Una’s physician in Italy) had taken place, she would have been banished from the Hawthorne household. Supposedly, Dr. Franco tried to seduce Shepard, but she avoided him. Hawthorne, Herbert concludes, would not have tolerated the “erotic struggle taking place in Una’s sickroom and the adjoining parlor.”[8] In addition to Hawthorne’s views on sexuality, these real life episodes, Herbert suggests, were transported into the realm of fiction. That is why, critics often agree, there is a tension in his fiction featuring a series of spotless vs. sexually experienced female characters.

In an intriguing essay titled, “Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Mother: A Biographical Speculation,” Nina Baym has unearthed a few details which may help to explain Hawthorne’s ambivalence and queasiness about female sexuality. Basically, she argues that *The Scarlet Letter’s* protagonist, Hester Prynne, was not modeled on Margaret Fuller, as most critics tend to agree, but on his own mother, Elizabeth Manning Hathorne (or, instead, containing a mixture of both women). Throughout his life, Hawthorne was strongly attached to his mother. *The Scarlet Letter*, Baym contends, “contains autobiographical and

biographical material (his mother's biography) and is engendered specifically by Hawthorne's experience of his mother's death. It is not inaccurate to describe *The Scarlet Letter* as Hawthorne's response to his mother's death."[9] Apart from the various parallels that may be established between his mother and Hester Prynne such as female independence (Hawthorne's mother became a widow at the age of twenty-eight), both real and literary figures are associated with motherhood and child rearing. In addition, both Elizabeth Manning Hathorne and Hester Prynne had questionable circumstances related to their children's births. "The date of Ebe's birth," that is, Elizabeth (Ebe), Hawthorne's eldest sister, Baym reminds us, "was barely seven months after that of her parents' marriage." Baym has also noted that the "significance of this seven-month's child has escaped notice, or at least mention, by virtually all of Hawthorne's biographers."[10] Baym has proven that this out-of-wedlock child was not a premature baby and that Hawthorne "would have to be old enough to mesh a knowledge of wedding and birth dates with a knowledge of biological processes before he could relate his mother's guilt, her children, and her separation from the Hathornes in one logical structure." With this knowledge, he could better understand the reasons for the

> failure of the Hathornes to pursue a relationship with Elizabeth [which] seems stranger than her defection from them, because in losing her they lost grandchildren who bore their name. But perhaps Elizabeth's misstep had disqualified her children as Hathornes in their eyes. Perhaps they viewed her as a social interloper, a female conniver using a woman's age-old trick to entrap a husband. Perhaps their old-fashioned piety led them to perceive her as sinful and fallen. Perhaps the causes of the falling-

> out were banal. But however it came about, it is impossible that Nathaniel Hawthorne could have absorbed any other perspective on this rift than that of his mother.[11]

In *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes*, Frederick Crews has also analyzed Hawthorne's treatment of this theme, which, he contends, is central to his fiction. When analyzing Miriam in *The Marble Faun*, Crews notes that without "ever saying directly that she is sexually stained, Hawthorne has labored ingeniously to ensure that we get that impression." Rather unusually, this study, first published in 1966, linked Miriam's sexuality with ethnicity, an issue which has captured the attention of contemporary theorists. The following quote, I believe, antecedes much of what Edward Said has written in, for example, *Orientalism*. Miriam, Crews notes,

> is not only part English and part Italian, but part Jewish as well, and it is rumored that she also has "one burning drop of African blood in her veins"…The equation of obscure, esoteric origins with promiscuity is already familiar to us from the metaphorically "Oriental" character of Hester and Zenobia, and Miriam too, in addition to her literal ancestry, has "a certain rich Oriental character in her face"…As for her Jewishness, Hawthorne reveals what he thinks of that when he describes Hilda's trip through the Jewish ghetto – "the foulest and ugliest part of Rome…where thousands of Jews are crowded within a narrow compass, and lead a close, unclean, and multitudinous life, resembling that of maggots when they over-populate a decaying cheese"… Such prose, which reminds us more of *Mein Kampf* than of the theological works that are usually adduced to explain Hawthorne's ideas, vividly demonstrates that Jewishness, earthliness, filth, and sexuality are symbolically interchangeable in his imagination. Miriam's fate in the plot of

> the romance is to be the scapegoat for a sexual nausea that Hawthorne, along with his other characters, prefers to vent upon the foreign temptress and her sensual race.[12]

This notion of a "foreign temptress" and her "sensual race" are aspects which he has pondered in the composition of "Drowne's Wooden Image." I also concur with Crews' insight concerning the sexual allusions in Hawthorne's fiction, namely that "*suppression* always has the psychological consequences of *repression*: the denied element surreptiously reappears in imagery and innuendo."[13] Again, this is the technique he also applies to his analysis of female sexuality in "Drowne's Wooden Image." Crews reminds us when reading a Hawthorne story, it is worth keeping the following in mind:

> As always, Hawthorne's personages are twisted and inhibited by thoughts that never literally occur to them, but which menace the author's private mental economy…. We have seen that in his world things often happen, not because of overt motives and intentions, but because of symbolic values that the characters must represent for the author. In these final works the pretense of literal motivation is almost abandoned: the characters mechanically and unquestioningly obey Hawthorne's own obsessions.[14]

When discussing Hawthorne's choice of a diplomatic post abroad after the publication of *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850, George Monteiro shows that the author had made some inquiries about Portugal as if he knew nothing about it. Of course, Monteiro argues,

> Hawthorne was having his little joke…for he was not unaware of Portugal and its literature, particularly Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas* in William Julius Mickle's eighteenth-century translation. As a child

> he had lived in Salem, the home port for ships that early on their way to the Far East stopped at the Azores.

While I concur with Monteiro, this quote does not convince us that Hawthorne knew the country well, either. What, I believe, is important for my analysis of "Drowne's Wooden Image," is to learn that – according to Monteiro via Luther S. Luedtke – the origin of Hawthorne's "dark ladies" can be traced all the way back to the Azorean woman in this story:

> In "Drowne's Wooden Image," published in 1844, Hawthorne tells the story of a young Salem woodcarver whose inspiration for his finest work is rumored to have come from his fascination with "an exotic dark lady brought from her home in the Azores" to New England. "The genealogy of Hawthorne's 'dark lady,'" a category that includes Hester Prynne of *The Scarlet Letter*, it has been said, "begins in earnest with the voluptuous 'young Portuguese lady of rank'" of "Drowne's Wooden Image."[15]

This story takes place in Boston, more precisely, in the workshop of a carpenter by the name of Drowne. Captain Hunnewell has requested his services in the conversion of an oaken log into a figure-head for his vessel, the *Cynosure*. At first, the figure that Drowne has been commissioned to produce is enveloped in an aura of mystery, but little by little it gains the shape of a female figure-head

> in what appeared to be a foreign dress; the gown being laced over the bosom, and opening in front, so as to disclose a skirt or petticoat, the folds and inequalities of which were admirably represented in the oaken substance. She wore a hat of singular gracefulness, and abundantly laden with flowers, such as never grew in the rude soil of New

> England…. There were several little appendages to this dress, such as a fan, a pair of ear-rings, a chain about the neck, a watch in the bosom, and a ring upon the finger, all of which would have been deemed beneath the dignity of sculpture. They were put on, however, with as much taste as a lovely woman might have shown in her attire, and could therefore have shocked none but a judgment spoiled by artistic rules (312).

While the rapture that the artist evinces in his work suggests "Rappaccini's Daughter," it also evokes the *Genesis* story when God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. This "dark" lady – like most others in Hawthorne's fiction – is initially portrayed as faultless but, when we delve deeper into her character, she has the potential for temptation since the serpent transmitted evil to Eve, the mother of all women. Further into the story, we learn that captain Hunnewell was disappointed by Drowne's decision to leave the figure-head unpainted, so he immediately proceeds to "paint the habiliments in their proper colours, and the countenance with nature's *red* and *white*" (314; emphasis mine). Artistic representations of the symbolical red and white have become a cliché for sexual appeal in the Western tradition. This is an issue we can see in, for example, medieval British literature, namely Chaucer's Wife of Bath and Dunbar's *The Treatise of the Two Married Women and the Widow*, where the female characters in these stories often bite their lips to make them look redder and more appealing.

In this story, however, we are not introduced to one of Hawthorne's "snow maidens," but, instead, another one of his "dark ladies" with

> strange rich flowers of Eden on her head; the complexion, so much deeper and more

> brilliant than those of our native beauties; the foreign, as it seemed, and fantastic garb, yet not too fantastic to be worn decorously in the street…. And then her face! In the dark eyes, and around the voluptuous mouth, there played a look made up of pride, coquetry, and a gleam of mirthfulness…(314).

The Puritan community speculates that "it would be no matter of surprise if an evil spirit were allowed to enter this beautiful form, and seduce the carver to destruction" (315). "One thing is certain," says a Puritan "of the old stamp," Drowne "has sold himself to the devil; and doubtless this gay Captain Hunnewell is a party to the bargain" (317). Such are the powers of the real woman this statue is meant to represent. According to this Puritanical mainstream community, this Portuguese woman can destroy the "innocent" American male, leading him astray. It is only on the day before Captain Hunnewell decides to sail for Fayal once again that he is seen walking in the streets of Boston with the real woman the statue is inspired by. Although this aristocratic woman may be physically appealing and even though the captain may wish to broadcast her beauty in foreign ports, readers unaware of Hawthorne's secret passion for "dark ladies" can only perceive the revelation of the female character's identity in the last paragraph as that of another "fallen" woman given Hawthorne's views on female sexuality and decorum:

> There was a rumor in Boston, about this period, that a young Portuguese lady of rank, on some occasion of political or domestic disquietude, had fled from her home in Fayal, and put herself under the protection of Captain Hunnewell, on board of whose vessel, and at whose residence, she was sheltered until a change of affairs. This fair stranger must have been

> the original of Drowne's Wooden Image (320).

Regardless of her social status (so far, she is the only fictional Portuguese aristocrat I have come across among a throng of peasants, fishermen, and blue-collar workers), in Hawthorne's depictions of female sexuality, she will always remain the foreign temptress, the sexually fallen woman. Moreover, I would argue that this story illustrates Hawthorne's attraction to the dark ethnic other as well as his fear and dislike of what these women represent.

A novel containing no subtle allusions to the sexual behavior of both Portuguese female and male characters is William Cummings' *An Island Chronicle*, published in 1924. Most of the action takes place on the island of the Fist, in a village named Melton. An outsider comes into this small community made up of Portuguese farmers and fishermen. Joe Silviedra, a young man of about twenty, is unemployed and word has reached him about old man Santos, who wishes to hire an experienced farm hand. As soon as he settles down in this community, he becomes the most desired young man by all the single women.

The Portuguese fictional characters in this narrative have quickly assimilated the values of thrift and entrepreneurship which are at the heart of American mainstream culture. This is clearly the case with Joe's employer, Mr. Santos, a successful Portuguese who

> had come to America years ago, had gone to work as a farm-hand on the island, and had never left it. By work and thrift and singleness of purpose he had prospered; in time he came to own his own farm, his herd of cows became a credit to the community; and now he was content to go on from year to year, living in simple prosperity, improving his farm and the quality of his herd, and putting more money into the

> bank. He was a very sane old man. He never pounded his chest and told how important he was; and he never outgrew his own people (4).

Although his demeanor may be highly commendable from a mainstream perspective because he made his way up the economic ladder, he remains, at heart, a Portuguese who is faithful to the values of the old country and its people, the ones he feels most comfortable with. We get glimmers of this when he and his wife were passing

> through the midst of a group of houses – the thirty-odd drab, unpainted, weather-stained houses of the Portuguese. It was an unlovely little settlement; many of the scattered buildings were no more than shacks – a collection of dreary habitations, sombre, desolate, dirty, depressing. Yet Santos was glad to be in the midst of them. The people within them were his own people. He knew them all and understood them; he had his place among them, and his own importance. There was stir and movement about, and the old man came to life in response to the life around him. Dogs barked at him familiarly; the uncombed heads of children appeared at windows; a man waved to him from the doorway of a shabby barn; he could hear the raucous voice of a woman scolding. The world had come to life at last (6).

While economic prosperity is an important issue in this novel, the author is also interested in focusing on sexual conduct involving ethnic minorities, the Portuguese in particular.

According to the prevailing sexual prejudices during the first quarter of the twentieth-century, the time when this novel was published, Rosie Rosario is depicted as a loose, sexually experienced woman. Although she is only in her mid-twenties, her sexual experience dates back a few years already since she has, in vain, fallen in love with

men who simply desired her body. As she counted the years go by, completely frustrated, we learn that:

> Rosie Rosario had never married. She had never had the chance, for she was possessed by a temper amounting to madness, a rage that no man could stand…. Rosie was now twenty-six, a number that spells 'old maid' in this community of early marriages. Hers was a somewhat shameful status, implying some fundamental disability, and her neighbours treated her, according to their temperaments, with supercilious gaiety or distant contempt. But none of them knew her status as well as Rosie knew it herself. Consciousness of her failure in life had ground itself into her soul, had gradually transmuted the wildness of her fury into the stillness of despair, and would later transmute her despair into a cold hatred of the world…. When her sexual passions took fire (as they had on occasions in the past), the heat and flame swept like a forest conflagration – swift, insatiable, uncontrollable, till they burned themselves out, marking the girl and the companion of her passion with the deep scars of life too swiftly spent (38- 39).

And even though she cannot resist sexual activity given her age, she yearns to be married to a man who will not treat her like a sex object as she has in the past by all the other men she has slept with. Unlike her brother Manuel – who ends up turning his back on this village, heading for New York City – she comes to the realization that it is better for her to stay at the Fist; otherwise she might end up like Maggie in Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, that is, prostituting herself in the streets of Manhattan:

> Every man she met seemed ready to drag her away from her dream of married decency; even her brother reminded her of possibilities which she wanted to forget.

> She became conscious of the sex-brutality of men. She knew that she could not leave the Fist because that brutality would destroy for ever her high ambition. Manuel might go away into the world, because he would there be the dominating brute; if she should go she saw that she would become the victim of the brutality of his kind (43).

Unable to attract the man of her dreams – Joe – she is willing to marry for money even if that means entering a loveless marriage with the richest Portuguese man on the Fist, Giorgio Vinti, who has also led a life of womanizing. But he shoves her aside, arguing she does not have the "stuff [he] want[s] in a wife" (69). As a fictional representation of real Portuguese men, Giorgio betrays the sexual prejudices of his time and age even though he himself has acted like a typical rake. Moreover, patriarchal culture which has shaped him has given him hints that it is fine for a man to be sexually experienced as long as the woman he ends up marrying is spotless. That is why he prefers Angela Granier, a chaste young woman pressed to relinquish the love of her life – Joe. Her mother had drilled into her the value of the material comfort that Vinti's money would provide for her should she marry him instead of the penniless Joe.

After so many fruitless attempts to marry decently, Rosie Rosario becomes more and more conscious of her destiny as a prostitute because, by now, all men

> had shown her with their eyes – Vinti had shown her, Joe had shown her, even her brother Manuel had shown her – that her destiny was bound up in the large handsomeness of her body. Men desired her, but they would not marry her – they did not love her. Now she was eager to fly out into the world that would show her no pity – the world that would invite her into its

> by-ways with the countless long scrutinies of men, and she would meet, greet, court those looks, till at last she would be destroyed by them – her destiny fulfilled (236).

She will even use her sexuality to hurt other people, especially her antagonist Angela, who detests the brutality and sexual aggressiveness of her husband Giorgio. With Vinti – Cummings seems to imply – Rosie could experience a similar sexual ecstasy. One day, Rosie passes by Vinti and, at first, we learn that

> In his look, when he first flashed it upon her, there was no desire whatever. But in the process he beheld the contours and surfaces of Rosie's splendid body, indicated and suggested, her bare throat, the rich colour of her neck, her shining eyes, her gleaming hair; and something waked in him, stirred, rose rampant. He was filled with desire, as he had often been before…. As he returned to the beach alone in the dark, he felt, somehow, that between him and Rosie there was an affinity, and though it occurred to him that it was only an affinity of hatred, he knew that there was something other than that on his side. Some day, he told himself, they would fly together instead of flying apart – they would fly together, if only to destroy each other. He was now ready for that encounter, and he wondered how she would meet him (240).

From now on, it is either Rosie who will end up broken or her partner. Cummings is not clear who will be the one to end up more hurt given both characters' sexual plenitude. Furthermore, the author of *An Island Chronicle* implies that such sexual violence only occurs with the Portuguese since this is the ethnic group – when other ethnics from all over the world were available in New England – he purposely selects to discuss their alleged sexual laxity.

Whereas Rosie was “destined to become a plaything of men” (282) and plunge deeper and deeper into the mire, Giorgio, in his late forties manages to channel his sexual energy into fatherhood with his wife Angela, who takes him back after his out-of-wedlock affair with Rosie. But this acceptance is a conditional one, for she will not tolerate any more of his womanizing from now on: “Don’t you suppose I’ve got any feelin’s… Listen, Giorgio… You can’t treat me like you treat them other women. You can’t come an’ go as you like between me an’ them. I’m your wife! (297). Fatherhood is what actually redeems him, but one cannot forget that he started his married life treating Angela much in the same way as he would a prostitute. His most disrespectful attitude towards his newlywed wife occurred on his honeymoon, at a New York City cabaret, where he happened to bump into Rosie’s brother, who is leading the life of a gigolo. Invited to come over to their table for a couple of drinks, Giorgio begins to fondle the prostitute’s hand under the table while his wife and Manuel are sitting right by his side. This episode ends late that night with Giorgio’s deflowering – or is it raping? – Angela since he had been

> unwontedly stimulated by the cocktails and by the little blonde girl; and that night Angela realized, for the first time, with terror, the intense passion, the sensual grossness that lay hidden beneath her husband’s recent kindness (209).

The following day, he and Angela have nothing to say to one another as they head back to Melton. But Angela cannot erase from her mind the words he had uttered to her the previous night,

> unforgettable words that had left her shamed and scarred, had robbed her of her virtue as a wife, and made her merely a

> partner of his vicious passion. His passion had scarred her physically; some substance of her being had actually been destroyed in that horrible hot fire; there were spots upon her face and upon her body where his kisses had burned, that tingled yet, and she was sure that her shame was visible to the world (210).

Although Cummings in *An Island Chronicle* suggests that the Portuguese are sexually promiscuous – as he tries to argue through the characters of Rosie and Giorgio – to this reader, at least, he is unconvincing. This is, at least, the case with the character of Giorgio Vinti. Giorgio's ethnic background is Portuguese as we are told that "his friend Mr. Romas" was "a thin, swart old man, Portuguese like Giorgio" (94). This character's name, however, is not a Portuguese one but, instead, Italian. If the Portuguese are said to be a sexually promiscuous people, Cummings' choice of name does not match with the ethnic group he chooses to depict.

What is, nonetheless, unique in this novel – something we normally do not encounter in other narratives – is this author's keen perception of the place of these fictional characters in the spectrum of American society and culture. In the case of Giorgio, he comes to the realization that he is a Portuguese at heart even though he had tried to assimilate American ways:

> To everyone but Giorgio himself, the new house was the crowning glory of a commendable success. His neighbours looked upon him and applauded his pride. Where, then, was his failure? His Americanism? Well, yes; most of the inhabitants of the Fist would have been puzzled and amused at his notions about being like the Americans. They all copied and imitated American ways and manners, but it was only the surface manners that they thus imitated. A deeper understanding would

> come only with the new point of view of a later generation. If his neighbours had actually come upon Giorgio's pride in his Americanism, they would have put their fingers upon it at once as a self-deception, and would have promptly proved him Portuguese. No, they all saw him as he was, and regardless of any different thing he might have thought he was or wished to be, they applauded him for that. His injured pride took firm hold of this at last, as of an assurance. He must, he saw, continue to keep up appearances (219-20).

Although Giorgio is depicted as a sexual brute, such coarseness is not extensive to his whole personality. As a first-generation Portuguese, Giorgio is fully aware that it will take at least another generation for his ethnic group to be fully integrated into American society. In his particular case, it is through his unborn sons that this will be accomplished. As he puts it: "They'll be dark an' strong an' proud. Americans they'll be… They'll go to college an' be proud" (300-301). What is rather intriguing about this comment is the ease he evinces in blending in his mind the darker complexion his Portuguese-American sons will inherit from him along with typical American mainstream values such as the importance of education and the pride and celebration of one's self. The importance of the self in America, Vinti is keenly aware, is a cornerstone in American culture and literature, and this is reflected in, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance," Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" or even Emily Dickinson's "The soul selects her own society." If Crèvecoeur had posited America back in the eighteenth century as a melting of peoples of European stock, perhaps what still remains contemporary about his vision is contained in the notion of the merging – not of just Europeans – but of values and different ethnicities. As a

character, Vinti's perceptions remain valid in today's world, especially in America. His vision of America is one that encompasses different nuances of complexion, a plurality of facial and bodily features –yet united by a set of values that transcend the very ethnic groups that compose this vast and fascinating country. To me, at least, issues such as these embedded within the narrative are far more pertinent and valuable than a mere biased, stereotypical, and dubious portrayal of the alleged sexual laxity of the Portuguese.

Readers of Elizabeth Eastman's *Sun on their Shoulders* (1934) have been misled from the very outset into assuming that Rosemary, the alleged sexually active young woman, is a Portuguese when, in fact, she is a Capeverdean. When this novel was published, Cape Verde was a Portuguese colony. According to António de Oliveira Salazar's policies, its citizens were also Portuguese. But in the United States, as Leo Pap has noted, the issue of skin color was an aspect which made the Azoreans and continentals shy away from their darker-complexioned, Portuguese-speaking Capeverdean colonial subject peoples. Before a discussion of this important detail is attempted, I must briefly focus on the story line. This regional portrait of Cape Cod and its cranberry bogs is not a major work of fiction, but the agricultural product – cranberries – and the toil involved in raising them are of great historical and sociological interest. There has been a tendency in the past to dismiss this kind of fiction as easy local-color writing. However, I believe it is worth revisiting it to see what sort of attitudes towards minority groups prevailed at that time, to say nothing of the historical interest that a local industry might have for economic historians.

In my view, *Sun on their Shoulders* succeeds in capturing the way of life of those ethnic minorities who have embraced the cranberry growers livelihood during this century – the Finns, the Portuguese from the islands and the continentals as well as the Capeverdeans. While the natives of Cape Cod loathe tilling the soil or getting themselves drenched in the cranberry bogs – as we have already witnessed in Rothery's *The House by the Windmill* – in this novel, there are no other job opportunities for its ethnic minorities. In this novel, the Finns fare not much better than the Portuguese. Although the Finns may look down upon the Portuguese, they are, in turn, spurned by the natives of New England of Yankee stock. The character Matti Erikson is conscious of their position within the spectrum of New England society: the Finns, too, have no other choice but do the work that most New England Yankees have refused to do. As he explains to Heikki Ranta, the protagonist and head of a Finnish immigrant family, those people who call themselves Yankees are often

> proud and most of them have their own houses and even a horse. The men, some of them, go out to the sea and catch fish; and the others are farmers and you can see them out in their fields any day when the sun shines. The women are lazy: they sit only in the house, and when they go out they hold umbrellas over their heads and cover their hands with gloves. Let me tell you, Heikki, if they were Finns this Cape Cod would look different: fields stretching out ten times as far and any day, in the rain or sun, you would see women and children out there with the men. Well, that's how it is. Only give me a few years; give me ten, twenty years. Then you will see what a man with a head on his shoulders can do in this country' (35-36).

This man will take advantage of the wonderful opportunities this country has to offer him and in due time and through honest, hard work he will make his way up the economic ladder. It is precisely at this stage – after so many years of toil – that the action in the novel begins. In the meantime, Heikki has become affluent and is eager to expand his property. His sons Arvo, Otto, and Bruno toil alongside him but do not wish to follow in the footsteps of their father for the rest of their lives. As soon as they own the money and property their father has painstakingly amassed we witness it being squandered at the very end of the novel in rocky business ventures. Meanwhile, the old man is left to himself, empty-handed and half-insane, to figure out what had gone wrong in the process of raising his sons. Moreover, he is given a glimpse of how much his sons may have been lured by America's consumer culture and how their squandering has left them completely destitute at the very end. But it is not really the Finns that this study aims to discuss. Instead, my focus is the Portuguese characters whom this family hires during the cranberry weeding or picking seasons and while ditching for a new bog. Another pertinent matter is how the author herself portrays this ethnic minority, never distinguishing between Azoreans, continentals, and Capeverdeans.

The conclusion one can reach about Eastman's "Portuguese" is that they – or their ancestors – originally emigrated from the Cape Verde Islands. As has already been pointed out in chapter two, there was a fairly large Capeverdean community living in New England, especially on Cape Cod and around Providence, Rhode Island. Most likely, now involved in the cranberry business, these characters are the descendants of the

Capeverdean sailors who had worked on the Nantucket whaling ships, the very same ones Melville immortalized in *Moby-Dick* and in "The 'Gees." What prompts this reader to view them as Capeverdeans instead of Portuguese from the mainland or even from the Azores or Madeira is that the author herself has interspersed her narrative with references pointing to their half-breed background. A good example of this is Mrs. Ranta's recollection of the shanty where she and her husband had lived right after they had married. She can still remember their single room and how cold it was and the people who lived nearby. Both the Rantas and their few neighbors lived in the backwoods, far from the center of the Yankee community and way of life. As Mrs. Ranta puts it,

> no one lived near us except a few *Purgiisia*. I was afraid of them at first because of their dark skin, but they were kind to us. There was an old woman, almost coal black, but her hair was light gray; and she helped me with the babies (29).

Her description of this woman is that of someone who resembles a person of African descent instead of a Caucasian. Even the Gomes family, whom Mr. Ranta hired to help him out with the ditching of a new bog, is depicted as being maybe half-breed. We learn that a "brown-skinned man," "a very light woman," and a "slight dark-faced youth" (70) lived in a shabby house in the backwoods, more precisely at "the most remote dwelling, that distant house on the outskirts" (69). Not only is this ethnic minority relegated to the outer edges of this narrative, it also lives on the fringes of a community that is predominantly Yankee. Moreover, this Yankee community ostracizes them and makes sure they live in the backwoods. The antagonism between the mainstream and the margins is further

reflected in the way these groups settle down in a given community. This is an issue David Theo Goldberg has noted when discussing consumer directed discrimination, namely when a

> real estate agent serving a prestigious neighborhood acts in his or her own long-term economic interest, and perhaps in the best economic interests of his or her clientele, by refusing to sell property of one client to members of a particular race where it is clear that this would result immediately and inevitably in lower property values for the neighborhood in general. Implicit here is the realistic assumption that only a small percentage of the restricted racial group could afford housing in such a neighborhood.[16]

Bruno has fallen in love with Rosemary Gomes. His brothers, however, let him know how distasteful they find this affair. Their disapproval is manifested through racist comments, and every now and then he is reminded that he is going out with a “nigger girl” (81), that she is a “dirty little Portugee” or that she is a “stinking little nigger” (232-33). This passage is replete with racial prejudice in that these young men with a very light Scandinavian complexion reject Rosemary because of her skin color. Moreover, his brother Otto singles Rosemary out as an unusual girl and this because he has never seen a “nigger girl with red hair before” (81). As I have argued earlier in this chapter, the emphasis on red and its association with ethnicity is, in my view, meaningful. Such a reference contains the motifs for a story that will stress the theme of sexual promiscuity among ethnic minorities.

The references to the Portuguese – or rather, Capeverdeans – as promiscuous people in this novel are

abundant. Mrs. Lainne, for example, tells her gossiping female friends about Selma Erikson, who was

> going to have a baby, so they said; and they say the man who did it is a *Purgiisi*[17] or a Frenchman from Dexter's camps…. She's slept with more than one man, let me tell you that; and with my own eyes I have seen her with her arms around a Purgiisi going along the road. Of course it was dark, but he looked very black" (104).

This quote further stresses the myopia of the one who is observing and commenting on Otherness. Even Arvo tells Bruno that Rosemary "likes anyone that wears pants" (123). Bruno's mother also reminds him that he

> ought to think how it will be looked at by others…. Soon you will be grown up and then you will be sorry you wasted your time with a black girl… certainly it is not her fault that she is a *Purgiisi*. Only she would stay with her people and you with yours. There are many good Finnish girls, Bruno…" (174-75).

Not only will he earn a bad reputation for himself, he will bring shame upon the family if he goes on with his decision to marry Rosemary. Mrs. Lainne's opinion of Rosemary and the comments she makes about her can speak for themselves. Bruno is simply going out with her to satisfy his desire:

> It is unfortunate, that is true, that she had to be a *Purgiisi* with a father and a brother as black as the top of a stove; but that is something she can't help. Maybe she is a good girl, after all; although I must say I have wondered about it when I have seen her riding around with Bruno and all of that red hair flying about her face. What do they do every night? I have asked myself that. They are both young and strong and it is summer time; and I can remember how it was with

> me in the hot weather when I was young" (264-65).

In this passage, Mrs. Lainne is thinking with nostalgia about youth and even admits that Rosemary may be a good girl; her comments, however, undermine this initial perception. In this novel, half-breeds are either viewed by the characters as sexually promiscuous or objects of sexual desire for others, that is, Bruno. The novel ends with Bruno's family discouraging him from having an affair with Rosemary and the hard-earned wealth of the Rantas being squandered by the siblings.

The graphic depictions of *ménage* and sexual promiscuity in Victoria Lincoln's *February Hill*, a novel published in 1934, are, for various reasons, unusual in American writings. The action in the novel revolves around the Harrises who, by all standards, are an extremely unconventional and unusual American family. The entire dynamics in this family is set by Minna Harris, a woman in her late thirties, who is married to the Harvard-educated Vergil. While incapable of holding a steady job, readers find him each morning grappling with a hangover throughout most of the novel. It is upon Minna's shoulders that the responsibilities of providing for this family have fallen. And she accomplishes this by prostituting herself to rich businessmen. About twelve pages into the novel, we learn that Minna is spending a week-end at a luxurious hotel in Providence and after having just finished servicing Mr. Jennings, he proposes to her. Upon learning that she is a married woman, he keeps on insisting that she drop her husband and go live with him, even after she has said to him: "Listen, Mr. Jennings… you're a gentleman in the mill business and you'd ought to have more sense. Nobody but a kid or a damn fool would marry a broad" (15). What further

enhances the air of unconventionality is the comments Minna makes about the other couple in the next room. They are spending the week-end with them too. We learn that

> From the next room there arose a rapid and logical succession of sounds, small slappings and quick breathing, stifled squeals and low, excited laughter. Minna shuddered….
>
> "Them two. Her. She makes nasty noises. Him, too. Eyetalians are all dirty. They mess around."
>
> He nodded his head. They had a great deal in common: a dislike for messing around, a hearty friendliness, a quick, decisive Anglo-Saxon lust (16).

Although she is prostituting herself and committing adultery, her Anglo-Saxon background seems to license a hypocrisy whereby she feels able to judge ethnic minorities – in this case, the Italians. This, however, is not the only instance where this attitude comes across in *February Hill*. In addition to Minna, other characters also seem possessed by the habit of judging others, a practice generally discouraged in most Christian thought. Most likely, Victoria Lincoln intended to craft *February Hill* as a parody of *Matthew* 7:2-5 since much of what happens in this novel seems to stress hypocrisy. In my view, this might also explain why the author has made extensive use of satire so as to criticize the unconventionality of this woman and family. Moreover, this author's questioning of the traditional view of moral superiority of characters belonging to the mainstream is a rather unique one. Although several characters with an Anglo-Saxon background in this novel are sexually promiscuous, they broadcast the comment that their behavior can only be attributed to others: Italians or, on a more recurrent basis, the Portuguese, as we shall see ahead.

While Vergil Harris has gotten used to living on the income provided by his wife's prostitution, most of their children are left to fend for themselves. Such is the case with Jenny, a teenager with a strong resemblance to the protagonist in Henry James's *What Maisie Knew.* Both girls attempt to fathom the sexual lives of the adults who surround them. She spends a great deal of time wandering around February Hill, a fictional place somewhere between Providence, Fall River, and East Providence (the only real places mentioned in the novel). She gets her breakfasts by either stealing a bottle of milk from someone's doorstep or by making up stories – like Huck Finn – where she dupes strangers and makes them feel sorry for her. Upon entering these people's houses, she compares them to her own with its air of neglect and uncleanliness. Moreover, her grandmother (Minna's mother) further adds to the air of unconventionality in this story. Supposedly, she has initiated her daughter into such a way of life and even in her senior years she is reported to put into practice – like Chaucer's Wife of Bath – some of the tricks of love she picked up along the way. Not only has she gained a bad reputation, she still uses make-up and tries to get the clerk at her local pharmacy – or just about any male senior citizen –interested in her.

As indicated earlier, we encounter in *February Hill* a few WASP characters who denigrate ethnic minorities when, upon closer inspection, their own sexual conduct is far from being exemplary. Berkley Howard, a rum-runner, is also a biased character. He has just made the acquaintance of Jenny Harris and, like most native-born males, he views the mainstream female as spotless whereas the female ethnic is loose. A young man already familiar with the famous 'double standard' in males, he makes assumptions

about others which he cannot prove and even sees the "mote" in the eyes of these ethnic women when – surprisingly – his comments reveal how sexually experienced he already is even though he is not much older than Jenny. Unlike the Portuguese girls, Jenny is someone he would not want to touch:

> I mustn't touch her…I mustn't scare her. She ain't Like Annie Pollen. She ain't like the Portygee girls. Her face and neck are all the same color, prettier than pink cheeks. She don't want me to get fresh (83).

Furthermore, whereas Jenny was only seventeen and sexually pure, seventeen "was different with these Portygee girls" (93). Even when he and Jenny become sexually involved around chapter twenty-six, Mr. Howard's perception of Jenny's love-making and how it differs from that of Portuguese women reveals much about his sexual prejudices regarding minorities:

> Her weary passivity pleased him. She's such a good little kid, he thought, in the ebb of his feeling. She ain't like those Portygee girls. Maybe I hadn't ought to love her so much before we get married, only we're going to get married so soon (165).

February Hill is a book which associates sexuality with explicit references to ethnicity. Sexual stereotyping, however, was a common practice during the time period in which it was published. Whereas Howard cherishes Jenny's "weary passivity" and views the American female as passive and traditional in her choice of positions during the sexual act, the Portuguese female is perceived as sexually active, aggressive, and a temptress. In the minds of American males represented by Mr. Howard, women like these represent a threat to them, for they try to assume an

agency that has traditionally belonged to men. Since Berkley Howard cannot deal with this alleged sexual freedom, his immediate reaction is to contrast Jenny, who "ain't like those Portygee girls," since he views them as promiscuous. But the piece of the puzzle, so to speak, that is missing from this sketch is that most of these Portuguese women were, at the time, chaperoned young women brought up by conservative, devout Catholic parents. In addition, even the only Portuguese female character who is personalized in this novel, Adaline Sylvia (Adelina Silva?), is referred to in a derogatory manner when she is simply being courted by a co-worker named Gamache, at the local mill. The passage in question deals with René, one of Adaline's co-workers, and his wife, Dottie. She tries to encourage him to beat Adaline at piece work in the factory for a week so that they can buy some curtains for the house with the extra income. Adaline, we learn, "made the most at piece work of anybody in the room that day, and Adaline was a hard worker but she always fixed herself up as cute as if she was going out for a party" (264). Because Dottie is so jealous of her, she can only say the following to her husband:

> "You could if you wanted to… You're too stuck on that dirty little slut to want to be the best. Just because she fixes herself up like a bad girl and takes on that cheap way you're all so crazy about her, you want her to win. You don't care nothing about your wife and child should have a decent house" (265).

As a fictional character, Adaline stands as a representative of numerous Azorean women who have given many years of their lives working in the New England textile mills during the earlier decades of the twentieth-

century, as Pap has pointed out in his study, *The Portuguese-Americans*.

In *February Hill*, Lincoln shows that promiscuity is within the mainstream and not just on its outer margins. Moreover, this book stereotypes native-born American women as promiscuous and with delusions of grandeur. The most obvious conclusion is that in this novel, the Portuguese women are chaste and, once again, the writer is ignorant of the community of which she speaks. As a parody of the biblical passage in *Matthew*, this novel emphasizes mainstream sexual looseness as opposed to ethnic chastity. And the statements made by a few mainstream characters, after all, backfire on those who have uttered them.

So far, this chapter has dealt with non-canonical writers – except Hawthorne – and their respective writings, which associate the Portuguese with sexual license. This association is also reflected in the writings of well-known, major American voices as is the case of Edith Wharton in her fragment, "Beatrice Palmato," a piece that perhaps only Wharton scholars are familiar with.

Edith Wharton's erotic fragment, "Beatrice Palmato," focuses on traditional views of pornography and sexual politics while, at the same time, making extensive use of racial stereotypes and hybridity. If we recall Judith Butler's words at the beginning of this chapter, she has made the claim that the ethnic decentered subject can be an object of sexual desire.[18] This view applies to Wharton's piece quite well. Although Wharton has blended eroticism, sexual politics, racial stereotyping, and hybridity into this piece of writing, they need to be separated for the purposes of clarity. The complexity of both the outline and the brief fragment of the story can

only be fully grasped if we first look at their erotic contents and ascertain why "Beatrice Palmato" defies the conventions of pornographic writings. This will be followed by an analysis of Wharton's position on matters of race and ethnicity. But perhaps this lesser-known piece in Wharton's body of writings needs to be set in its proper context.

According to R. W. B. Lewis in *Edith Wharton: A Biography*, the "outline and the brief fragment of the story 'Beatrice Palmato'… seem to have been written sometime in 1935." The name "Beatrice Palmato," however, "appears in a notebook as early as about 1920." Lewis also points out that the "ingredients of 'Beatrice Palmato'… were in Edith Wharton's mind by 1920. But it remains probable that she was not ready to write it for another fifteen years." This fragment is included as Appendix C in Lewis's biography but because its pornographic and incestuous motifs were considered taboo and too shocking for the time, Lewis states that "no respectable magazine in the world would have published it."[19] R. W. B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis again adopt 1935 as the date of composition in a footnote to a letter in which Wharton states to Bernard Berenson, apropos Faulkner and Céline, "I've got an incest donnée up my sleeve that wd make them all look like nursery-rhymes."[20]

In *A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton*, Cynthia Griffin Wolff believes that

> the missing link between *In Morocco* and *The Age of Innocence* … can be found in the outline of a projected short story entitled "Beatrice Palmato" and an "unpublishable" fragment of it, both of which were written sometime in 1919. The very name "Palmato" carries whispers of the burning desert wind; and the

> incestuous subject of the piece echoes the horrified observation that "precocious sexual initiation" that Wharton had observed as prevalent throughout Moroccan life. Even the characters carry exotic hints of the lands beyond the Mediterranean – for the father, Mr. Palmato, is half Levantine.[21]

In the light of the dates suggested by Lewis, Wolff's dating is problematic. But her argument about the extent to which Wharton's sojourn in Morocco may have fuelled her imagination in terms of how she viewed Muslims in North Africa or Middle Easterners is quite intriguing even if she does not elaborate on it. Basically, this fragment provides a description of a sexual affair between a father and a daughter. R. W. B. Lewis has argued that the writing of this fragment seems to have been prompted by her emotional and sexual liaison with Morton Fullerton after endless years of an insipid married life with Edward Wharton. The Palmato fragment, one may argue, had nothing at all to do with Fullerton since it had been composed too long afterwards, that is, practically two and a half decades after the Wharton and Fullerton affair had ended. Had the Fullerton episode not taken place, however, it is quite improbable that Wharton would have written so openly about sexuality as she does here. Fullerton – not her husband – was, so to speak, the one who initiated her in the pleasures of sexuality. Lewis then goes on to state that Fullerton shared this piece of information with Elisina Tyler who intended to write a biography of Edith Wharton. Fullerton is reported to have said to her: "Please seize the event, however delicate the problem, to dispel the myth of your heroine's frigidity." Lewis then points out that Fullerton

> went on to compare his former mistress to George Sand, in the quality of her passion, and to speak in the most extravagant – and unfortunately not altogether legible – terms of her adventurousness as an erotic companion. Fullerton's comments would sound like old-age preening, on Fullerton's part were it not for other evidence. But the latter (for example, the fictional fragment "Beatrice Palmato," included as an appendix at the back of this book) suggests that Edith Wharton was indeed, of a sudden, an uninhibited woman, eager to experiment – with a kind of generous and imaginative energy – in all the modes of sexual enjoyment. The suppressed ardor of more than thirty years was released, in Fullerton's description of it, with something approaching violence in the Spring of 1908.[22]

We learn in the outline to this fragment that, presumably, Mr. Palmato initiated his daughter into the secrets of adult sexuality when she was only twelve years old, an act which, in the light of current discourse, would grant him the epithet of paedophile. It is not specified whether Mrs. Palmato suspected the intimacy between her husband and daughter, but one may venture to suggest that her growing attitude of aggression towards her husband may be an indication that she believed some inappropriate behavior was taking place. As Louise Kaplan has pointed out in *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Madame Bovary*, this story substantiates the view that certain conditions must exist for this behavior to emerge or even thrive. According to Kaplan, an incestuous relationship between a father and a daughter usually takes place when there

> is an alteration in the structure of his relationship to his wife. The wife's prolonged illness, her death, their

> separation or divorce, her showing some sparks of independence – losing weight, changing her hair style or mode of dressing, going back to school, spending long hours at a paid job or volunteer work instead of doing the laundry and dusting the furniture.[23]

In the particular case of Mrs. Palmato, it is exactly her nervous breakdown and prolonged stay at the mental institution that prompt Mr. Palmato into giving more attention to his daughter during the long winter where he is reported to have taken "charge of Beatrice's education." Moreover, the sexually-deprived Mr. Palmato awakens the Electra instincts within his daughter to such a degree that this "intimacy between father and daughter continues to be very close" (545) for years, well after he has married a governess. Presumably, it ends when she marries a "dull man" at the age of eighteen with whom she has two children. This marriage, we learn brought her "animation and brilliancy" to an end and, in the meantime, she gave up "all her artistic interests, and appears to absorb herself in her husband's country tastes. The Palmato group of friends all deplore her having married such a dull man, but admit that he is very kind to her and that she seems happy" (546). A few years later, the affair between father and daughter was renewed, for the narrator tells us that "Once her father takes her with him on a short trip to Paris, where she goes to buy a picture or some tapestries for his collection, and she comes back brilliant, febrile and restless; but soon settles down again" (546). It is probable that the dull husband in "Beatrice Palmato" was modeled on Teddy Wharton and Beatrice's father on Morton Fullerton.

Beatrice's life loses its meaning soon after her father's death. After a few fits of jealousy in which she

may have read too much into her husband's innocent affection for their daughter, she commits suicide.

Since we often associate the genre of pornography with men, it is intriguing to see a woman use it as a means for self-expression. Wharton does so and in a rather unusual way. Because “Beatrice Palmato” is written from a female perspective, the erotic component here is quite different from pornographic writings of men. Feminist readers argue that male representations of women in these writings and in the porno industry are simply degrading to and exploitative of women. In “Beatrice Palmato,” the female protagonist is not relegated to a role of passivity nor does she become a mere sexual toy in the hands of her male partner. She will not settle for the traditional missionary position; unabashedly, she will often take the lead. But her father is not the average male chauvinistic lover who will take the lead, either. Mr. Palmato may be compared to a Sadeian lover without the whips since he – unlike most male figures in pornographic writings – is concerned with his lover’s pleasure during their love-making. Mr. Palmato’s concern for his partner, however, may not amount to more than his own crafty scheme to belittle her husband. Wharton’s piece is unusual and perhaps too modern for the time since it ends with a sensuous and detailed description of Beatrice performing *fellatio* on her father. And the narrator does not even think twice about telling readers how much Beatrice really enjoyed it as well:

> …she flung herself upon the swelling member, and began to caress it insinuatingly with her tongue. It was the first time she had ever seen it actually exposed to her eyes, and her heart swelled excitedly: to have her touch confirmed by sight enriched the sensation that was

> communicating itself through her ardent twisting tongue. With panting breath she wound her caress deeper and deeper into the thick firm folds, till at length the member, thrusting her lips open, held her gasping, as if at its mercy; then, in a trice, it was withdrawn, her knees were pressed apart, and she saw it before her, above her, like a crimson flash, and at last, sinking backward into new abysses of bliss, felt it descend on her, press open the secret gates, and plunge into the deepest depths of her thirsting body… (548).

In her discussion of Sade's pornographic writings in the chapter titled "Polemical Preface: Pornography in the Service of Women," included in *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History*, Angela Carter argues that Sade was not the average misogynist who treated his mistresses and casual lovers as sex objects. His pornographic stories about Juliette, says Carter, are fine examples of a writer who "declares himself unequivocally for the right of women to fuck … that if it [fucking] is not egalitarian, it is unjust."[24] According to Carter, what the violent love-making Sadean heroines resort to is a form of sexual politics, a means for female affirmation, and that is why – says Carter – Sade "urges women to fuck as actively as they are able, so that powered by their enormous and hitherto untapped sexual energy they will then be able to fuck their way into history and, in doing so, change it."[25]

"Beatrice Palmato" is an innovative and provocative piece of pornographic writing because Wharton, like Sade, has defied the conventions of such a mode of writing. Both are concerned with female pleasure and do not portray women as sex objects. If we also take into account that Wharton comes from an American Realist tradition, where

portrayals of sexuality in literature were not encouraged, this issue becomes far more suggestive. One need only recall William Dean Howells, the Dean of American Realist letters, frowning upon the literary voices who wrote in such a vein or, for example, how American society received the works of those who had been more daring like Kate Chopin and her novel, *The Awakening*. Furthermore, Wharton's piece questions the long-held view that pornographic stories are essentially

> Produced in the main by men for an all-male clientele, suggesting certain analogies with a male brothel, access to pornography is usually denied to women at any level, often on the specious grounds that women do not find descriptions of the sexual act erotically stimulating.[26]

The answer to this is that Wharton obviously did. Since "Beatrice Palmato" was written by a woman and its details are rendered from the perspective of a first-person female narrator, this point of view also questions the traditional view that many "pornographic novels are written in the first person as if by a woman, or use a woman as the focus of the narrative; but this device only reinforces the male orientation of the fiction."[27] Although Wharton's piece had been preceded by Sade, over a hundred years earlier, this does not disqualify its potential as an innovative and unique piece of writing since it was written by a woman who defied the conventions of her time and age. Knowing that American literary circles viewed these matters as unwholesome and decadent, it is interesting to observe how she dared to write about these matters even if "Beatrice Palmato" was intended for private use.

Wharton's "Beatrice Palmato," to some extent, bears out Angela Carter's discussion in her polemical chapter on

Sade. When looking elsewhere for a discussion of pornography and the role of women in these writings, what one tends to encounter is an overall feminist reaction to pornographic writings because women become mere sexual toys in the hands of the male writers. Such is the position, for example, that Susanne Kappeler takes in her work, *The Pornography of Representation*. In her assessment of D. M. Thomas' *The White Hotel*, she points out that in this pornographic novel, women are the victims of violent sex and mere objects for male pleasure. She even reacts against George Levine's review of this novel in *The New York Review of Books* because she feels that

> The feminist reader … can find no place to take up in this literary romance. Hers would be the designated place of the victim, but if the truth be known: she does not wish for Thomas' impact, she has no desire for his big bang (however quickly it is over). This kind of reading, pornographic reading, is "for men only." For the woman reader has no part in Levine's "we": *she* finds no protection behind his ("our") documents and books, the literary is no sanctuary to her. And she has every reason to "care to know": how easily accessible this reality is, how easily accessible she is to this reality – deadly to her, but so vital to the patriarchs, our literary men.[28]

Pornographic and incestuous motifs are not, however, the only relevant elements that Wharton has chosen to illustrate sexual awakening. She has also found in race and hybridity a means through which she could openly write about her sexual fantasies. And this, as we shall see ahead, was accomplished through ethnic minorities, the Portuguese in particular.

In this respect, it is important to keep in mind my discussion of the darker complexion of the Portuguese in

chapter two and what that has meant in America. But this darkness – as is the case in the half-Portuguese character Wharton created in “Beatrice Palmato” – does not only include negative traits as we have seen in some of the texts analyzed in chapter two. It also contains an aura of sensuality and enticement.

We are told in the outline of this story that Beatrice Palmato is “the daughter of a rich half-Levantine, half-Portuguese banker living in London” (545). Only in the fragment do we learn that it is her own father who has awakened her sexually and with whom she has been carrying on a sexual affair for some time. Apart from the erotic and incestuous motifs, I am intrigued by Wharton’s choice of a “half- Levantine, half-Portuguese” man to carry out the affair. Like other Anglo-American writers before her, Wharton, too, is associating people with a darker complexion with sexual license, a point that Homi Bhabha makes in an earlier quotation (72). Palmato has a Middle-Eastern or East Mediterranean heritage (his half-Levantine side) along with a Southern European one (his half-Portuguese side). To further support this view of the dark “other” as sexually active, Edward W. Said has pointed out in *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* that the Orient and Middle East have appeared in the Western imagination as a place of sexual licentiousness. He sheds some intriguing light on how, for example, Gustave Flaubert incorporated this stereotype into some of his writings about the Orient. Said argues that “Woven through all of Flaubert’s Oriental experiences, exciting or disappointing, is an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex. In making this association Flaubert was neither the first nor the most exaggerated instance of a remarkably persistent motif

in Western attitudes to the Orient."[29] In his assessment of this issue, Said further adds that in all of his novels, but most importantly in *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert

> associates the Orient with the escapism of sexual fantasy. Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau pine for what in their drab (or harried) bourgeois lives they do not have, and what they realize they want comes easily to their daydreams packed inside Oriental clichés: harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys, sherbets, ointments, and so on. The repertoire is familiar, not so much because it reminds us of Flaubert's own voyages in and obsession with the Orient, but because, once again, the association is clearly made between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex.[30]

What Said is suggesting here is that these fantasies are fuelled by images of the Orient which evoke pleasant dreams and escapist reveries. Said further notes that the Western view of Oriental sexual knowledge may have surfaced because colonialism inevitably brought together different races and interethnic sexual desire. To the Western mind, the Orient and its harems functioned, so to speak, as a sexual safety valve which "respectable" European men resorted to so as to obtain the readily available sex that supposedly was missing in Europe:

> Just as the various colonial possessions – quite apart from their economic benefit to metropolitan Europe – were useful as places to send wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. Virtually no European writer who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself or herself from this quest: Flaubert, Nerval, "Dirty Dick" Burton, and Lane are only the most notable. In the twentieth century one

> thinks of Gide, Conrad, Maugham, and dozens of others. What they looked for often – correctly, I think – was a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden; but even that quest, if repeated by enough people, could /and did) become as regulated and uniform as learning itself. In time "Oriental sex" was as standard a commodity as any other available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient.[31]

In this piece, Wharton is certainly tapping from the stereotype of the Oriental in much the same way as Said is suggesting.

In the article "Edith Wharton and the Issue of Race," Elizabeth Ammons unearths for her readers a facet of Wharton that has been overlooked or hushed up for too long. Wharton scholars are familiar with R. W. B. Lewis's decision "to exclude letters [in *The Letters of Edith Wharton*] with racist and anti-Semitic content, a choice which has been the subject of criticism."[32] Wharton's anti-Semitism is now well-known and the object of various scholarly essays. Ammons' argument is that a colonial mindset is deeply entrenched in Wharton's writing and this can be seen, for example, in a love letter she sent to Morton Fullerton in 1908:

> And I'm so afraid that the treasures I long to unpack for you, that have come to me in magic ships from enchanted islands, are only, to you, the old familiar red calico & beads of the clever trader, who has had dealings in every latitude, & knows just what to carry in the hold to please the simple native – I'm so afraid of this, that often & often I stuff my shining treasures back into their boxes, lest I should see you smiling at them![33]

Ammons points out that this letter "casts erotic desire in a colonial metaphor of economic manipulation and exchange. Wharton compares herself to the 'simple native' in contrast to her lover, the experienced white trader."[34] Ammons concludes this discussion in the following manner:

> Representing her own sexual desire as colonized – unsophisticated, vulnerable, laughable – Wharton uncritically reiterates empire's essential racist paradigm, that of the (dark) "simple," erotic, feminized "native" wishing to be dominated (sexually, economically) by the clever white man. Such images of orientalized sexuality perfectly illustrate Edward Said's argument about Orientalism as a constellation of values that are not authentically Eastern but reflect instead the West's exoticized fantasy creation of an "East" to serve its own racist agenda of promoting and supporting European dominance.[35]

Ammons stresses that "we must refuse to continue to approach her work as if race is not an operative category within it…. Indeed, many studies are needed in order to bring fully to the surface the ways in which race functions in Wharton's fiction."[36] She also claims that "Wharton's published letters show that she agreed with the standard, white, racist generalizations and stereotypes of her day."[37] This can also be seen, she argues, in other Wharton writings, namely her memoir *A Backward Glance* (1934) and her three novels: *The House of Mirth* (1905), *Summer* (1917), and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), which contain, for example, various anti-Semitic references. Moreover, Wharton was extremely well versed in social Darwinist theory for she had read the work of not only Darwin, but Huxley, Herbert Spencer, Romanes, Haeckel, and Westermarck as well. Having uncovered the

colonial subtexts in Wharton's major texts, Ammons concludes her groundbreaking essay by stating that:

> the importance of race in Wharton's writing has not received attention for at least two reasons. First, she masterfully created the fiction that race was not one of her subjects. Second, her critics – most of them, like her (and me), white people – have been happy to support that fiction. To do otherwise requires changing our perspective on Edith Wharton. We can no longer think of her as a major woman writer or major American writer or major novelist of manners but, instead, as a major white woman writer, white American writer, white novelist of manners. To return to Toni Morrison's concept: Edith Wharton wrote as a raced writer. That means, given her class, historical era, and personal values, that she enjoyed tremendous white privilege, which is inscribed in her texts, and that she is thoroughly implicated in standard turn-of-the-century racist and colonial attitudes and rhetorics, which also permeate her writing. Recognizing race as a subject in Edith Wharton's work – an inquiry which, I need to emphasize, this essay only begins – represents an important step (even if a disconcerting one to some readers) in redefining her within a multicultural U.S. literary-historical context.[38]

My contention is that this colonial mindset is present in "Beatrice Palmato" as well. Although briefly, Gloria Erlich, too, hints at this analysis in *The Sexual Education of Edith Wharton*, where she notes that

> The half-Portuguese, half-Levantine Palmato, leading a life of cultured leisure not unlike that of George Frederic Jones, would have been an alien in London society. "Portuguese" may signify "Continental" and, according to the cultural stereotype, sexually liberated, but "Levantine" unmistakably means Jewish. The fact that Wharton went out of her way

> to endow this father with exotic racial origins suggests the kind of taboo that Leslie Fiedler long ago identified as the projection of our unacceptable sexual desires onto a despised minority. Although Wharton had some Jewish friends, including Bernard Berenson and Rosa Fitz-James, whom she must have regarded as exceptions, she shared the prejudices of her class and time and probably shared some of the projective tendencies as well. Her fictional references to Jews display the prevailing racial stereotypes, sometimes with an aura of erotic ambivalence.[39]

I would argue that Edith Wharton is a product of her time and age and there is no escaping these realities. In a time marked by scholarly interests in multiculturalism, ethnicity, postcolonialism, and gender studies, however, literary critics can no longer choose to leave these issues unaddressed. In her use of such an ethnically biased sexual stereotype, Wharton casts erotic desire onto the Portuguese, about whom she virtually knew nothing.

One may argue that she may have come into contact with some Portuguese people in Massachusetts since she owned a house in Lenox, but it seems highly improbable that she would want to mix with Azorean fishermen, whale hunters, farmers or even textile factory workers from Provincetown, New Bedford, Fall River or even Providence, in nearby Rhode Island, given her moneyed background. Her summer resort at Newport, Rhode Island, is another possibility. Portuguese immigrants, however, were not seen there – unless it were for room service at the expensive hotels she stayed at. But since she spent so many years of her life in Europe, she may have come into contact with the Portuguese there. The truth is that one looks in vain for references to Portuguese names and places in her writings. What we do know is that she traveled to Spain

several times throughout her life and even once to Morocco – but never to Portugal.

As Teresa Gómez Reus has shown in the essay titled "Mapping the Contours of a Forgotten Land: Edith Wharton and Spain," Wharton's first visit to Spain took place in 1866 at the early age of four. Although "Wharton's unquestionable love for France and Italy has led many critics to believe that her European interests encompassed only these countries, bypassing Spain altogether," Reus's inspection of manuscripts at the Beinecke Library has allowed her to come up with some exciting materials on Wharton's *affair* with Spain, proving that "Spain also exerted a significant influence in Wharton's later years."[40] Wharton repeatedly traveled to Spain throughout her life. Her second trip there took place in April of 1912, followed by another in July of 1914. The fourth and fifth visits date back to 1925 and 1928, when she spent some time in Compostela. Her last visit there occurred in 1930. The unpublished manuscript, "A Motor-Flight through Spain" and the Spanish chapters of *The Gods Arrive* show us that Spain had something else to offer, which she could not find in Italy or France. According to Reus, Spain is reported to have

> enlarged her knowledge of European art, landscape and history; it contributed to modify – indeed, displace – her alleged agnosticism, and it helped her shape her interest for the Catholic Church and its impact over the European civilization. There she felt "regenerated" by her identification with the spiritual powers of Christianity, and by what María Zambrano called "the Dionysian element" of Spanish culture. How else could we explain her recurrent trips to a country apparently so uncongenial to her taste? Spain helped her integrate her two contradictory sides – her Christian and

> her Nietzschean side – and it also harmonized with her homelessness, with all the delights and pains of dislocation, which was fundamental to the psychodynamics of her creativity.[41]

Its neighboring country, Portugal, was a place Wharton never set foot on during her lifetime. As she has written in her autobiography, *A Backward Glance*, the Whartons had once planned to travel to Portugal and the Azores islands, but this never materialized. They had once made arrangements to

> charter a sailing vessel, head for the West Indies, pick up the trades for the Canaries, and thence, by way of the Azores, make for Portugal and Spain. The schooner was chosen, the charter drawn up – and what a glorious adventure it would have been! But, alas, it was not to come off, for there was cholera at the Canaries or the Azores, and we were warned that quarantine difficulties would waylay us everywhere. Our families drew a breath of relief – but we never ceased to regret our lost adventure.[42]

She may have also wanted to stay abreast of what was going on in the world, as Lewis remarked, when she made mention on February 1, 1908 "of the assassination of the King and Crown Prince of Portugal,"[43] which led to the end of monarchy in Portugal.

Even though she has never visited the country, this does not altogether mean that she found no interest in its history and culture. This is manifest in, for example, her travel book *In Morocco* (1920), where she discusses the Portuguese presence in Ceuta and Tangier, former Portuguese strongholds in this North-west African country. When discussing the relationship between the Saadians and

the Berbers in section six of the chapter titled "A Sketch of Moroccan History," Wharton tells us that

> The Saadians were Cherifian Arabs, newcomers from Arabia, to whom the lax Berber paganism was abhorrent. They preached a return to the creed of Mahomet, and proclaimed the Holy War against the hated Portuguese, who had set up fortified posts all along the west coast of Morocco…. This equally applies to the Berbers of the sixteenth century, when the Holy War against Catholic Spain and Portugal was preached. The real cause of the sudden deadly hatred of the foreigner was twofold. The Spaniards were detested because of the ferocious cruelty with which they had driven the Moors from Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella; and the Portuguese because of the arrogance and brutality of their military colonists in the fortified trading stations of the west coast. And both were feared as possible conquerors and overlords.[44]

Judging from the little material available on Wharton's impressions of Portugal, one may argue that her knowledge of this country and its culture is bookish and second-hand. And whatever exists, it is glossed over with negative overtones. Perhaps we will never know for sure why she writes like this. Although she had traveled extensively to Spain, she was, nonetheless, appalled by its backwardness.[45] Portugal, at the time, could not boast a much better economic situation. Whether she may have picked up this attitude of looking down upon Jews, Middle Easterners, and the Portuguese as a result of her upper-class, white, mainstream background – the lenses through which, according to Elizabeth Ammons, she saw the world around her – or whether it may have also been imbibed from her reading of Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* is

impossible to say. As she has recorded in *A Backward Glance*, she and her brothers

> all knew by heart "Alice in Wonderland", "The Hunting of the Snark", and whole pages of Lear's "Nonsense Book", and our sensitiveness to the quality of the English we spoke doubled our enjoyment of the incredible verbal gymnastics of those immortal works. Dear to us also, though in a lesser degree, were "Innocents Abroad", Bret Harte's parodies of novels, and, in their much later day, George Ade's "Arty", and the first volumes of that great philosopher, Mr. Dooley.[46]

As I will discuss in chapter five, Mark Twain's impressions of the Azoreans in chapters five and six of *The Innocents Abroad* are disparaging. Whether Twain's portrayal of the Azoreans remained imprinted on her mind or not is mere conjecture. What is true, however, is that when both Twain and Wharton comment on or write about the Portuguese, they are influenced by what Ammons defines as "the standard, white, racist generalizations and stereotypes of [their] day."[47]

What clearly stems from this exposition is that she knew little or nothing about the Portuguese and their culture. Without an apparent personal reason to justify her association of the Portuguese – and Middle Easterners – with incest and moral laxity, I would argue that "Beatrice Palmato" is a fine example of a story where Wharton used an ethnic minority as a subterfuge or disguise to write about her own sexual fantasies; or, as Erlich has put it, as quoted earlier, "the kind of taboo that Leslie Fiedler long ago identified as the projection of our unacceptable sexual desires onto a despised minority."[48] Furthermore, it is worth recalling my discussion of bell hooks and Robert J. C. Young in chapter

one, especially when they note white sexual attraction for darker ethnic minorities.[49]

One may argue that in “Beatrice Palmato,” Wharton’s sexual stereotypes denigrate the Portuguese. But there are, obviously, other layers of meaning at stake here. The occurrences in this story are rendered as a pleasurable and fulfilling experience. Perhaps this is Wharton’s way of criticizing a certain type of traditional marriage which was very unsatisfactory to women, as was the case with herself. Her choice of a “half-Levantine, half-Portuguese” character may be her means of tapping into the stereotype of the “sensuous, dark Southerner” as opposed to the “cold Northerner” that one encounters in numberless British and American novels, D. H. Lawrence’s or E. M. Forster’s in particular.

Wharton finds in pornography, eroticism, incest, race, and hybridity the ideal masks to openly express her sexual fantasies about the darker ethnic “other.” Her selection of a half-Levantine, half-Portuguese banker is not, after all, a naïve and haphazard choice, but rather her own way of giving shape to the mainstream’s racial and sexual stereotypes.

Another novel that explores the theme of the female ethnic who supposedly uses her sex appeal to bewitch a Yankee male, leading him to perdition, is Joseph Lincoln’s *Out of the Fog*, published in 1940. This novel would be more appropriately classified as a detective story in the sense that the goal here is to discover the murderer of George Crockett, the only son of the prominent and proud Elisha Crockett from Wellmouth, Cape Cod. On an unusually foggy night, Captain Mark, the President of the Wellmouth Savings Bank and the most influential member of the Board of selectmen, and Myra Crusit, a writer for the local

county paper, are returning home from a town meeting when they discover the body of George Crockett, lying on the cross-cut road. The rest of the story is a piecemeal, step-by-step account of the specifics surrounding such a macabre event. After several suspects have been crossed out from the list of potential murderers, Captain Mark and Myra Crusit concentrate on the peculiar place where his body had been actually encountered: the lane leading to West Wellmouth, where a group of Portuguese immigrants had settled. From this moment onwards, the reader is led to believe that someone from this Portuguese community is linked to the murder. West Wellmouth is described as a place located somewhere in the backwoods, far from the center, and geographically located as if on the outer edges of a well-to-do community – Wellmouth – where all the prominent Yankee families live. More precisely, we are told that:

> There was no cross road or side road between the accident place and Wellmouth and only one between it and Trumet. That one wasn't more than a lane which, if you went to the right – coming from Trumet, as we had – led along till it came out on the regular road to West Wellmouth, a little kind of settlement, with a dozen or so houses and a wharf and fish shanties. Mostly Portuguese fishermen and longshoremen live in West Wellmouth (72-73).

Such a pattern, argues Gail Ching-Liang Low, is also prevalent in narratives about colonialism. While those belonging to the dominant culture occupy a central position within a given community, the ethnic minorities are seen in the periphery. Whether it is in a colonial situation or in a democratic country such as the United States, the images associated with both environments are

very similar. “In much Anglo-Indian literature,” argues Low,

> a manichean allegory operates in the polarisation of the vile native city versus the good, clean Anglo-Indian one. The language of the disciplinary and regulatory discourses produces an Other city which is always sinister, mysterious, and dark, and whose shadow always falls on the city of light. This Other, expressed through the nineteenth-century privilege of the body as transcoder of difference, always threatens to spill over the geometric divisions of the civilised body, oozing its contaminated bodily wastes, disgusting odours and noxious smells. It thrives under the sign of the ubiquitous body of the native which is forever invading hallowed ground.[50]

Myra, who has gone to look up the Sylva (Silva) family, is driving on the main street of West Wellmouth, saying that she does not really know why it could possibly be called such a thing because it was not more than

> just a section of road – thick oil poured over the sand formation – with a dozen or two little houses straggling along each side of it. A few scrubby trees by the sidewalk edges and some sickly lilac and syringa bushes in the front yards. The road stops, a little further on, at the upper end of the cove where the fish boats and lobster dories are made fast. There is a wharf and some scallop shanties where the road ends (186).

Not only is it depicted as a shabby place, it also has the typical smell of a fishing village. Moreover, most of its inhabitants “were Portuguese and they didn’t get up to the Centre often, except to go to the stores or the post-office” (186). Adding to this division between the center of Wellmouth and the peripheral West Wellmouth, Rosa Sylva says the following to Myra a while later: “I know almost

everybody in Wellmouth. I have lived here always. I went to school at the Centre" (194).

As has already been suggested, Rosa Sylva is the female ethnic from West Wellmouth whose sex appeal has drawn George Crockett to her. Although this young man was brought up in a respectable household, he enjoys hanging out with a group of gamblers and heavy drinkers. Moreover, as we shall see ahead, he is described as a young man who wastes his time with people his Yankee neighbors consider as worthless – the Portuguese – especially the "seductress" Rosa Sylva. In the eyes of his community, he has become a degenerate young man. When Captain Mark explains to Elisha Crockett his strategy to capture the suspect, he says the following:

> "…And just one more thing, Elisha. I am hunting for the blackguard that killed your George just as hard as I know how, but it isn't because you have done things for me or because you call yourself my friend. That doesn't come into it at all. I should hunt just as hard if it had been a Point-End Portygee. I'd have to. It is what I am there for."

Upon hearing this, we are told that Mr. Crockett immediately left the room. Such a reaction, we learn, cannot prevent the narrator from

> wondering though how the Honorable Elisha liked it. That about his son and a Point-End Portygee. Putting them on a level, as you might say (84-5).

At the end of the novel, when the Crocketts learn about their son's desire to sleep with Rosa Sylva, their immediate reaction is – the narrator tells us – to

> "… keep everything quiet…. It isn't a pretty yarn and it wouldn't show George up in a nice light. Elisha and Sylvia are proud and that scamp of a son of theirs

> was their pet property. They will hush it up, if they can" (341).

According to Elmer Badger, Frank Digson and George Crockett had once fought each other over the same woman. Badger states that Frank

> was going pretty strong with her, I guess, until George got after her. Then she dropped Frank like a hot poker. She would; she knew who could put the most frosting on the cake. She wasn't born yesterday, even if she is a Portygee. Smart one, Rose is, and a good looker, too. She keeps 'em playing around I'll tell the world (182-83).

Rosa may have dropped Frank since a potential marriage to George might represent a quicker assimilation into the mainstream – even though his family would never have approved of it. Although it is not clearly stated, perhaps this might be the reason why she desires his attention but he, however, simply views her as sexually appealing. The representation of Rosa gives further substance to the view of some Hawthorne texts that dark complexioned females with dark eyes evoke images of the sexually fallen woman, an issue we have already witnessed in Hawthorne's "Drowne's Wooden Image," and a belief in Leslie Fiedler's chapter on Hawthorne in *Love and Death in the American Novel*. From Myra Crusit's perspective, Rosa Sylva has all the physical attributes that would make men chase after her. Not only was she young, she was "pretty, too, if you like black hair and big black eyes, eyes that looked at you sideways or over the shoulder, especially if you happened to be a good-looking young fellow" (184). With Rosa Sylva, we are far from the virginal blond-haired, blue-eyed female Hawthorne ended up marrying, while secretly preferring the "dark" lady.

Although readers may assume that the Sylvas really live up to the stereotypes the mainstream culture and characters surrounding them have created, we learn from Elias Thanks that Rosa's father, Joe, "didn't like her running around with – with one or two of 'em. Said he had ordered her not to have nothing to do with 'em – one in particular. He was real ugly about it" (269). The fellow in question is, obviously, George Crockett. On the night George had been found dead, Joe Sylva arrived home rather late since he had been playing cards and drinking with some of his friends. He was extremely upset to find his daughter and George "sitting on the sofa [with his] arm around her waist" (270). A few days later when Myra and Captain Mark question Joe about what had happened on that foggy night, Rosa's father lets them know why he was so upset, saying to them: "Why wouldn't I be mad? That fellow was no good. He mean no good with Rosa" (285-86). Elias Thanks, who had witnessed the altercation between father and daughter that had immediately taken place after the sofa scene, provides us with the key to George's death. We learn that George had heart problems and since he was so affected by the verbal dispute between Rosa and her father, Elias Thanks points out that he saw George

> kind of staggering toward the door. And then – well then, down he went on the floor, flat…. "I don't know why. I didn't know then. All I know is that he did and nobody tripped him or so much as touched him, either. He just sort of slumped down and – and there he laid" (273).

The Sylvas are not responsible for such a sudden and strange death even though the entire episode leaves them apprehensive. And George's body appears at the crossroads because Joe had been the one to take it there in his car.

So far, we have centered our discussion on a few novels focusing on the image of supposedly sexually promiscuous Portuguese female characters. In Ida A. R. Wylie's novel, *Ho, the Fair Wind* (1945), however, we get the same perception in the Portuguese male. An intriguing aspect here is the fact that this novel is uncommon in its treatment of this issue. In *Ho, the Fair Wind*, we are introduced to the story of a New England woman. Here Ellen Frosbie defies her society's assumptions about the alleged depravity and lechery of a half-Portuguese male character Joss Caval, finding him to be exactly what she is looking for. And this when such a choice entails the rejection of a chaste, puritanical male candidate by the name of Hebron Allyn. Despite the Jewish name, this novel captures the connection to the Puritans who, like the Jews, viewed themselves as God's chosen people. The choice of name is, in a sense, a means to highlight the Puritan legacy in this character and his puritanical intolerance towards Otherness. Moreover, this author's overall argument in this novel is clearly a condemnation of New England religious fanaticism and how its intolerance may lead to stereotyping and misjudging ethnic minorities. With New England for its backdrop, *Ho, the Fair Wind* focuses on the time when the inhabitants on the island of Martha's Vineyard witnessed change:

> The whales on which their well-being had been founded had fled to other distant seas and the war had destroyed many of the finest whalers. But the Islanders were shrewd and hard-headed and not easily beaten. This Captain Norton and his associates, Hebron had said bitterly, planned to turn the land that lay between the Camp and the sea into a playground and to build big hotels for the holiday-makers and organize a steamboat service

> that would bring even bigger crowds to the beaches (70).

Mr. Allyn, however, is the only character who does not look forward to the economic and social changes Martha's Vineyard is about to experience. His goal is to keep the old New England way of life intact. It is also with regret that he notices that:

> Even last year, the bathing beach over at Holmes Hole had been black with people, many of them women none too decently clad. It might be healthy pleasure, Hebron admitted. But it was not for pleasure that the pilgrims had first sought the Island's peace and separateness from the world's tumult (70).

With its whaling industry gone, an industry (as I have already indicated) which was heavily dependent on Portuguese labor, Martha's Vineyard began to gentrify, but is now caught in the midst of Prohibition. But when men in Martha's Vineyard got together, we learn that they

> no longer talked of ships and whales and distant desperate voyagings, not even of the ruin that of late had stalked the Island like a specter, but of the luxurious hotel that was to spring up on the Bluffs, the fine wharf at which a regular steamboat service would discharge the health-and-pleasure- seeking crowds, new roads, maybe even a railroad which would link Edgartown to all this bounding prosperity…. The whales had gone, but, by Godfrey, the summer guests were coming and it would be a poor Islander who would not get his share of blubber out of them (334-35).

Although readers are told that this novel contains Portuguese fictional characters, the Caval surname does not hold up and provides no clue to ethnic identity. Once, Joss is reported to have explained to Ellen that his "name

is Caval – a corruption of the original Cavalho" (97). Even this character's explanation is misleading since the correct spelling would be Carvalho. As in other works dealt with earlier, this writer, too, is not very knowledgeable and misunderstands the culture she is analyzing. We also learn that Joss Caval is the bastard son of an aristocratic Englishman, Henry Bredlaw, and a Portuguese woman named Leonora Cavalho. As Joss gradually falls in love with Ellen, he shares with her a few particulars about his parents' star-crossed love. Once, while on an outing with Ellen, he asks her to

> "Look over there…. That's where my father's ship foundered. He was the only survivor. My grandfather swam out in a wicked winter sea and brought him in, more dead than alive, and took him home. My mother nursed him and they fell in love…. It wasn't just falling in love …. They loved each other. You know the difference. It's a circumstance rarer than we like to believe. Perhaps even love isn't the whole of it. Whatever it was there was no room for it in their respective worlds. So they ran away from both. They made a world of their own. It sheltered them from all uncharitableness" (314-15).

The novel is pretty clear about how this conservative New England community feels about this union: it was unacceptable since it involved an Englishman and a female ethnic. Moreover, this Anglo-Saxon male had fallen in love with a woman who, according to a few citizens in this community, was seen as loose. While Martha Allyn viewed Leonora Caval as a "wicked woman" (51), Mrs. Hooker claims she was a "fallen woman" (124). In addition, for a few citizens in this community, such a romantic attachment produced a sexually depraved young man. His English father is seldom alluded to and nowhere to be seen in the course

of the novel. It is Joss's Portuguese heritage and family that readers are constantly reminded of while his English side has been shoved into the background. There is more to this emphasis on his Portuguese heritage than most readers may be willing to admit. In my view, it is not an innocent repetition, but rather a narrative technique meant to stress the notion that the larger community thinks depravity emerges in the heart of Portuguese-American communities.

Asked to choose between a stern and drab Puritanical young man, Hebron Allyn, and a socially rejected man, Joss Caval, Ellen Frosbie is more inclined toward the latter even when she knows that he has been living with a woman of ill-repute during the course of most of the novel. The woman's name is Carly; we learn a lot about how she befriended Joss and what she feels for him during one of her interior monologues:

> It was worse after Joss Caval had been with her. Given a few days and she'd settle down, sink into a sort of sodden apathy, until, as the days went by, hope would stir again and she would begin to listen, more and more tensely, for the soft clear whistle from the water's edge. But when he went away again she knew it might be for weeks, and the passion he had roused in her was like a sea, whipped by a gale, to a wild destructive fury. Then New Bedford and the feverish, riotous memories tugged at her. She had been a sort of queen there, making her own wayward terms with the life-hungry men she served. Until she'd come on Joss Caval lying battered and unconscious in the gutter. After that he'd made his terms with her. If he'd cared a damn whether she'd accept them or not, she might have had a chance. But he never had. "You can come along if you want to," he'd said, and she'd given up the good times and the good money, as though she couldn't help herself. But she had a

> sort of shrewdness left. One day she'd be old and maybe crazy. She'd have nothing to show for her submission to him – not even a gold ring. For he'd never marry her, drunk or sober. He'd said so, laughing at her, and the laughter had been like a drop of poison, eating into the vitals of her passion for him. Maybe she'd run away. Maybe he'd find out, after all he couldn't do without her and would come after her whining and cringing, to accept her terms. But that was just a dream. She couldn't go and he wouldn't follow her if she did. In his most furious ruthless love-making she knew best how little he needed her (167-68).

Moreover, Mr. Allyn's admonitions that Joss is the Devil's advocate prove fruitless because Ellen cannot help being hypnotized by Joss's virility and masculinity, especially after having realized that Mr. Allyn had avoided situations involving joy and spontaneity. To her, Joss's piercing gaze was simply irresistible:

> A bad man, Hebron had called him. Certainly, only a bad man could look so – she had no right word for it – so set apart by the ungoverned forces in him. Evil they might be. They were arresting and challenging. She could not move away or take her eyes from him. They followed, as though hypnotized, his every movement as he pulled on his pilot coat and gathered in his line (82).

Invited to dinner at the Cavals, Ellen finds out that they are not a typical Portuguese-American family since they spend most of the evening discussing historical matters related to the English aristocracy and the English houses they had once visited in England, especially that "Elizabethan manor which was burned down in Charles' time" (219). Furthermore, Joss Caval plays a few Italian operas on the piano to entertain Ellen. Torn between a life of

emotional and cultural barrenness with Mr. Allyn and the refinement, good taste, and passion of the stigmatized Caval, Ellen finds what Caval has to offer her as far more appealing. This is why at the end of the novel they are seen sailing away together, after her refusal to marry Hebron. Upon closer inspection, one would not expect otherwise from a character who, in my view, was modeled on Margaret Fuller. Both the fictional and real women had been brought up on the principles of Emersonian self-reliance and New England transcendentalism. In addition, they were defiant of socially acceptable love affairs and also had in common an uninhibited, unrestrained femininity.

Undoubtedly, what is interesting about this piece of writing is Wylie's argument regarding this character's choice of mate. Wylie's contention is that love, compassion, and human warmth can also be found at the margins. In this novel, at least, mainstream American society – here represented through the character of Mr. Allyn – has nothing else but sternness and cheerlessness to offer. In *Ho, the Fair Wind*, Joss Caval's sexual experience is rather appealing to the emotionally and sexually deprived Ellen Frosbie. In this sense, this female character further supports Leslie Fiedler's discussion in *Love and Death in the American Novel* about American mainstream infatuation and fantasizing concerning the sexual activity of those living on its fringes. Whereas in the past only the minds of men like, for example, Hawthorne would ponder such matters, in a more contemporary novel as is the case of *Ho, the Fair Wind*, the same longing may also occur but rendered from a female perspective.

Before bringing the discussion in this chapter to a close, a few final remarks on Wilbur Daniel Steele's short stories, "The Thinker" (1927) and "For Where Is Your Fortune Now?" (1946) might shed some additional light on how another non-canonical writer has dealt with the issue. Although both stories are different in scope and subject-matter, the framework or pattern Steele has made use of is identical. Structurally, there is a triangular framework within both stories. More specifically, both stories focus on the relationship of a given couple and how one of its members has indulged in an adulterous affair. Moreover, a pattern that recurs in both stories is that one of the said characters is Portuguese. One cannot help wondering whether Steele chose this ethnic group at random or, instead, if his goal was to stereotype the Portuguese as adulterous individuals.

In "The Thinker," the action takes place in a Portuguese fishing town on Cape Cod. We learn that Dummy Santos has married Rosie Farquiera (another dubious "Portuguese" name) and that she is carrying on an adulterous affair with a man by the name of Stinky, who works at the local factory specializing in fertilizers and guano processing. By the time Rosie had exchanged her wedding vows, she had already earned a bad reputation. Everybody in this community was astonished that she had settled for a supposedly good-for-nothing "Portygee":

> The fellows with whom Rosie used to run were amazed. Rosie Farquiera! and that shrimp! Rosie liked to dance and go for auto rides; she wore her hair short and knew how to use her eyes and never wanted the word for a spade. An "animal," the minister called her; a "heller," Father Deutra called her, publicly, at mass. So when in his sober, long-nosed, tight-mouthed way Dummy Santos hired a closed

> car one day and took Rosie to father Deutra's altar, everybody in Portugee town was mystified (301).

As a matter of fact, Rosie married Dummy to secure a sound financial standing since he co-owned a business with "another fellow in a power-ketch, dredging inshore winters and going South for the netting every spring" (301). With such economic independence, she was free to indulge in adulterous relationships since her husband was too trusting of her. Although the narrator in this story tells us that Dummy's nickname had its origin in the fact that he "kept his mouth shut," (301) he certainly lives up to his name. In other words, the narrator suggests that Dummy was the right kind of husband and, in my view, the one responsible for such a sex-starved wife since he hardly slept with her. He also gives the impression that he does not mind his wife going to bed with other men. As everyone puts it, "It's seemed as though Dummy were the right kind of a husband for that girl after all" (302). So overwhelming was Rosie's sexual appetite – the narrator tells us – that she does not mind the nauseating – yet sexually appealing – stench on her lover. Stinky himself has actually

> made the discovery that a great many women actually liked it. Some women it seems to draw. He has seen women he was hugging, close their eyes, part their lips, dilate their nostrils, and seem to drink. He doesn't understand it himself, but there must be something strange and strong and nice to them in that smell, after the plain grease and gurry of their husbands. Like a caveman, perhaps, in the movies (307).

The greatest irony in this story is that Dummy feels indebted to Stinky after having been rescued from the icy

waters. Out of friendliness and thankfulness, he even makes the following proposal to Stinky:

> "Well… I got to thank you for my life, that's all, and so has Rosie. From now on anything I got in the world is yourn for the askin', that's all. I got to beat it now, or I won't get South … if you wouldn't mind, while I'm gone South, droppin' round now and then to see that Rosie's all safe, all right. Though her and me owe you so much already" (329-30).

But Stinky's mind has now shifted to the new nurse who had recently moved into this town.

Annie, the wife in "For Where Is Your Fortune Now," perceives her relationship with her Portuguese lover in a completely different manner. Although she is married to a man named Ben Ring, neither she nor their young son has known his whereabouts for the past eight years because he had left town to seek his fortune elsewhere. She has reached a point in her life where she is convinced he had died at sea. But at night, she still dreams about the day of his return and his finding her living in sin. One day, her estranged husband – much like the one in Hawthorne's short story titled "Wakefield" – actually comes back home only to realize that life had gone on without him. In his pursuit of money, he comes to terms with the fact that he had neglected his wife and son.

In contrast to the entrepreneurial, dynamic Dummy Santos of the previous story, the lazy Portuguese fisherman Annie is living with seems to have a similar outlook on life as that of a kept man. During the entire story, he is never seen working but rather lives at her expense. In both stories, the image of the Portuguese characters does not strike one as positive. Instead, the aftertaste with which readers of Steele's "The Thinker"

and “For Where Is Your Fortune Now” are left with is one marked by stupidity, promiscuity, and exploitation. Upon closer inspection of both stories, however, the out-of-wedlock sexual relationships in which these Portuguese characters are engaged in are, in a way, justified because in the first one, Dummy Santos is “unavailable” and in the other one, the husband is absent.

With such a discussion of the depiction of alleged sexual license of the Portuguese in mind, readers will be struck by the notion that none of these texts provides substantial evidence on this stereotype. The conclusion readers might reach is that the discussion of this issue is simply a matter of perspective or point of view.

As has already been seen, there is much in these narratives that undercuts the authors’ zeal in writing ‘so-called’ realistic stories. Apart from a weak understanding of Portuguese culture, for example, some writers misspelled or chose the wrong names for the Portuguese characters they portrayed as sexually promiscuous. Obviously, matters such as these do not assist in sustaining verisimilitude. Moreover, the inability of certain writers to discriminate between a Portuguese from the mainland, the Azores, Madeira, and Cape Verde islands is, in my estimation, another element which diminishes the credibility of a writer’s given work. For Portuguese-American readers, matters such as these are rather too serious, especially when some of these writers aspire to represent the way of life of Portuguese immigrants in America.

Another important aspect is that the New England environment has also played a major role in the discussion of this theme since all the texts discussed in this chapter are set in this region. In most of these novels,

writers strive to transcend the religious and puritanical beliefs of their cultural heritage with varying degrees of success. But the “better than thou” New England attitude still persists, even if not quite as strongly as before in some of the stories under consideration.

Edith Wharton, for example, felt the need to write about sexual enjoyment. The only socially acceptable way she could write about it was to channel her feelings and desires into her fictional ethnic characters. Such a strategy enabled her to discuss a taboo issue while relegating it to groups at the margins of conventional social acceptability. But, as we have seen, Wharton was not the only writer to resort to such a technique.

“Drowne’s Wooden Image,” too, does not convince us of the alleged sexual licentiousness of Portuguese women, but, instead, illustrates Hawthorne’s secret attraction to the dark ethnic other, as well as his fear of and repulsion at what these women represented to him. Furthermore, it helps the author to come to terms with the feelings of guilt which prevailed in his family.

As far as the association of the Portuguese with sexual license and the changing attitude to sexuality from, say, Hawthorne’s “Drowne’s Wooden Image” to Edith Wharton’s “Beatrice Palmato” is concerned, much has changed in the course of about a century. Whereas the first story, a mid-nineteenth-century text, relied on imagery to focus on sexuality, texts from the first half of the twentieth-century – especially private unpublished ones – treat the issue in a more open manner. It is hard to imagine Hawthorne’s strictures surviving through to the twentieth-century and the Jazz Age of Wharton’s later life. This greater openness to sexual exploration was to progress throughout the century, to the point where second

and third generation Americans of Portuguese descent are depicted as indulging in interethnic sex in works such as Greg Sarris's *Grand Avenue* (1994). The explicit sexual activity of the Portuguese with Native-Americans in this book's story, "Joy Ride" is, without a doubt, a far cry from the sexual demonization and lurid imagery utilized by some of the authors analyzed in this chapter.

Mainstream American writers, however, did not limit themselves to racial matters, violence, and sexual license in their depictions of the Portuguese. They also associated this ethnic group with dirt, drunkenness, alcoholic and narcotic trafficking, stupidity, and ignorance. These are the associations which will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

Notes

[1] Mary V. Dearborn, *Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), p. 139.
[2] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 113.
[3] Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1998), pp. 94-5.
[4] Brodkin, p. 100.
[5] Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), pp. 275; 282.
[6] T. Walter Herbert, *Dearest Beloved: The Hawthornes and the Making of the Middle-Class Family* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: U of California P, 1993), p. 146.
[7] Herbert, see pages 228-34.
[8] Herbert, p. 246; see pages 240-47.
[9] Nina Baym, "Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Mother: A Biographical Speculation" in *Feminism and American Literary History: Essays* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1992), p. 51.
[10] Baym, p. 41.
[11] Baym, p. 43.
[12] Frederick Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The U of California P, 1989), pp. 221-22.
[13] Crews, p. 20.
[14] Crews, pp. 248-49.
[15] George Monteiro, *Fernando Pessoa and Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Literature* (Lexington: The UP of Kentucky, 2000), p. 100.
[16] David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 135.
[17] The Finnish word for Portuguese.
[18] Butler, p. 113.
[19] R. W. B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 544.
[20] Edith Wharton, *The Letters of Edith Wharton*, ed. R. W. B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis (New York: Scribner's, 1988), p. 589.
[21] Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton*, 2nd ed. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), p. 291.
[22] Lewis, pp. 222-23.
[23] Louise J. Kaplan, *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Madame Bovary* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 440.
[24] Angela Carter, *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (London: Virago, 1993), p. 27.
[25] Carter, p. 27.
[26] Carter, p. 15.
[27] Carter, p. 15.
[28] Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 1986), pp. 99-100.
[29] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 188.
[30] Said, p. 190.
[31] Said, p. 190.

[32] Elizabeth Ammons, "Edith Wharton and the Issue of Race," *The Cambridge Companion to Edith Wharton*, ed. Millicent Bell (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995), p. 84.
[33] *The Letters of Edith Wharton*, p. 135.
[34] Ammons, p. 69.
[35] Ammons, p. 69
[36] Ammons, p. 68.
[37] Ammons, p. 68.
[38] Ammons, p. 83.
[39] Gloria Erlich, *The Sexual Education of Edith Wharton* (Berkeley: The U of California P, 1992), p. 39.
[40] Teresa Gómez Reus, "Mapping the Contours of a Forgotten Land: Edith Wharton and Spain," *Wretched Exotic: Essays on Edith Wharton in Europe*, ed. Katherine Joslin and Alan Price (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 202.
[41] Reus, p. 212.
[42] Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York: Scribner, 1964), p. 101.
[43] Lewis, p. 194.
[44] Edith Wharton, *In Morocco* (Hopewell, NJ: The Ecco Press, 1996), pp. 247-50.
[45] *A Backward Glance*, p. 330.
[46] *A Backward Glance*, p. 50.
[47] Ammons, p. 68.
[48] Erlich, p. 39.
[49] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), pp. 21-22.
[50] Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 165.

CHAPTER FIVE

DIRT, ALCOHOLISM, STUPIDITY, BUFFOONERY, AND THE PORTUGUESE

Unlike the previous chapters in which the discussion of the Portuguese fictional characters in American writing was centered on a specific theme, this chapter reviews a variety of stereotypical portrayals. These additional stereotypes will, I believe, enable readers to obtain a fuller picture of how the Portuguese have been depicted in American fiction. Moreover, this chapter aims at completeness as well. The issues to be explored in this chapter complete the discussion of the stereotypes that I have encountered in American writings dealing with the Portuguese.

Briefly, I will argue that in the geographical locations where the Portuguese have settled in America, they have also been perceived as dirty people, drunkards, opium traffickers, bootleggers, and more generally stupid and ignorant individuals. Nor are these different stereotypes confined to a specific area. They indicate what some American writers have thought about the Portuguese, regardless of where they settled.

What this chapter also aims at testing is what Vermette diagnoses as a typical attitude in America, a young country where "it has always been popular to make scapegoats of foreigners, particularly when Americans were puzzled by threats to their political and economic stability."[1] When reminding us of this country's "relatively short history," Vermette regards this attitude as more akin with the spirit of older nations, namely,

those in the Old World. In her view, such a young country as America has, unfortunately, developed these attitudes prematurely. Moreover, when questioning the stereotype of the Portuguese as drunkards or a violent people, Sandra Wolforth in *The Portuguese in America* argues that this ethnic group was discriminated against and encountered prejudice because of the "confusion and irrationality, promulgated by historians, sociologists and novelists."[2] In her assessment of anti-Portuguese prejudice, Wolforth also argues that American intellectuals' interaction with the Portuguese in New England was marked by coldness and rejection. More explicitly, New Englanders have been far more hostile towards the Portuguese than other fellow Americans in California and Hawaii – a point which the following quote substantiates:

> The Portuguese on the West Coast did not encounter the same prejudices as those on the East Coast, and consequently, they have been able to advance further occupationally, as a group, than their countrymen in the Yankee strongholds. They were not from the beginning stigmatized with the mark of the mills, not considered as little more than industrial fodder.[3]

With these preliminary considerations in mind, we shall now focus on the primary sources so as to analyze these stereotypes in their proper context.

Filth and the Portuguese of California

Of the three novels with a Californian setting which highlight the Portuguese as dirty individuals, perhaps no other work has generated a more passionate reaction from the Portuguese communities there than did John Steinbeck's

Tortilla Flat (1935). In *Tortilla Flat*, we have a canonical writer and one of his major works. Since it is still so widely read, the images of repugnance that its Portuguese fictional characters arouse – especially Big Joe Portagee – will linger in the minds of readers to come. Before we dwell on this work of literature, our goal is to focus on two earlier pieces of writing by two lesser-known figures in the annals of American writings. The novels in consideration are Mary Austin's *Isidro* (1905) and Ruth Comfort Mitchell's *Water* (1931). What they have in common is, obviously, their portrayal of the Portuguese as filthy. Since these are two lesser-known pieces that may interest the ethnologist only, the damage they inflict on the image of the Portuguese is minimal. Stereotypes are perpetuated or generate responses from readers when the works containing such viewpoints become a part of readers' collective memory. To qualify for such a broad readership, a work must have generated a widespread enthusiasm on the part of reading audiences. Unlike *Tortilla Flat*, both aforementioned novels do not perpetuate this stereotype because practically nobody today bothers to read them. Although these are lesser-known works of fiction, for the purposes of this study they contain a lot of information on Portuguese immigrant life in California. As in other works analyzed earlier, the allusions to the Portuguese in Mary Austin's *Isidro* are also minimal and sketchy.

With the advent of multiculturalism, ethnic studies, and canonical vs. non-canonical discourse, Mary Austin's fiction is now receiving more scholarly attention, but *Isidro* does not strike me as possessing an elaborate plot. The importance of *Isidro* lies mostly in Austin's calling our attention to the questionable role of the Missions in

the American Southwest during most of the nineteenth-century. Austin raises pertinent issues such as the mass destruction of Native-Americans and their culture, their rebellion against the religious and cultural imperialism imposed on them by the priests in these Missions, Native-Americans' struggle to maintain their ancestral way of life unmolested, and their overall resistance to acculturation.

Despite the literary periods each work belongs to, much is gained from reading *Isidro* side by side with Cooper's *The Prairie* since there are so many themes connecting one work with the other. It is no mere coincidence that both writers devote so much space in both narratives to episodes such as the ones describing the tension between the natives and the white men, the destruction of the environment when vast prairies are set on fire, as well as the white man's responsibility for bringing about genocide when setting tribes of Indians against each other. In *The Prairie*, however, the Sioux are the ones responsible for these fires. They do so in order to locate the hiding places of the white frontiersmen. Austin's works contain an aspect which William Dean Howells admired – and even encouraged – in the writers of the period. Howells felt that American literature had confined itself to New England for too long a time. In his call for a national literature, he supported and urged writers like Austin to record the regional ways of life in the various geographical areas of the United States. Seen from this perspective, *Isidro* may be considered a valuable piece of Southwest local-color writing.

Although the Southwest sparked Austin's imagination, Jacqueline D. Hall argues that Austin's closeness to the Southwestern landscape and way of life was more intense

during what Hall views as the first phase in Austin's career as a writer, that is, when she emerged as a regional writer. It was in most of the fiction of this period that she described

> the desert, the mesas, the canyons and mountain ranges, the alpine lakes and streams, and the course of High Sierra storms in precise detail…. The way animals make trails to the few springs, the methods hawks and coyotes use to hunt, the migratory patterns of deer in the spring and fall. She explains how the desert plants adapt to small amounts of rainfall and shows the reader how the land shapes the plants and trees – the sage, the juniper, the scattered pines.[4]

It was also during this period that Austin inevitably came into contact with Portuguese farmers and shepherds in California, the setting of a great part of *Isidro.* According to Hall, this phase is located in the late 1880s, after Austin's "graduation [when] she and her family moved to California's southern San Joaquin Valley."[5] At the time, the demographics in the San Joaquin Valley registered a steady increase of incoming Portuguese, especially farmers who had sailed there from the Azores or, more likely, those who had gone there after a temporary stay in New England, especially in New Bedford.

In this novel, references to the Portuguese are scarce. The exception is the voiceless character Mariano, a shepherd, who, as I will try to show, betrays the author's prejudice towards this ethnic group. What we actually get to know about him is conveyed through the narrator's impressions at the very outset of chapter two. Although a skimpy snapshot, in the following passage we learn that:

> The sheep which Isidro had seen feeding at evening belonged to Mariano, the Portuguese. His house stood in a little open plain having a pool in the midst, treeless, and very lonely, called The Reed; his sheep fed thence into the free lands as far as might be. The Portuguese was old, he was rich, he was unspeakably dirty, and a man of no blood…. Mariano was not known to have any one belonging to him; his house was low and mean, thatched with tules, having a floor of stamped earth; his dress and manners what might have been expected…. He was reputed to have at his bed's head a great box full of gold and silver pieces, – and yet he worked! It was predicted of him that because of his riches he would have a foul ending, and as yet he had not (14-15).

While this character's American dream has materialized, his shabby ways and demeanor are unappealing to the narrator. I would further argue that these feelings are both shared by the narrator and author and that the former is an extension of the latter. It is worth recalling what Toni Morrison has to say on the art and craft of fiction. When discussing a passage about a black female in Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* in connection with the author, the narrator, and the fictive characters, Morrison contends that

> It would be irresponsible and unjustified to invest Hemingway with the thoughts of his characters. It is Harry who thinks a black woman is like a nurse shark, not Hemingway. An author is not personally accountable for the acts of his fictive creatures, although he is responsible for them.[6]

Although theorists distinguish between the perspectives of a given author, his or her fictive characters, and the narrator, in specific works of literature these different

entities often converge. Such is the case in *Isidro*. In addition, for the sake of literary versimilitude, in a rural setting, shepherds are portrayed as attired in humble, coarse clothes as they roam with their flock through dusty, arid landscapes and, for that reason, are untidy. What is puzzling in *Isidro* is the narrator's reaction to such uncleanliness. Because the Southwest is renowned for its shortage of rainfall, it is improbable that Mariano would come upon a stream every so often should he wish to wash up. I cannot help but wonder if Twain's litany on "Cooper's Literary Offenses" may also be applied to Mary Austin's *Isidro*. At times, one gets the impression that this writer's biased portrayal of the Portuguese in *Isidro* undercut her faithfulness at recording life on a regional level. In other words, her practice of mimesis is questionable. While the phrase, "a man of no blood" implies he is either an insensitive man or that he has no family, it denigrates him as well. His status as an extremely rich shepherd, however, should not be dismissed as misleading and inaccurate. This detail is an indication that the Portuguese in California – unlike those working in New England factories – have, undoubtedly, become wealthy and this because agriculture and cattle breeding made it possible for them to excel in a way of life they were very familiar with.

It is also probable that Mary Austin may be venting other prejudices against the Portuguese through the character of Juan Ruiz, who is envious of Mariano's wealth. After murdering Mariano, Juan Ruiz goes to the Mission in Monterey to seek confession. Meanwhile, the priest asks him a few details about his past and identity. Upon learning that Juan Ruiz was the son of a certain woman by the name of Maria Lopez, a Mexican, the priest

exclaims the following to him: “What!…. Was she, indeed, Maria Lopez, daughter of Manuel Lopez of San Jose? And are you her son born out of wedlock? May God be merciful to you a sinner! Your father was Mariano the Portuguese” (162).

After all, this is a story of patricide or even a tragedy in the classical tradition. It might also be a way of pointing out that human relations, even blood ones, can be opaque and reality difficult to perceive and handle. Or, instead, is her application of this reference the way in which she contributes to the social Darwinist movement that some of her contemporaries – London and Norris – took part in when contending that ethnic minorities occupied the bottom of the racial pyramid in late nineteenth-century America?

The Portuguese in chapter nineteen of Ruth Comfort Mitchell’s novel *Water* may not have evoked disgust on the part of this story’s narrator or may not look as dirty as Mariano in *Isidro*, but they are compared to hobos, an image which suggests carelessness, neglect, and uncleanliness. Like most of the novels I have analyzed up until now, *Water* is not really interested in the Portuguese at all. This is just another book where this ethnic group gets little more than the usual casual glance from its author. Even though their role in this novel about milk-ranching and farming in California is an unimportant one, their appearance in the novel – as we shall see ahead – reveals much about their way of life in California.

As the title suggests, this novel is about the obtaining of funds for an irrigation system to be installed in the San Joaquin Valley. It also tells us about Darrow Brant’s gradual immersion in country life and

his growing awareness of the difficulties involved in such a way of life. Such an insight or “epiphany,” however, does not come about suddenly since the character in question is a city-bred, college-educated, young sports star. We find him in the novel’s denouement completely receptive towards this way of life and more sympathetic towards humble people, uncommon behavior for a man accustomed to investing in the stock market and being surrounded by the rich and powerful. Moreover, he succeeds in ousting Gusberger, a man with a tight grip on all the farmers who had borrowed money from him and who is in control of the local water supply. *Water* comes out of the local color movement which Hamlin Garland endorses in *Main-Travelled Roads*, especially in his story “Under the Lion’s Paw.” What both works have in common is their emphasis on social protest and criticism of the economic exploitation of landowners.

Had it not been for Mr. Brant’s decision to sell all his Holsteins in exchange for Jersey cows, it is unlikely that any mention of the Portuguese would ever have been made. Among all the potential buyers, the Portuguese are the ones who flock to his farm in greatest numbers. They are reported to have arrived there in

> Shabby cars and new and shiny cars, rattling old vehicles spilling over with eight and ten Portuguese – ”short on the buy and long on the lunch” – Jim Corey said out of the corner of his mouth – ”although now and then one of those fellows that looks like a hobo has a bank balance that’d make you gasp” (218).

While there is some recognition of their wealth, the overall impression contained in this quote is negative in the sense that these fictional Portuguese farmers are depicted as shabby-looking, filling their cars to full

capacity, unmindful of personal travelling comfort, and eager for a free lunch. And yet, they are the ones who purchase most of the cows, especially one particular individual. He is referred to as the "Portuguese on the rail" who "had bought three cows." A while later, we also learn that the "big and beautiful Holstein was sold to the silent Portuguese on the rail for a hundred and ninety dollars. He had spent close to a thousand without opening his lips" (223-26). More than a half century ago, this was, by any measure, an enormous sum. This episode may seem irrelevant to most readers, but the truth is that it substantiates the economic ease many Portuguese in California enjoyed. According to Pap,

> it was the dairy industry more than gardening that produced the relative wealth of California's Portuguese ethnics. Immigrants from São Jorge, Terceira, and Flores in the central and western Azores, where dairying (at least as a home industry) had a long tradition, in contrast to other parts of Portugal, led in developing this line in California. The start was made in the 1870s in Marin County, which then had abundant natural pasturage, close enough to the burgeoning San Francisco-Oakland area for convenient marketing…. From there, about the turn of the century, the industry spread into the San Joaquin Valley, as land values in the Central Coast area were rising and as irrigation opened up the dry interior valley to a longer grazing season – and ultimately to alfalfa culture. Dairying in California was based on the tenantry system pretty much from the start: large landowners would lease land and cattle to dairy operators who had little capital. Poor immigrants thus had a chance to work themselves up from lowly milking and other ranch jobs to tenantry, and from there gradually to independent dairy farming. With the invention of milking machines, cream separators, refrigeration, etc.,

> dairy production became more and more of a specialized, factorylike operation.
>
> The Azorean settlers followed through on this; by 1915 they owned about half of all the dairy land in the San Joaquin Valley, and together with compatriots in coastal areas were then producing well over half of all the milk, cream, and butter (but not cheese) in California…. In the early 1930s the Portuguese in California were estimated to control 60 to 70 percent of the state's dairy industry…. As of 1938, total Portuguese holdings in the state were estimated at 450,000 heads of dairy cattle, representing a capital in excess of $30 million.[7]

The Portuguese in California yearned to own dairy farms, a trait we already witnessed in the character of Maria Silva in London's *Martin Eden*. What this information also conveys is that they also reaped the rewards of their own American dream because they were in the main a hard-working and ambitious people. This was also possible because they encountered excellent opportunities and working conditions in California. While their countrymen were being exploited in the New England textile mills, in California they were engaged in the activities they had always done back in the Azores islands, but on a grander scale.

Perhaps the reason why the Portuguese strike both novelists as dirty and shabby-looking is that one should not overlook the biases of these novelists. As a group of people who had experienced overwhelmingly spartan and miserable living conditions back in the old country, for many of them, it is simply in their nature to be as frugal as possible. Of course, with the better living and economic conditions that America had to offer them – along with America's powerful conspicuous consumption culture –

they still kept a tight grip on their money. One should not forget that these people had been brought up in the old country with the belief that one should save for days of economic hardship. Moreover, the fear of spending their senior years in the poorhouse (if they were lucky or if one existed in their vicinity) or, most likely, of being completely abandoned, was something that could not be easily erased from their minds. Social security and pension plans were rare at the end of the nineteenth-century or even during the earlier decades of the twentieth-century – especially for farmers, shepherds, and cattle breeders. And these are the very people who sought to escape grinding poverty. What is also interesting to observe in *Isidro* and *Water* is that in these two works a gender response or way of looking at this particular ethnic group cannot be ruled out. In addition, both novels reflect a concern deeply rooted in American culture at the end of the nineteenth- and beginning of the twentieth-centuries, which sparked a nationwide obsession with owning a bathtub. Mark Twain's complaint about the lack of hygiene in European hotels in *The Innocents Abroad* is, without a doubt, a case in point.

What Big Joe Portagee in Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* has in common with Mariano in Austin's *Isidro* and with the nameless Portuguese in Mitchell's *Water* is his air of carelessness and filth. Unlike the fiction produced elsewhere in America, perhaps the reason why the Portuguese in California have evoked these images in the minds of writers such as these may be due to the type of work they have traditionally been engaged in there. Of all the different occupations available to the Portuguese in America, farm work is one of the most dirtying. With the possibility that these writers may have only bothered to

look at these people while they were working in the fields – and not elsewhere and at other times – it is no surprise that the images of sweaty foreheads and shabby-looking, dusty clothes would stay with these authors.

While I am particularly interested in understanding why Steinbeck depicted Big Joe Portagee as a shabby character, such a portrayal, I believe, must be considered in the light of this author's inclusion of the issues of race and ethnicity in his cameos of *paisanos* and Portuguese Americans. Whereas most scholars contend that Steinbeck was receptive towards Otherness, such was not the case in *Tortilla Flat*, one of his early pieces of writing. Unmindful of issues centering on class, gender, and race, generations of scholars prior to the nineteen sixties have overlooked Steinbeck's ethnocentric views. Such is not the case today. And yet, it is puzzling to read the following in one of the most recent biographies written about Steinbeck. Steinbeck, Jay Parini argues,

> uses satire to point up defects in American society, although he never goes so far as to suggest that the *paisano* way of life is in any way superior to that of the mainstream. *Tortilla Flat* has limited aims, and it cannot be called a political novel in any real sense. The author's satirical tone is a device for maintaining an aesthetic distance from the *paisanos* for gently poking fun at them while viewing them sympathetically.[8]

To state that this author's treatment of ethnic minorities in *Tortilla Flat* is sympathetic is, in my estimation, downright wrong. Parini's words may apply to Steinbeck's treatment of ethnic minorities in, say, *The Forgotten Village* (1941), *Cannery Row* (1945), or even in the movie

script for *Viva Zapata!* (1952), but not in the piece under consideration.

In *Tortilla Flat* Big Joe Portagee and Rosa Martin are portrayed as filthy and sexually active. Moreover, they possess practically all the negative stereotypes that American writers in general have attributed to the Portuguese. In the article titled "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese," George Monteiro views this novel as "structured around paradigms of the Arthurian romance,"[9] but the irony is that if the reader expects Big Joe Portagee to embody the spirit of the Grail quest, he has been disqualified by his own creator from the very outset. This is due to Steinbeck's prejudices towards the Portuguese, which he has channeled into the portrait he has made of Big Joe Portagee. As Monteiro puts it, "What can one expect of the unconscious racism of a romantic naturalist like the Nobel-prize winning writer, California's John Steinbeck?"[10] While I do not entirely view Steinbeck's ethnocentric views regarding the Portuguese as "unconscious racism," Steinbeck's racist references in this novel are, in my view, more overt than Monteiro is willing to argue. And yet, in little more than two decades (Monteiro's article dates back to 1979) Steinbeck's views on race and ethnic minorities have received much attention in scholarly writings.

Steinbeck creates a character who embodies traits which most Americans abhor. In Big Joe Portagee we see no glimmers of industriousness and determination, characteristics which Americans tend to favor. Instead, we meet a person who is depicted as a vagrant, who prefers to remain locked up in prison and, thus, be a burden on the taxpayers, than work for his own livelihood:

> If he had been a hero, the Portagee would have spent a miserable time in the army. The fact that he was Big Joe Portagee, with a decent training in the Monterey jail, not only saved him the misery of patriotism thwarted, but solidified his conviction that as a man's days are rightly devoted half to sleeping and half to waking, so a man's years are rightly spent half in jail and half out. Of the duration of the war, Joe Portagee spent considerably more time in jail than out.
>
> In civilian life one is punished for things one does; but army codes add a new principle to this – they punish a man for things he does not do. Joe Portagee never did figure this out. He didn't clean his rifle; he didn't shave; and once or twice, on leave, he didn't come back. Coupled with these shortcomings was a propensity Big Joe had for genial argument when he was taken to task.
>
> Ordinarily he spent half his time in jail; of two years in the army, he spent eighteen months in jail. And he was far from satisfied with prison life in the army. In the Monterey jail he was accustomed to ease and companionship. In the army he found only work. In Monterey only one charge was ever brought against him: Drunk and Disorderly Conduct. The charges in the army bewildered him so completely that the effect on his mind was probably permanent.
>
> When the war was over, and all the troops were disbanded, Big Joe still had six months' sentence to serve. The charge had been: "Being drunk on duty. Striking a sergeant with a kerosene can. Denying his identity (he couldn't remember it, so he denied everything). Stealing two gallons of cooked beans. And going A.W.O.L. on the Major's horse" (55-56).

As far as the issue of image creation in America is concerned, I would like to recall bell hooks' argument, namely that from "slavery on, white supremacists have recognized that control over images is central to the

maintenance of any system of racial domination."[11] Although America had undergone profound changes since the days of slavery and even the Reconstruction, one should not forget that Steinbeck and the writers of his generation were living in the heyday of racial segregation and ethnic minorities – especially Latinos and Southern Europeans – were looked at with suspicion by Nativists. Apart from being depicted as a shabby character who ignored cleanliness, Big Joe Portagee is also referred to as "this big black Portagee" (69). In chapter two, I have already focused on the issue of race and the overall darker complexion of the Portuguese compared to people from a Northern European background. A dark complexion is something over which Big Joe Portagee, obviously, has no control.

Not only do the Portuguese characters in Steinbeck's novel arouse fear of the dark ethnic other, Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* abounds with animal imagery. Tia Ignacia, for example, is reported to have referred to Big Joe Portagee as "This pig…this big and dirty animal. It would be better for me if I brought some cow in the house out of the rain. Another man would say some little friendly word at least" (90). Because he is so lacking in initiative and quickness of thought, he cannot discern her sexual desires. After giving up on him, she kicks him out, calling him a "'Pig!…Big dirty garbage! Out in the mud with you!'" (91). In this passage as in many others, there is a profusion of animal imagery in the very texture of this novel. With the knowledge that one can only expect from Big Joe Portagee the same type of behavior one would normally encounter in an animal, Monteiro is certainly justified in asking:

> What else can we expect of a brutish Portugee who invariably moves, thinks, and acts as if he were an animal? Zoologically, Big Joe walks "like a great alert dog"; when he moves, like a small animal, he "scurries"; when he would engratiate himself, he "trots" after people, when he sleeps "he curl(s) up like a dog," when he is fearful, he "stretches his neck like a chicken," and when he sees a jug of wine, "wolfishness" comes into his eyes."[12]

In *A Cultural History of the American Novel: Henry James to William Faulkner*, David Minter traces the origin of Steinbeck's use of animal imagery, claiming that "the influence of Edward F. Ricketts, a marine biologist and naturalist whom he met in 1930 and from whom he learned an early version of sociobiology…changed his sense of relations between individuals and groups."[13] If one just reads Minter, one would remain convinced that Steinbeck's comparisons of big Joe Portagee to animals are innocent and a reflection of his naturalist tastes. In my view, Steinbeck is, indeed, voicing his own prejudices. Minter, who does not read too much into the race motif, further argues that:

> Like his fellow Californian Jack London, he was drawn to portrayals of people of reduced states of consciousness because he wanted to situate the human spirit within nature and to locate nature's force within human animals. Animal imagery pervades his novels, from the pirate in *Tortilla Flat*, who lives in a kennel with his dogs, through "The Leader of the People," to the famous description of a turtle crossing a highway in *The Grapes of Wrath*, where we see life as a biological process that has always been historical and as a historical process that has always been biological.[14]

Because Steinbeck was

> more clinical than sentimental about people…his most telling loyalty was to the processes of life. He values social movements, including strikes and protests, in the name of social justice, but even more in the name of loyalty to life. In his fiction, however, that loyalty, which opened his eyes to some things, closed them to others.[15]

In this quote, Minter is suggesting that Steinbeck's recurrent use of animal imagery is not, after all, unbiased. As I have shown earlier in this study, a postcolonial critic like, for example, Frantz Fanon, would not hesitate to claim that the dominant culture's recourse to animal imagery is typical of the dialectics between the colonizer and the colonized, that is, between the dominant and a minor culture.[16]

Big Joe Portagee is a type of character who recurs in Steinbeck's fiction. As we all know, Steinbeck had an affection for the proletarian experience. He is often a friend of the down and outer and wants to make this clear to middle-class Americans of his time. There is something which attracts him to these people. Perhaps it is their joy in living and their spontaneous, carefree ways. That is why he tends to romanticize the hookers, the hobos, and the social misfits. Further evidence of this can be seen in the manner in which the characters in *Tortilla Flat* turn their backs on work and organized society. As social drop-outs, Steinbeck is perhaps arguing that such a way of life in America is possible. Although they spend their time sitting around, talking, and loitering, these characters, however, have enough to eat and even enjoy a roof over their heads. In his discussion of Big Joe Portagee, however, this does not really apply. If Steinbeck is so fond of the vagabond or hobo figure, why

does he insist on including a reference to Big Joe's ethnic background? He does not do so with the other characters in *Tortilla Flat*. Why not let him simply be Big Joe? To this reader, the reference to the "Portagee" part in his name is certainly not innocent. Vamberto Freitas is right in stressing that "A palavra *Portagee* não nasceu só da ignorância linguística dos americanos; é um termo pejorativo e classificador do grupo."[17]

If we recall what Homi Bhabha has pointed out in *The Location of Culture*, and even though we are in a non-colonial context, with the character of Big Joe Portagee we are in the presence of a mainstream, canonical writer resorting to the discourse and treatment often utilized by the colonizer when referring to the colonized, oppressed people. In other words, a rhetoric centering on animalism, dirt, and stereotyping such as the one Steinbeck makes use of in *Tortilla Flat* resembles the one a colonizer uses to justify his subjugation of the colonized.

Warren French has noted in *John Steinbeck's Fiction Revisited* that not everyone finds *Tortilla Flat* a very rewarding and pleasant reading experience – especially if such a reader happens to be a Mexican or Portuguese American. Steinbeck's treatment of ethnic minorities, he contends, is too ethnocentric and patronizing:

> Steinbeck has been praised for his understanding of the Mexican psyche; nevertheless, at the present distance from his writings one feels that while he displayed much greater tolerance and self-indulgent envy for Monterey's *paisanos* during a trying period in his own life, he understood them little better than most other Californian Anglos. He stressed to Joseph Henry Jackson, a sympathetic reviewer for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, that "those people" in the novel were

> "very dear" to him; however, such affection does not rule out one's yet being patronizing, as one can be to children, especially if the characters' charm derives from a childlike innocence.
>
> Certainly Steinbeck did not share the views that Frank Norris expressed in 1901 in *The Octopus*: "The Anglo-Saxon spectators roundabout drew back in disgust, but the hot, degenerated blood of Portuguese, Mexican, and mixed Spanish boiled up in excitement" at the slaughter of jackrabbit that had been rounded up. But it was nearly impossible in the atmosphere of agricultural California to avoid the attitude from which the humor in these stories derives – even if one held it with some wistfulness that "these people" whom the Anglos had dispossessed could not survive in the new society.
>
> In the 1930s the *paisanos* were viewed at best (many Anglos simply despised them, as they still do) as ingratiating but ineffectual people.[18]

The victim of physical abuse, Big Joe Portagee shows very little resistance when he is beaten up every now and then. With so much brutality and violence inflicted on him throughout the novel, one cannot help but see Big Joe Portagee as a sort of Christ-like figure. And since it is part of human nature to destroy and denigrate what it cannot understand, one should not be surprised to witness such violence inflicted on him. So disgusted were the Portuguese in California upon their learning that Steinbeck had depicted them as dirty and stupid that they responded with the erection of a statue honoring Cabrilho. The statue might be the means to improve the image of this ethnic group. As Mary Theresa Silvia Vermette has pointed out in *The Image of the Azorean: Portrayals in Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Writings*,

> the erection of a monument to Cabrilho was promulgated to remind others that the Portuguese had their own noble heritage and could claim their own heroes. This movement was supported by the Native Sons of the Golden West, who felt that, "To the leaders of the Portuguese colonies, the recognition of Cabrilho was a means of securing dignity for the Portuguese immigrant and a reminder to the immigrant of this dignity during his struggle of adjustment and integration." On December 19, 1940, the statue of João Rodrigues Cabrilho was dedicated at picturesque San Diego Bay. During World War II, it was moved to Point Loma, where it stands above the site where Cabrilho landed in 1542.
>
> There are those who feel that the statue was a response to the description of the Portuguese in John Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* as characterized in the person of Big Joe Portagee. Joe is a big, lazy, shiftless, lascivious lout, who is too stupid to be insulted by the demeaning treatment received from Pilon and his friends. Other allusions to the Portuguese, such as those about the women, are equally derogatory. It is no wonder that the Portuguese of California would want to refute this image, not only with Cabrilho's statue, but with week-long Cabrilho festival held every autumn. To their credit they have established a fine library at San Leandro. An impressive monument in honor of the Portuguese immigrant stands across the street from it.[19]

On this issue, Vamberto Freitas is also of the opinion that "Tudo em *O Milagre de San Francisco* [the Portuguese translation of *Tortilla Flat*] indica que o racismo anti-português é deliberado, consciente."[20] Freitas then goes on to ask a provocative question:

> Todos os críticos de Steinbeck, em *Steinbeck and his Critics*, estão de acordo que *O Milagre de San Francisco* é uma

> subversão do *sonho americano*, uma visão anti-capitalista e anti-regimentalista da cultura puritana do seu país. Creio que esta será uma pergunta legítima se, mesmo em 1935, todas as personagens deste romance fossem anglo-saxónicas, a reacção teria sido a mesma? A saber: brancos alegremente alcoólicos, malandros, ladrões, promíscuos e mentirosos receberiam a mesma condescendência, ou será, porque outra coisa não se esperava ou espera de gente de sangue misto e cultura misteriosa, por natureza avessa a todas as estruturas societais e civilizacionais?[21]

Widely regarded as a relevant work in Steinbeck's canon, *Tortilla Flat* cannot be disassociated from an important fact. It dates back to the author's early career as a novelist and, as such, it reflects Steinbeck's patronizing and ethnocentric attitudes towards minority society groupings which he eventually dropped as he became a more seasoned writer.

The Portuguese during Prohibition: Alcohol, Opium Trafficking, and Bootlegging

While the theme of filth has captured the attention of a few writers from California, such is not the case with the depiction of the Portuguese in, for example, the writings with a New England setting. In a region swept by temperance revivalism, alcohol consumption was a pressing concern and this is precisely the case in Eugene O'Neill's *The Haunted*, the last play in the trilogy *Mourning Becomes Electra*, published in 1931. Although the New England social pressure to eradicate such habits play a minimal

role in this work, O'Neill's attraction towards the subject stems from his own Irish background. Works of literature penned by Irish or Irish-American authors often touch upon this trait, which is deeply ingrained in Irish culture. This author's most famous play, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, is, I believe, a substantiation of this. But in *The Haunted*, it is not the Irish who exhibit an addiction to booze. Instead, it is the Portuguese. Why O'Neill chooses to stereotype the Portuguese as drunkards is not clear, but this play opens with a group of five heavy drinkers, and Joe Silva is the only character whose ethnic background is specified. Perhaps O'Neill's familiarity with the Portuguese dates back to his seafaring years when he came into contact with Portuguese sailors or perhaps to 1916 when he became associated with the Provincetown Players. In Provincetown, there was no way he could have avoided the Azorean community. Whatever his reasons may be, in *The Haunted* O'Neill never gives the reader any clue on this issue. Instead, his interest lies in the Mannon family's past and why their ghosts have come to haunt their descendants, Lavinia and her brother Orin. Upon the disclosure of his incestuous attraction towards his sister, Orin immediately commits suicide. The parallels between this play and Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" are worth considering. The play ends with Lavinia's determination to remain locked up in the haunted house and be consumed by the ghosts and sins of her ancestors.

For a study concerned with the Portuguese experience in America, the character of Joe Silva is too important to be overlooked. At the very beginning we are introduced to a group of five men who are having a good time. They are depicted as "a chorus of types representing the town as a

human background for the drama of the Mannons" (333). The play is structured around the paradigms of a Greek tragedy. Even though we are told that "all five are drunk" (333), Joe Silva is the one who makes the most noise. In the following passage, we learn that "Silva is a Portuguese fishing captain – a fat, boisterous man, with a hoarse bass voice. He has matted gray hair and a big grizzled mustache. He is sixty" (333). Instead of a melancholy drunkard, Joe is full of happiness; that is why he cannot resist "burst[ing] into song":

> *"A bottle of beer and a bottle of gin*
> *And a bottle of Irish whiskey of!*
> *So early in the morning*
> *A sailor likes his bottle oh!"*
> AMES (derisively) You like your bottle 'ceptin' when your old woman's got her eye on ye!
> SILVA She's visitin' her folks to New Bedford. What the hell I care! (*Bursts into song again*)
> *"Hurrah! Hurrah! I sing the jubilee*
> *Hurrah! Hurrah! Her folks has set me free!"*
> AMES (slapping him on the back) God damn you, Joe, you're gittin' to be a poet! (*They all laugh*) (334).

As this passage shows, these men are all equally drunk together and having a good time. While stressing the good fellowship and social equality among these men, in this excerpt, his singing is associated with his activity as a seafaring man. Joe uses language which some contemporary readers would consider sexist, especially when he says the following: "By God, if ghosts look like the livin', I'd let Ezra's woman's ghost set on my lap! M'm! (*He smacks his lips lasciviously*)" (334).

But such is the world of men and the dynamics of male interaction if we take into account the time period

in which this play was written. And since the consumption of booze has been one of the foremost activities in these male rituals, it does not surprise us to see a group of men celebrating their friendship with “a stone jug in [their] hand[s]” (333). What I find relevant in this play is the author’s insistence on revealing the ethnic background of one of these men. In my view, the connection between booze and the Portuguese is far from being an innocent and unbiased one.

Two non-canonical writers from Hawaii have also looked at the Portuguese, but with different interests in mind. Armine Von Tempski’s *Dust* (1928) and Ruth Eleanor McKee’s *After a Hundred Years* (1935) represent this ethnic group differently compared to the ones encountered up to this point. In these two novels, the Portuguese are depicted as engaged in illegal activities. Whereas the first novel focuses on the Portuguese involvement in opium trafficking, the second one is concerned with bootlegging.

In *Dust* we learn that the island of Kahoolawe, in Hawaii, is currently a deserted place whereas in the past it had huge, fertile fields and prosperous ranches. Driven by greed, its former inhabitants imported sheep and goats to graze on its hillsides, ”which proved the ruin of the island. Close feeders, they ate the grass down to the roots and trampled the roots to dust. With nothing to bind the soil it began blowing away” (5). Nowadays, “opium smugglers were said to take advantage of its isolation to ply their unlawful trade” (2). The challenge for the twenty-three year-old Saxon lies in his determination to bring back to the island the dignity and prosperity it once had. In practice, this means the total eradication of the unwelcome sheep and goats – a task that will take him months to complete – and the planting of grass and trees.

In addition, the novel also aims at explaining why Saxon had been banished into exile. Under the illusion that he had merely signed a lease from Albert Feveral, towards the end of the novel he is dumbfounded to learn that this man was actually his father, that he had been conceived out of wedlock, and that he had been sent to Kahoolawe so as to not find out about the whole affair.

Among the several workers Saxon hires, one of them is a Portuguese by the name of Manuel. He had come from the island of Maui, where perhaps most of the Portuguese in Hawaii resided at the time this novel was published. One should not forget Maria Silva, in London's *Martin Eden*, had also lived there before moving to California. In more recent times, when referring to the Portuguese population in Hawaii, Pap points out that

> In the Hawaiian Islands, as of the 1960s, the large majority of the population of Portuguese (or part-Portuguese) extraction had well-nigh lost its ethnic distinctiveness, and was found primarily in a variety of urban occupations, around Honolulu and Hilo. Some Portuguese-Hawaiians on the islands of Maui and Hawaii were still working on the sugar plantations (where the need for manual labor had been reduced by the invention of the mechanical cane-cutter). Others were employed in the growing and canning of pineapple.[22]

From the very beginning, the presentation of Manuel is a negative one and it is conveyed through Saxon's initial scrutiny of him:

> Swarthy, ill-looking, raw-boned, over six feet, "Manuel," for he seemed to have no other name, came up to the steps. Fierce and sullen, with dark, doubting eyes. Half a bandanna of indescribable filth was knotted about his buzzard-like neck. Tiny gold rings were in his ears. He had heavy

> shoulders and powerful, loosely-hanging arms (70).

Not only is he metaphorically compared to an evil-looking pirate during the course of the novel, readers feel that there is something mysterious about him mostly because he spends most of his time at night, after work, sitting "like a brooding buzzard staring at the sea" (75). Gradually, we come to the realization that his interest in working on Kahoolawe was a mere cover-up for his partnership in the opium smuggling business he was carrying on with a few other men operating off-shore. On Kahoolawe, which functioned as a sort of hideaway, he would control the inward movement of boats smuggling opium there. His role was to assist his confederates by way of signalling to them the appropriate moment to unload their cargo on Kahoolawe. Later, Saxon comes to the conclusion that Manuel was a paid spy, that he was operating for Albert Feveral, his own father. This man believed that Saxon would exhaust his funds during the process of converting Kahoolawe into an agriculturally productive environment and that he would inevitably endorse the pact with the opium smugglers since he would be pressed for cash. This is the conclusion he reaches when sharing the following with the sheriff about his father:

> "Can't tell you but he hates me enough to attempt anything to get me out of Hawaii. Bet when I came over he figured the whole thing out, that having practically no funds to fall back on I might be – tempted. I lay awake thinking. When Murakami went to Maui to get men to work here, Manuel and Tam Wong and his father came and offered their services, they were in his pay – spies, in cahoots with him and with the opium smugglers –" (234).

Apart from Manuel's opium-smuggling activity, he is also portrayed as a mean and cruel person. Manuel's insensitivity increased every time a defenseless animal happened to cross in his way. Once, Saxon noticed one of his men, Pili, "lean over and assist to its feet a kid that had got knocked down, saw Manuel throw his leg out to kick a nanny in the eye as she passed" (99). Another time, Saxon also witnessed how rough Manuel was "with the mules…[how] careless about ungirthing them when they halted to rest, brutal with the goats" (103). So restless was Manuel with the drought on Kahoolawe that he even "kicked at the sleek dogs as they passed" (224). Once, we are told that Saxon had "slid down a dry gully just in time to see the Portuguese harpoon a kid. It screamed and fell down, darted away and Manuel jerked it back, grinning with diabolical joy" (226). Unfortunately, the novel does not specify whether the cruelty this writer distilled into the character of Manuel stems from his witnessing of violent behavior in real Portuguese individuals or if, instead, it is totally made up.

Readers searching for a formal condemnation of bootlegging in Ruth Eleanor McKee's *After a Hundred Years* are, instead, perplexed by the relaxed atmosphere in Hawaii during Prohibition. Police raids and people adopting a hush-hush attitude as we often encounter in New England writings on this theme are nowhere to be seen in this novel. Joe, the Portuguese character who sells illegal liquor, is viewed as someone who is providing a valuable service to the community. This is, at least, the impression we gather from Hal Carrington and Mr. Williams when they go to his shack. We learn that Joe is a "big, good-looking Portuguese-Hawaiian" who had "thrust his head through the door and then sauntered out to greet them,

grinning broadly" (62). A while later, Mr. Williams tells Hal that "Joe's the best bootlegger on the island…. And he makes beer that'd put fur on the chest of a brass monkey" (62). Hal's opinion of Joe's home-made beer is that he has got some "Good stuff…. Good and strong" (62). Unexpectedly, a "fat, very dark Hawaiian policeman [also] came in" (63). While Mr. Williams is introducing the cop to Hal, he says that "This is a good friend of mine, Kemoo, the pride and joy of the Police Department. He can drink more beer at a sitting than I can" (63). After he has finished his beer, the policeman thanks Joe, saying "That was good, Joe. Now I chase hell out of the automobiles" (63). Generally speaking, they are said to be "Swell guys, these Hawaiian cops. Slip'em a little bill and not one of 'em'd hurt a fly. Best natured guys in the world. Just treat 'em right" (63). Before leaving Joe's shack, Hal has come to the conclusion that he enjoys this "Friendly place…. Senators and bootleggers and traffic cops all meeting over a glass of beer – all good friends" (64).

The most obvious conclusion one may draw from this brief exposition is that the local authorities in Hawaii did not take Prohibition as seriously as they did in the rest of the country, especially in New England, where coast guards were constantly on patrol as was the case in the novel I shall be analyzing ahead. And Joe, instead of being the typical *persona non grata* one would normally expect in the official discourse about bootleggers, is rather a charming and friendly man who, in his defiance of an oppressive law, is actually providing an important service to the male community on this Hawaiian island. Instead of a negative and biased portrait of this Portuguese fictional character, we end up, unexpectedly,

with a favorable image of a man who is manipulating the system to everyone's advantage. Of all the works of fiction analyzed so far, we have hardly made the acquaintance of a Portuguese character who has been as welcome and cherished by mainstream characters as is the case of Joe in *After a Hundred Years*.

Such a nonchalant, care-free attitude towards alcohol trafficking and consumption on the part of local and federal authorities, however, is nowhere to be seen in Scott Corbett's and Captain Manuel Zora's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Sea Fox: The Adventures of Cape Cod's Most Colorful Rumrunner*, published in 1956. This work contains a stark and vivid account of the Prohibition years in Provincetown, Cape Cod. Here, the reader is confronted with a detailed account of the tactics involved in dodging the Prohibition agents and the coast guards along the shores of Provincetown. Unlike the Hawaiian authorities in *After a Hundred Years*, the FBI agents in this novel are in earnest, especially when the goal is to capture Manny Zora and his associates. Although a bootlegger, Manny Zora is also described as a "young Provincetown Portuguese fisherman" with a "magnificently abundant nose and long swarthy face" who was "aboard the thirty-eight-foot fishing boat *Mary Ellen* that lay alongside an old schooner" (2). We also learn that

> His great long nose dominated his features and was itself a good counterpart of sly Reynard's long nose. His name, Zora, meant "fox" in Portuguese; and, because he had proved so foxy at sea, the men of the Coast Guard had given him a special nickname. They called him the Sea Fox (2).

The surname Zora does not mean fox in Portuguese. Most likely, the word Corbett wanted to use in this context is

“raposa.” Instead, he used the Spanish word *zorra*, spelled incorrectly. It is worth noting, however, that the word under consideration is used in specific areas of Portugal, namely in the Beira Alta and Trás-os-Montes regions and in the Azores. Aquilino Ribeiro, for example, uses it and the same could be said for Vitorino Nemésio in *Mau Tempo no Canal*. This detail endorses my suspicion that *The Sea Fox: The Adventures of Cape Cod’s Most Colorful Rumrunner* does not have joint authorship as we are led to believe on the book’s title page. Instead, we are confronted with a ghostwriter who is writing about a Portuguese character. Originally from Olhão, a fishing town in the South of continental Portugal, Manny Zora did not embrace bootlegging simply to make some quick money but, rather, for the pleasure and excitement involved in the trade. As the narrator puts it,

> Manny felt with pleasure the way excitement warmed his insides more thoroughly than Scotch could ever hope to, and wondered if Boston’s tired businessmen and their women got as much fun out of drinking the stuff as he did out of bringing it in. He loved the cat-and-mouse game, loved being at the wheel of the creeping boat with Jack and Johnny on lookout up forward, their eyes digging into the darkness and their ears standing out like rabbits’. Listening, listening, that was the most important part of all. Any one of the three men knew the sound of the Coast Guard’s engines at any distance (7-8).

Manny, however, has not been a bootlegger all his life. While he spends most of his time fishing, these skills are also used as a cover-up for the illegal activity he is carrying on. And why has Manny decided to become a bootlegger when his passion since early childhood was to

become a fisherman? According to Sandra Wolforth, during the Depression, most Portuguese fishermen in Provincetown saw their meager savings used up completely. Furthermore, Wolforth points out that

> Fresh fish had to be thrown away because its price fell abysmally.
>
> Change enveloped the New England Portuguese fisherman. Boys who had followed their fathers into fishing in Provincetown or elsewhere, or who had gone into the mills, stayed home. Those who had lost their jobs returned home. There was little work with the bottom out of the fish market. Yet there was also less despair than in the mills, for at least there were always fish to eat. No one in Provincetown starved during the Depression.
>
> But those years broke the tradition of fishing among the Portuguese in Provincetown. Disillusionment set in among younger men who, under more propitious circumstances, would have followed their fathers to sea. Some of their affinity for that life was redirected into Prohibition bootlegging activities. Manny Zora, a local Provincetown character and raconteur, relates tales of those days in his romanticized autobiography, *The Sea Fox: Confessions of Cape Cod's Most Colorful Rumrunner*, published in 1956.[23]

While most readers are interested in this work's rendition of the Portuguese involvement in bootlegging activities during the Prohibition years (1920-1933), I am more concerned with other important issues that the work itself raises than a mere account of bootlegging and how some Portuguese may have taken advantage of the situation to make money illegally. Embedded within this picturesque account of Manny Zora's adventures as a rumrunner, lie a few rich and fascinating examples of where the Portuguese

are located at the margins of mainstream American society as well as the dynamics of immigrant life in New England.

While Provincetown was quickly evolving into a summer resort during this period, attracting prosperous Americans to its shores, the attitude of the Portuguese there was one of complete alienation and aloofness:

> The town was still a fishing village and an important one, with a proud fleet of fishing vessels; but many changes had come to it in the past few years and now they were coming faster. The State road had pushed its way the full length of the Cape now so that sand roads no longer held back large-scale invasion by automobiles. They poured into town, and the summer season and summer people became a far more pronounced part of the town's picture – and of its economy. The artists' and writers' colonies were long established and glittered with well-known names. The flapper, with her short skirts and tight bra to give her a flat, boyish look, and the "sheik," with his brilliantined hair and his ukulele and his hip flask, had come to Provincetown as they had to the rest of the nation.
>
> Most of these things did not touch the life of her Portuguese fishermen, however. Their world remained a thing unto itself, and nowhere more so than in the loafing rooms. Their talk took no stock of the Jazz Age, of the crazy Twenties that were roaring about them, but concerned itself as usual with its eternal and all-absorbing topic – fishing. And only among them was Manny really at home, because no matter what he did with himself and his life he always remained essentially one thing – a fisherman (12-13).

Moreover, according to one of Manny's friends, it is not mainstream Americans who turn their backs on the Portuguese in Provincetown, but the Portuguese themselves who resist any type of contact. In this "ethnic enclave,"[24]

the Portuguese immigrants have created a sort of Little Portugal – much like Little Italy or Chinatown in New York City – where they lead completely independent, self-sufficient lives. Manny, however, regrets that the Portuguese resist assimilating into the mainstream and that they feel more comfortable at the margins. This is what he says to one of his fellow countrymen when he arrives in the U.S. for the first time:

> "And when I been here long as you, I'll know the language and know my way around, you wait and see."
>
> "Oh, Manny, you'll find out. You'll be like us. Look, everything in Provincetown is Portuguese. The groceryman is Portuguese. The clothing man is Portuguese, the drugstore man is Portuguese, the police is Portuguese, the fishing captains is Portuguese – even the undertaker is Portuguese."
>
> "Yes, but it's still America, so don't you think you oughta learn? Must be some Americans that speak English living there in Provincetown."
>
> "Yes, but we don't associate with them. You'll see. You'll be like us" (61).

The work under consideration was published in 1956 and, for that reason, touches upon issues of assimilation or non-assimilation, an aspect which older publications, say, from 1912, 1880, or even 1860 featuring Portuguese characters did not. Without any interest in learning the English language, how would assimilation become a reality for the Portuguese? True, such an attitude on the part of the Portuguese is, in part, responsible for the prejudice they received from the mainstream. But the Portuguese were not the only ones at fault since they received no signs of encouragement from the Yankee community either. Manny, however, is determined not to follow in the footsteps of his countrymen. Now that he is in America, his goal is to

squeeze into the mainstream. In other words, he does not want to be one of the unmeltables. In addition, he would not let himself be overwhelmed or even crushed by the challenge involved in mastering a new language:

> The Portuguese were not segregated in any one quarter, but they were walled in by the language barrier and by the resentment of the outnumbered Yankees against the encroachments of any outsiders, especially foreigners. Time, however, was on the Portygee's side. With his large families, as compared to the smaller ones of his Yankee neighbors, he was destined to increase his percentage of the population more and more and take over the town by sheer weight of numbers.
>
> In the meantime a few like Manuel Zora struggled to learn something of the new language, even though it was hard to do so when there was no chance to associate with the Yankees. Manuel had come to the land of the free where all men were created equal, and he would never be satisfied until he could mingle and make friends with anyone he chose (66).

The ethnic barriers that have existed in Provincetown are not exclusively of a Portuguese vs. Yankee nature. They can also occur within the same ethnic group, namely between the Portuguese from the Azores Islands and those from the mainland:

> Of Provincetown's forty-two hundred souls nearly two-thirds were Portuguese, and of that number a hundred and fifty were from Olhão. All persons from Portugal itself were called "Lisbons" and were hotly resented by the Azoreans, the "Islanders," who had been the first comers, beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. Azoreans constituted a large majority of the town's Portuguese population (64-65).

In *The Portuguese-Americans*, Leo Pap adds that:

One major division within Portuguese immigrant communities has always been that between Islanders – primarily Azoreans – on the one hand and Continentals on the other. Inhabitants of Portugal "proper" and of the Azores, Madeira, and Cape Verde Islands are not only separated by vast stretches of Atlantic ocean; they also know little about each other. The Azoreans in particular, as has already been indicated, have tended to resent the central government in Lisbon, and by extension mainlanders in general, for taking a neglectful and supercilious attitude toward them. Probably more important than political aspects of the problem, to the average immigrant, are the plainly observable differences in dialect, festive traditions, and various customs between people from his own home district and those from other parts of Portugal.

When the "Lisboas" (which is the Islander's popular name for the mainland Portuguese in general) began settling in numbers in various parts of New England, the older Azorean settlers described them as ill-mannered, irreligious, etc. Some feuds seem to have arisen when single men from mainland Portugal paid "too much attention" to the girls from Azorean and Madeiran families. When fishing people from the Algarve, Portugal's southernmost province, settled among Azoreans in Provincetown, some of the latter would call them "Guineas" (in the case not a reference to Italians, but to the somewhat "rough and rustic" blacks of Guinea, then a Portuguese colony). Many Continentals, speaking a Portuguese relatively close to the educated standard of Lisbon, would make a point of sneering at the nonstandard dialect spoken by many Islanders. In some locations, at some periods, the line-up was not Continentals versus Islanders, but rather Continentals plus Madeirans versus Azoreans (especially versus those from São Miguel). Among Azorean immigrants, some cleavage developed between the older "refined"

> group from Fayal and the more recent arrivals from São Miguel; the "Migueis" are strongly marked by their nonstandard speech and have a reputation for "coarseness."[25]

In *Leaving Pico*, a novel I will refer to in Chapter Six, Frank Gaspar has given us a fictional account of this tension that prevailed among the Islanders and the Continentals on American soil, more specifically in Provincetown. Ironically, the Portuguese – like the Hispanics in this huge American mosaic – are responsible for their own mode of settlement in the United States. In other words, the ease the Portuguese have in getting around within their own community without having to learn the English language is counterproductive, especially when the challenge in America is to embrace a new way of life and, if possible, gradually make one's way into the mainstream. Unfortunately, too many Portuguese people from the first and, perhaps, second generations have survived in America without ever having made an effort to master the English language or learn about American ways. In this work, however, this is not the case with Manny Zora. As a matter of fact, he is not the typical Portuguese whose dreams do not stretch beyond his "ethnic enclave" in Provincetown. A whole new world of friendships and opportunities inevitably opens up for him because he can communicate in the English language. Compared to his countrymen, it is astonishing to learn that

> The criticism he received from his own people increased his determination to break through the barriers and widen the range of his social life. He was fascinated by the artists, writers, actors, and assorted Bohemians he saw around town. Flamboyant himself, and an actor in his own way, he loved shows and

> was particularly attracted by the glitter of the group that constituted the Provincetown Players…. One place where Manny sometimes encountered artists and writers was in restaurants. Occasionally he had a little casual conversation with one of them. He knew they considered him part of the local color – a Portygee fisherman who was said to do some bootlegging on the side – but he played along, because he was really more interested in them than they were in him…. The gates of that great America he wanted so much to become a part of seemed to be swinging open (126-27).

In addition, we also learn that "Manny Zora even came to know the greatest of Provincetown's great, Eugene O'Neill, who still visited there frequently though he was no longer a year-rounder" (173).

Although Manny's personal achievements in America are worthy of being praised from a Yankee perspective – except, at the time, his activity as a bootlegger – most Portuguese fishermen in this work are portrayed as stupid people. Take, for example, the episode when a Portuguese man purchases a pair of boots:

> When it came to buying wearing apparel, the Portuguese were used to having the size make a difference in the price. It always did in the old country. There, the larger the size the higher the price. Strange things happened when one of the smaller Portuguese went into a store to buy boots in America.
>
> "Mister, how much these boots?"
>
> "Five dollars."
>
> "How much these big ones?"
>
> "Same."
>
> "Oh! Then give me the big ones!"
>
> And out he went with huge boots flapping on his feet, unable to resist a bargain (64).

Or the one when the fishermen's boat stops because of the cold weather. According to one of them, this is what they should do:

> "Well, I think the trouble is, the gasoline must be frozen"…. "Yes. We got plenty gasoline, got plenty spark, the sonamabeech don't want to go, what the hell else can it be? Nothing else. Gasoline must be frozen"…. "Well, since the gasoline is frozen, I only see one thing to do. We got a torch here in the stern. So I think the best way is, light up the torch and we'll unfroze the gasoline"…. In those days the engines had an open carburetor, and finally Doming' reached it with the torch. Boom!
>
> Both men went overboard, right through the tarpaulin. It was lucky that they had a skiff tied astern that they could swim to, because the boat was going up in the flames of a tankful of thoroughly unfroze gasoline. The two men got home minus mustaches, eyebrows, and derbies, soaking wet and half frozen; but at least they got home (72-73).

Or even the one where a fellow is praying to Saint Peter and is reminded that "this is America, and the Saint Peter they got over here, he's English. He don't understand Portuguese!" (75). It is unlikely that a Portuguese author, Captain Manuel Zora, would allow such humorous material in this novel as is the case with these jokes, which further supports my argument of this novel as not possessing joint authorship.

One last aspect worth pointing out is the reason why so many young men – like Manny Zora – have emigrated to America before coming of age. The problem with them is that they cannot "get passports because they're too close to the age for the army – and they want to get out because they don't want to serve for a cent and a half a day for

three years of the best time of their lives" (27). Once again, it is worth quoting Pap for more details on this matter. For most young men, the reason why they turned their backs on Portugal and looked elsewhere was because of their desire to

> escape military service. This factor seems to have been of importance especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the Portuguese monarchy was beginning to totter under Republican opposition, and again immediately before and during the First World war. The escape from military service must, of course, be judged against the background of economic and political conditions existing at the time in Portugal, especially in the Azores and Madeira. The islanders, isolated and relatively neglected by the central government as they were, had little sense of involvement in the affairs of the mainland. Also in the north of continental Portugal, hotbed of Republicanism around the turn of the century, military service was felt to be an unjust burden.[26]

What initially looked like a representation of the Portuguese and bootlegging has side-tracked into other important matters. And yet, this has allowed me to delve into the dynamics of Portuguese immigrant life in America and how the first and second generations of Portuguese-Americans have responded to their country of adoption.

Stupidity, Ignorance, Buffoonery, and the Portuguese in their Native Country

Much has been written about *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), Mark Twain's bestseller and literary success, but the two chapters he devotes to the Portuguese from the

Azores Islands in this book have received little or no critical attention. Since the plot of *The Innocents Abroad* is about a group of Americans traveling to the Holy Land and coming into contact with different peoples along the way, one would expect, for example, Hilton Obenzinger's recent study, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* to make some reference to the Azoreans, but such is not the case. To my knowledge, Twain's impressions of the Portuguese he encountered on the island of Fayal (Faial) have never received any scholarly attention, not even in George Monteiro's article, "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese." And yet, a portion of Monteiro's title and the caption in his introduction have been extracted from this travel narrative.

As far as I am aware, the Portuguese appear only once in Twain's work. My goal in this chapter is to assess Twain's treatment of the Azoreans in *The Innocents Abroad* and analyze the ways in which this may shed additional light on the ongoing debate on race and Otherness in Twain's fiction. While this discussion may, at first, strike the reader as more suitable in Chapter Two which deals with racial issues, my aim is to argue that the various aspects inherent in stereotypical representations are, in fact, interconnected. Such is the case with Twain. I believe that his portrayal of nineteenth-century Azoreans as both stupid and ignorant people was motivated by his ethnocentric ways and beliefs.

As I argued in Chapter Two, the Portuguese have been victims of prevailing theories of race in America and Twain's work of literature now offered for inspection is a substantiation of this. While during its year of publication *The Innocents Abroad* was being hailed as a

literary success, the number of Azoreans flocking to New Bedford and Nantucket, Massachusetts, to work on board American whalers was gradually increasing. Unlike other works of American fiction with Portuguese fictional characters, Twain's piece is unusual in the sense that he portrays them in their native land. Although Twain is writing about a foreign land, the way in which he represents the Azoreans is similar to that of later works like, say, Frank Norris's *The Octopus* or even Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon*, even though *The Innocents Abroad* is a work of comedy travelogue.

As we shall see ahead, scholars have argued that in matters of race Twain is, indeed, slippery and elusive. I would add that his interest in tall tales makes this assessment even more difficult because of his humorist treatment of foreign peoples in *The Innocents Abroad*. After all, the humor in the story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1867) was still very strong in his style of writing, and remained so throughout most of his career. The voice we hear in *The Innocents Abroad* is the one dating back to the period in Twain's life where he had been shaped by Western humor. It is the voice that delights in telling yarns to frontiersmen gathered around a campfire at night. The humorous touch he has perfected here shows us a writer who is concerned with such matters as how he can refine his usage of comedy and humor into the crafting of bestsellers. It is no mere coincidence that *The Innocents Abroad* was advertised and sold through subscription. In a way, that is why he could not care less if he mocked or even denigrated the Azoreans. As long as he sold more and more copies to entertain nineteenth-century readers, that would be fine, considering his voracious appetite for making money.

While race and ethnicity were taboo issues, say, prior to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, we can no longer afford to remain silent about Twain's literary excesses in a world that is now concerned with multiculturalism and ethnic and postcolonial studies. His portrayal of the Azoreans reflects a man who feels superior. Moreover, he has immortalized them as stupid and ignorant. Needless to say that other cultures and peoples represented in this work, too, have been subject to the author's penchant for caricature. Before proceeding to a more detailed analysis of chapters five and six in *The Innocents Abroad*, we must look into other preliminary matters first. These include the ongoing critical debate on the issue of race in Twain's fiction, how postcolonial theory may help us to understand Twain's frame of mind when coming into contact with Otherness, his contradictory, boisterous, and humorous personality and how all of these threads can be pulled together to assess his portrayal of the Azoreans.

In *Lighting Out for the Territory: Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture*, Shelley Fisher Fishkin has noted that the man who wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894) was not a racist. Presumably, this was due to his exposure to the Abolitionist cause that prevailed in the East and his marriage to Olivia Langdon. But the letters he sent home after moving out of Hannibal in 1853,

> show a young man who expressed attitudes then typical of the majority of people in his hometown: he was rabidly antiabolitionist and he assumed white superiority to be part of the natural order of things. He wrote his mother about a court-house "surrounded with chains and companies of soldiers to prevent the

> rescue of McReynold's niggers, by the infernal abolitionists," and he groused that "in these eastern States niggers are [treated] considerably better than white people."

Fishkin goes on to state that:

> Within sixteen years, however, he would write an editorial blasting assumptions of white superiority – a theme echoed in his comments about Johnson Whittaker. Within twenty-one years he would publish a story that ridiculed white myopia about black experience. And within twenty-three years he would begin a novel [*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*] that ranks as one of the most scathing critiques of racism by an American. How did he get from there to here?[27]

Susan Gillman contends that Twain's awareness of race increased as he traveled more and more around the globe and that his later writings reflect this. Gillman supports her argument when discussing Twain's *Following the Equator* (1897), a travel book that is

> based on Twain's 1895-6 around-the-world lecture tour, which took him from the Pacific Northwest to Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, India, and South Africa, announces its connection to the U.S. racial context of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* with the maxims from "Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar" that head each chapter. But the travel narrative, engaging a variety of racial and national groups, moves beyond the claustrophobic world of the prewar South in more than simply a geographical sense. Here the black-white binary that defines the U.S. racial system and the master narrative of U.S. race relations gives way to the complexities of race and nation in the colonial context…. And here the race-sex nexus that Twain largely shies away from in the avenging mulatto sketches emerges more fully, in the images of blackness and sexuality that are

> repeatedly associated in his focus on the sensuality of black skin, bodies, and clothing.[28]

In *The Jim Dilemma: Reading Race in Huckleberry Finn*, Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua also maintains that the man who wrote the most influential American novel of the nineteenth-century is not a racist. Among the various examples she cites, the one I consider the most convincing is that of George Griffin. According to Chadwick-Joshua, this individual, who was

> crucial for understanding Twain and his rendering of Jim, originally came to the Twain house to wash windows. As Twain wrote Howells, he "remained for half a generation"…. From Griffin, Twain's imagination gleaned other facets of Jim's character – honesty, loyalty, friendship, forthrightness, objective thinking, and wit. Living at home with the family, his room located next to Twain's study, George Griffin had a profound effect on Twain. Many times I have been told "authoritatively" that Mark Twain was a dyed-in-the-wool racist, a product of a racist South. These opponents find themselves unable to explain why a racist" would allow Griffin so close as well as why Griffin would want to remain.

Chadwick-Joshua goes on to note that the arguments supporting Twain's racist views are unfounded given this unusual relationship between a black man and a white man. "One undeniable piece of evidence," this scholar emphasizes,

> is the sustained relationship Twain forged with George Griffin. Twain's third-floor study, flooded with sun and complete with veranda and billiard table as well as the more typical accoutrements of a writer, is flanked by a guest bedroom, and then a room that would become George Griffin's bed-room, also with a veranda. Why is the

> location important? Before Griffin assumed possession of the room, it was clearly designated as a guest room. He lived, actually lived, within the nucleus of the house rather than in some removed region or servants' quarters. His private space was three and one-half steps away from Twain's study. Would a racist writer place the object of his ire next to the very place of his creativity? Of equal interest, we must ask why Griffin would hang pictures of Twain's family in his room if in fact he was the target of such racism. Not even the most mistreated slave was required to hang pictures of the master in his quarters. It is an important indicator of their relationship that Griffin felt close enough to the family to bring them into his personal and private space in such a way.[29]

Tom Quirk, however, does not entirely subscribe to these viewpoints. In his opinion,

> Often enough, Twain flinched when he treated racial subjects, his own powerful bias dislodging his moral convictions. Here are two examples. On August 23, 1877, Twain witnessed a remarkable act of heroism on the part of a black man. A Runaway buggy carrying Ida Langdon, Livy's sister-in-law, was rushing toward a cliff. A middle-aged Negro, John T. Lewis, threw himself at the horse and stopped the carriage very near the cliff. This is the stuff of melodrama and rich in literary possibility. Twain was deeply affected by the event and tried several times to work it into a fictional narrative. The closest he came to publishing a fictionalized version of the event occurred in *Simon Wheeler*, but in that fiction he made the hero of the episode white, not black. He did dramatize just such an episode in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, where he had the huge Negro slave Jasper stop a runaway carriage. But Twain got cold feet and deleted the incident from the published book.[30]

When dealing with racial issues, Quirk further contends that Twain's attitude was marked by duality and contradiction:

> Twain, the man, was only a partly reconstructed southerner, and he never completely outlived his earliest impressions of the Negro. The record of Twain's own racial prejudice is too complete to make of him an enlightened, wholly unbiased champion of blacks. To do so would be as grave an error as it would be to make Huck Finn into an unwashed, adolescent political liberal. Those who champion or condemn Mark Twain's racial views on the basis of his biography and who, in turn, praise or blame *Huckleberry Finn*, somehow miss the point. It was Mark Twain, imaginative artist, not Samuel Clemens, U.S. citizen, who wrote *Huckleberry Finn*. While it is true that Samuel Clemens paid a young black man's tuition at Yale, it is also true that he often complained about the inferiority of Negroes in letters to his mother. Mark Twain, the artist, imagined and created Nigger Jim, but as a man he too was limited by circumstance, but not by possibility.
>
> Twain possessed a double imaginative talent, at once projective and assimilative. And, if we are to trust Rhett Jones on the point, he also possessed a white "double-consciousness" that enabled Twain to see Jim at one moment as a human being, at another as a "nigger." At all events, we can agree with Jones that it is "profitless" to argue about whether or not he was a racist.[31]

In an intriguing article titled, "Mr. Clemens and Jim Crow: Twain, Race, and Blackface," Eric Lott has also stressed the keynote of ambivalence in Twain's discussion of race in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*:

> Ecstatic in blackface, Twain touched on a form that conveyed exactly the brutality,

> insecurity, omnipotence, envy, condescension, jealousy, and fascination that characterize popular white racial responses to black people. Arguments either pro or con Mark Twain and race flatten out this complexity. Much of Twain's work enacts (Twain's own) white lower- or working-class affective racial alliances, which have always been more ambiguous and variable than bourgeois culture and its educational apparatuses can safely admit.[32]

Contradiction, argue various scholars and biographers, is the best word to describe Twain's most distinctive personality trait. This may, therefore, help us to understand why this writer, at different moments in his life, penned overwhelmingly antagonistic portrayals of ethnic minorities. His depictions of Otherness, namely African-Americans, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and the olive, dark-complexioned Azoreans in *The Innocents Abroad* look as if they had been written by two different writers. But we know that this is not true. In my view, Twain's perception of Otherness contains a mixture ranging from the insights of Shelley Fisher Fishkin to Tom Quirk. Twain's contradictory personality, his lack of a formal education, and exposure to different attitudes towards race in the South and East have molded both the man and writer. That is why Fishkin cannot help thinking

> about the demands Twain put on us, the contradictions he required us to acknowledge and address. The paterfamilias hosting elegant dinners in this house in Hartford also contained within himself the unruly child who hated to put on shoes. The man who felt such a deep sense of shame about the role white people played in oppressing blacks in America that he made that oppression central to his

> greatest works of fiction, explored the subject so artfully that he would be constantly misunderstood. Why was he so cagey? Why so reticent to stake out these positions unequivocally? I thought of the numerous fragments Twain wrote but chose not to publish. So many – like "The United State of Lyncherdom" – dealt with issues of race. Twain wrote his publisher that he would not have a friend left in the South if he went through with that book. (He seems to have been unaware of the fact that black writer Ida B. Wells had written a very similar book several years before Twain conceived his). Was Twain guilty of trying to "have it all," to be true to his principles yet retain that "option of deniability" that could banish controversy from his doorstep when he chose to do so? Did the local-boy-made-good who relished the chance to "go home again" to a hero's welcome somehow make it too easy for his countrymen to avoid confronting the dark currents under the raft?[33]

Perhaps no other biographer has captured this duality as well as Justin Kaplan in *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography*. "Twinship," Kaplan notes,

> was one of Mark Twain's favorite subjects, often one of his fatal temptations…. But twinship, along with the cognate subject of claimants of all sorts, also offered Clemens an enormously suggestive if misleadingly simple way of objectifying the steadily deepening sense of internal conflict and doubleness which is suggested by two sets of near-homonyms: Twain/twins and Clemens/claimants. And soon he would begin to explore the doubleness of Samuel L. Clemens and Mark Twain through concepts of "dual personality," "conscience," and, toward the end of his life, a "dream self" that seemed to lead a separate life…. Clemens was a Southerner turned Northerner, the son of slave-owners but now about to marry into an abolitionist family.[34]

Current postcolonial discourse, too, may help us to understand Twain's attitude toward the Azoreans he encountered on the island of Fayal and about whom he has written in *The Innocents Abroad*. In the light of the theoretical models propounded by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha, I would argue that Twain's portrayals of Otherness in *The Innocents Abroad* reflect a colonial mind at work. The man travelling on board the *Quaker City* who sent letters to the *Alta California* viewed himself as belonging to a superior culture and society as he was more and more exposed to foreign peoples in the Azores, Europe, and the Holy Land.

During the period of composition of this travel narrative, America was still undergoing the phase Frederick Jackson Turner defined as that of the "moving frontier." At the time, America was not considering any overseas territorial expansion, but it would later in the century, especially after the Spanish-American war in 1898. The dialectics of an imperial or invading force and a subject people that is present in narratives about Empire – such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* – resembles the one we encounter in *The Innocents Abroad*. In other words, in this travel narrative Twain anticipates a debate which would become very popular in America at the turn of the century. Twain's portrayals of Otherness are highly stereotypical. In my view, Twain was subject to the same prejudices and way of representing Otherness that we encounter in narratives about empire. If we recall what Edward Said has said on this issue, the "inferior" will always be inferior no matter what and this is exactly what we gather from Twain's narrative. We must

concede that Twain's portrayals of the Azoreans, Arabs, and Jews are not very favorable.

Hilton Obenzinger has also noted that Twain "attempts throughout the excursion to maintain a proper sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority."[35] But often, writes this scholar,

> when Twain offers some kind of "charitable," democratic gesture toward the Other, he does so within the patronizing bounds of Euro-American notions of uplift: "These people [Arabs] are naturally good-hearted and intelligent, and with education and liberty, would be a happy and contented race."[36]

Twain's argument concerning Azoreans' technological backwardness is very similar to what Obenzinger is stating in this quote. This critic also points out that *The Innocents Abroad* is not a Realist piece of fiction like, for example, his masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Obenzinger notes that:

> *Innocents Abroad*'s radical effect has nothing at all to do with any attempt at objectivity, despite Mark Twain's abjuration of the normative and his claim to "impartial eyes." Most Holy Land travel writers, with only brief sojourns that were informed by little knowledge of local conditions, produced only superficial impressions; the Palestine depicted in *Innocents Abroad*, however, is predicated, far more than the usual accounts, on distortion. By 1867, the year of the *Quaker City* excursion, so much had been written and so many attitudes, characterizations, scenes, observations, and speculations had become stock, sentimental devices that Twain could attempt to plunge through this overwrought textualization to a sense of reality by means of tall tale, burlesque, joke, and parody, in spite – or even because – of

> his blissful ignorance of actual Palestinian conditions.[37]

In this work, Twain's characters have been filtered through the consciousness of a writer who delights in humor and tall tales. Everett Emerson has argued that in *The Innocents Abroad*, "it is sometimes difficult to distinguish passages of genuine sentiment from burlesque imitation." This biographer further adds that "Mark Twain's basic technique was to appear playful." Kaplan has distinguished between Samuel Clemens in the smoking room and the drawing room on the *Quaker City*. In the smoking-room packed with men, where poker and alcohol prevailed, the "truculent surface of his personality" erupted with relative ease. He did not refrain from making statements we would now object to, but which, back then, supposedly were seen as acceptable during male interaction:

> With them he was Mark Twain, satirist and mimic, profane, who joked about genuine Nubian chancres and about Bayard's motto ("*Sans peur et sans* culottes"), and who told them that contrary to all reports the ugly women of the Azores were probably virtuous – "Fornication with such cattle would come under the head of the crime without a name." (Some months earlier he had decided that the big-breasted Nicaraguan girls also were virtuous, according to their lights, but "their lights are a little dim.") He was no prude, but he did make a finical distinction between the smoking room and the drawing room.[38]

With Obenzinger's comments on the overall lack of objectivity in *The Innocents Abroad* in mind, how does Twain portray the Azoreans?

Twain sketched his impressions of the Portuguese after interacting with them, but his initial written

account of them borders on racial stereotyping. Even before the anchor is lowered, he tells us about

> A swarm of *swarthy, noisy, lying,* shoulder-shrugging, gesticulating Portuguese boatmen, with brass rings in their ears, and fraud in their hearts, climbed the ship's sides, and various parties of us contracted with them to take us ashore at so much a head, silver coin of any country (my italics; 41).

Apart from their darker complexion, stupidity and dishonesty are what Twain sees in the Portuguese he meets at the Azores islands during one of the *Quaker City's* calls before reaching the Holy Land. Everett Emerson has noted that this voyage was "the first made by an American ship to the Old World exclusively for pleasure."[39] Although in *Harvests of Change* Jay Martin may point out that Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* is "delightfully masked in a good deal of humor and parody,"[40] this reader would add that Twain's attitude is one of insensitivity when commenting on the Azoreans on the island of Fayal. In addition, Twain has often overstepped the boundaries of decency and human respect in the reports he sent to the *Alta California* about this ethnic group. After all, he was a man who had been brought up in the midst of Southwestern violence, mob lynching, slavery and Western male bravado. Nor are we to expect from this time period any type of rhetoric showing sympathy towards ethnic minorities. Twain was undeniably influenced by both realities but, at times, he seems to have had some difficulty in measuring the consequences of his observations and loose tongue. While he seems to derive a droll satisfaction out of the situations he creates, a Portuguese American reader cannot help but feel that Twain's depictions hurt and denigrate ethnic minorities.

Unlike other works where the Portuguese appear in American writings, what is unique in *The Innocents Abroad* is the fact that the Portuguese Twain comments on are not living in an American setting, but rather in their native land. In this sense, Twain is showing the Azoreans' way of life and the landscape they inhabit for an audience in America desirous to read about "exotic" places. Moreover, his depictions – albeit jaundiced – of the Azoreans in their native land are a valuable contribution to the history of Azorean immigration to the United States since they show such an audience the living conditions in the Azores.

Before analyzing his corrosive remarks on the Portuguese, let us, then, focus on two or three details he singles out in his observations of the Azores and its people. As the *Quaker City* is making its way towards the seaport in Horta, on the island of Fayal, Twain is simply fascinated by the landscape in front of his very eyes:

> Its snow-white houses nestle cosily in a sea of fresh green vegetation, and no village could look prettier or more attractive. It sits in the lap of an amphitheatre of hills which are three hundred to seven hundred feet high, and *carefully cultivated clear to their summits – not a foot of soil left idle* (40-41; my emphasis).

This Azorean habit of maximizing the limited areas of arable land due to the islands' peculiar geographical conditions explains why characters like Antonio Silva in Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon* hold on to agricultural methods acquired in their native land, even though they now find themselves in the vastness of the San Joaquin Valley. Had London read this passage in Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*, perhaps he would not have allowed

Billy Roberts to ridicule the Portuguese and their agricultural techniques. Another detail which, for example, reminds us of Thomas Wentworth Higginson's short story "The Haunted Window," is the one where Twain refers to the cloak – or *capote* – which nineteenth-century Azorean women brought to the United States and which Higginson has publicized through the character of Emilia. For Twain, however, the *capote* and those who wear it are just another opportunity for mockery. As he is walking through the streets of Horta, he notices that

> Here and there in the doorways we saw women, with fashionable Portuguese hoods on. This hood is of thick blue cloth, attached to a cloak of the same stuff, and is a marvel of ugliness. It stands up high, and spreads far abroad, and is unfathomably deep. It fits like a circus tent, and a woman's head is hidden away in it like the man's who prompts the singers from his tin shed in the stage of an opera. There is no particle of trimming about this monstrous *capote*, as they call it – it is just a plain, ugly dead-blue mass of sail, and a woman can't go within eight points of the wind with one of them on; she has to go before the wind or not at all. The general style of the *capote* is the same in all the islands, and will remain so for the next ten thousand years, but each island shapes its *capotes* just enough differently from the others to enable an observer to tell at a glance what particular Island a lady hails from (41-42).

One cannot also help wondering why the first generations of Azoreans who sailed to America in the latter half of the nineteenth century were never asked to return to the Azores since back home, as Twain tells us, they were "slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy" (44). Most likely, Twain is unaware that the American whaling

industry in Nantucket and New Bedford, Massachusetts, would not have prospered as much without the Azorean contribution, as Herman Melville has shown in *Moby-Dick*. This also applies to New England textile mills and even the dairy industry in California, to mention just a few areas where the Portuguese have contributed with their sweat and energy to the building of America. It is unlikely that a "slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy" people – as Twain has noted – would undergo such a radical change in America, eventually becoming enterprising and hard-working people, especially when we know how they held on to their ways and customs.

A man so obsessed with technological advancement as Twain (a good example being the Paige typesetting machine which literally drained his financial resources to the point of bankruptcy) could not pass up any opportunity to comment on the backwardness in any European country that was still lagging behind America technologically. Such was the case in the Azores, but the rhetoric he uses to refer to the Azoreans' resistance towards technology makes them look like stupid, narrow-minded people:

> There is not a wheelbarrow in the land – they carry every thing on their heads, or on donkeys, or in a wicker-bodied cart, whose wheels are solid blocks of wood and whose axles turn with the wheel. There is not a modern plow in the islands, or a threshing- machine. All attempts to introduce them have failed. The good Catholic Portuguese crossed himself and prayed God to shield him from all blasphemous desire to know more than his father did before him (44).

What are we to make of the following quote where Twain insults the Portuguese people, when claiming that:

> The donkeys and the men, women and children of a family, all eat and sleep in the same room, and are unclean, are ravaged by vermin, and are truly happy. The people lie, and cheat the stranger, and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence for their dead. The latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys they eat and sleep with (45).

In these quotes, Twain comes across as a confident, condescending, middle-class man who is happy to pass judgement on others even if, at times, he exhibits no understanding of anthropology. While in the past many farmers in the Azores and in Continental Portugal utilized the ground floor as a barn for their cattle, while they lived on the first floor, Twain is caricaturing this practice when stating that the Azoreans he encountered are "little better …than the donkeys they eat and sleep with." In addition, Twain is downright wrong when claiming that the Azoreans "hardly have any reverence for their dead." In my view, the Azoreans – and the Portuguese in general – have a proper respect for the dead and honoring their lost ones. As we have already seen in chapter two, the character of Maria Silva, a widow, in Jack London's *Martin Eden* supports this reading. Moreover, even though the American Civil War had already been fought when Twain published *The Innocents Abroad*, his way of thinking, however, had not changed much since the days of antebellum South. The animal imagery he applies to the Portuguese when metaphorically comparing them to donkeys is not much different from the one Frederick Douglass used in his unveiling of a similar perception of American black slaves when he tells his readers in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) that he

> was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant (1).

In this passage, Douglass is comparing the consciousness of slaves with that of horses, a perception that prevailed in the white slaveholders' minds. In my view, Douglass's metaphor is pertinent because when comparing the Azoreans of Horta to donkeys, Twain is arguing that they are stupid, ignorant people. As I have already noted earlier in this study, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon argues that the usage of zoological terms when referring to the colonized or subordinate culture is typical of colonial discourse. In other words, Twain's way of looking at the Azoreans was similar to that of the peculiar gaze of the colonizer while interacting with the colonized – in this case, the "minor" or subordinate culture. Finally, when claiming that "Nobody comes here, and nobody goes away" (45), such a statement is just absurd. One should not forget that the Azores has always been a strategic point and that even today – at least since World War II – the United States still operates the Lages military base there. Moreover, America once had its own consulate in the Azores as well. In addition, Twain is overlooking the Nantucket ships stopping at the Azores to recruit crewmembers for its whaling industry as well as the transatlantic ships from Europe and the Americas. The same could be said for the thousands and thousands of Azoreans flocking to America in search of a better life. While

Twain is not accountable for what happened after he traveled to the Azores, in my view, such a place was not as lifeless as he seems to suggest.

Twain was so wrapped up with his mocking content during this episode on the Azores islands that he even overlooked the basic tenets of his gospel of Realism, which was at the center of most of his life as a writer. *The Innocents Abroad* was his greatest financial success but, unfortunately, it was obtained at the expense of denigrating ethnic groups and cultures whose role in this work is one of complete silence.

It is unlikely that either Steinbeck or Twain had any real animus against the Portuguese. They just display the contempt some Americans evince towards any ethnic minority whose physical features do not resemble those of WASPs. What also seems more and more evident – at least the materials in this chapter seem to confirm this hypothesis – is that most writers reflect how strongly they have been shaped by the values and mannerisms of the geographical locations they are writing about. Instead of adopting an attitude of lucidity, impartiality, and fairness, most writers discussed in this chapter have manifested a willingness to repeat stereotypes about the Portuguese in a given region. Instead of unbiased accounts, they have replicated the beliefs of ill-informed, uneducated, and narrow-minded Americans. Most likely, those who were writing in the mid-eighteen hundreds or a few decades later were unaware of this and were even unmindful of how they represented the ethnic other in their writings. Ethnic writers are already engaged in such a cause. Unlike previous generations of "Anglo" writers, their works provide us with a first-hand

representation of life from those ethnic minorities who, in the past, had been at the margins.

So firmly implanted were those writers in the geographical locations they are writing about – except Twain in the work under review – or even in the regions that strongly shaped their personality that their fiction mirrors such localisms. Such is the case of California, a predominantly rural state until not too long ago. In my opinion, it makes sense for dirt and soil to appear in the narratives produced there (*Isidro* and *Water*), especially in those focusing on farmers, shepherds, cattle breeders, and dairymen. The same could not be said for New England writings since most people in this region have been factory workers – and the Portuguese there have been no exception.

What New England writings do reflect is a condemnation of activities such as bootlegging, which clearly go against not only the law of the time, but also the views of the so-called Moral Majority. And New England has been proud of its reputation and staunch moral practices. That is why the writers from this geographical background are more inclined to discuss moral and psychological values such as stupidity and ignorance than any other aspect. While my analysis of texts about Hawaii in this chapter is limited, *After a Hundred Years* and a few others discussed in my previous chapters, allow me to argue that this does not apply, for example, to novels about Hawaii since it has been traditionally a more relaxed environment. And this because of the mingling of Asian and South Pacific cultures whose affinities with Christianity are superficial. Moreover, because Hawaii was admitted into the Union only in the course of the twentieth-century, the unrootedness of Western culture

there is another factor worth considering. Typical Christian moral offenses such as adultery and sexual promiscuity are hardly condemned in the narratives about Hawaii, at least those under consideration. Compared to New England, Hawaii seemed to enjoy a more relaxed and tolerant moral climate.

Having, thus, analyzed the representations of the Portuguese in American writings and what this ethnic minority has evoked in the minds of some native-born writers, it is now time that we let the Portuguese speak for themselves. Since the other side of the issue is, evidently, too important to be left unheard it will be at the fore of the chapter at hand.

Notes

[1] Mary Theresa Silvia Vermette, *The Image of the Azorean: Portrayals in Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Writings* (Angra do Heroísmo: Instituto Histórico da Ilha Terceira, 1984), p. 23.
[2] Sandra Wolforth, *The Portuguese in America* (San Francisco: R&E Research Associates, 1978), p. 91.
[3] Wolforth, p. 58.
[4] Jacqueline D. Hall, "Mary Hunter Austin" in *A Literay History of the American West* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian UP, 1987), p. 359.
[5] Hall, p. 361.
[6] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (London: Picador, 1993), pp. 85-86.
[7] Leo Pap, *The Portuguese-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), pp. 144-45.
[8] Jay Parini, *John Steinbeck: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), pp. 158-59.
[9] George Monteiro, "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese" in *Proceedings of the Fourth National Portuguese Conference: The International Year of the Child* (Providence, R.I.: The Multilingual/Multicultural Resource and Training Center, 1979), p. 178.
[10] Monteiro, p. 181.
[11] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), p. 2.
[12] Monteiro, p. 179.
[13] David Minter, *A Cultural History of the American Novel: Henry James to William Faulkner* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 189.
[14] Minter, p. 189.
[15] Minter, p. 190.
[16] See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 32-33.
[17] Vamberto Freitas, *A Ilha em Frente* (Lisboa: Salamandra, 1999), pp. 170-71.
[18] Warren French, *John Steinbeck's Fiction Revisited* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), pp. 57-58.
[19] Vermette, pp. 122-23.
[20] Freitas, p. 167.
[21] Freitas, p. 171.
[22] Pap, p. 153.
[23] Wolforth, pp. 39-40.
[24] Milton M. Gordon, "Assimilation in America" in *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 90:2 (Spring 1961), p. 123.
[25] Pap, pp. 158-59.
[26] Pap, pp. 36-37.
[27] Shelley Fisher-Fishkin, *Lighting Out for the Territory: Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), pp. 73-74.
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[29] Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua, *The Jim Dilemma: Reading Race in Huckleberry Finn* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1998), pp. 22-23.
[30] Tom Quirk, *Coming to Grips with Huckleberry Finn* (Columbia and London: U of Missouri P, 1993), pp. 76-77.
[31] Quirk, p. 75.
[32] Eric Lott, "Mr. Clemens and Jim Crow: Twain, Race, and Blackface," *The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain*, ed. Forrest G. Robinson (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 141-42.
[33] Fishkin, pp. 113-14.
[34] Justin Kaplan, *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966), p. 101.
[35] Hilton Obenzinger, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1999), p. 218.
[36] Obenzinger, p. 219.
[37] Obenzinger, p. 163.
[38] Kaplan, p. 44.
[39] Everett Emerson, *Mark Twain: A Literary Life* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2000), p. 46.
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CHAPTER SIX

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DEBATE: THE PORTUGUESE SPEAKING TO THE MAINSTREAM

While in the previous chapters the Portuguese fictional characters were created by native-born American writers (except Rudyard Kipling), in this chapter the Portuguese are conveyed from the point of view of writers who identify themselves as Portuguese or Portuguese Americans. While some of the writers in the first group have offered tentative accounts of the fictional Portuguese, in this chapter, I shall analyze how the Portuguese have tried to come to terms with the way in which the margins have shaped them.

Whereas in the previous chapters I have argued that we should not expect anything uplifting in the Portuguese characters created by some native-born American writers, this chapter centers on ethnic pride and the celebration of one's ancestry. John Dos Passos is an exception because he did not take any pride in his Portuguese background. He did not find in his Portuguese ancestry any reason for celebration or motive for writing. Readers expecting an analysis of Dos Passos in this chapter will be disappointed because the subjects he had chosen to write about in his major novels does not fall within the scope of this study. Simply put, Dos Passos was ashamed of his ethnic background. His paternal grandfather, who had been born on the island of Madeira, was not someone he felt proud of. His Portuguese background was an encumbrance, something shameful which he wanted to conceal. As Monteiro has written:

> Dos Passos, who was one-quarter Portuguese, had identity problems from the beginning. He was born out of wedlock and even though his father later married his mother, the marriage did not take place until the boy was fifteen. Indeed, until 1912, the boy, employing his mother's surname, was known as John Rodrigo Madison and he knew his father only as his "guardian," and as his mother's sometime companion.
>
> In addition, he became aware at some point that he was one-quarter Portuguese, a fact that was magnified dramatically when he acquired his new, Portuguese surname shortly before entering Harvard College. Given this situation, it is intriguing to learn that at Harvard, in his sophomore year, Dos Passos elected to study Spanish even though Portuguese was also available and that immediately after graduation Dos Passos sailed off to Europe to pursue his studies, not in Lisbon, but at the Centro de Estudios Historicos in Madrid. Even the chiding of the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno that he "ought to be ashamed at not knowing Portuguese" failed to spark his interest in the language. The problem, of course, was that Dos Passos was still uneasy about being (his words) "a quarter – 'Dago,'" for "that was considered somewhat disreputable in those days." One suspects that in electing to study Spanish Dos Passos was symbolically rejecting his Portuguese heritage. It is true that later, much later, he began to work at Portuguese with the result that in 1969, just a year before his death, he published his view of Portuguese history in *The Portugal Story: Three Centuries of Exploration and Discovery*, an act of personal expiation.[1]

Monteiro has also argued that Dos Passos may have been inhibited from writing about Portugal and its people because of the politics of the day and his opposition to the Fascist government led by Salazar. Dos Passos'

“Portuguese ancestry was more of an encumbrance to be suffered quietly than a proud heritage worthy of proclamation.”[2] Even Leo Pap, in his article entitled “Portuguese-American Literature,” is not sure whether he should include Dos Passos in his list of Portuguese writings:

> I mention Dos Passos with hesitation and only in passing, for despite his Portuguese name, he was a native American whose Portuguese ancestry was limited to one Portuguese-born grandfather – a Madeiran who had settled in Philadelphia as a shoemaker about 1830. In his later years, however, Dos Passos manifested a strong interest (not atypical of second-or third-generation ethnics) in his one-fourth Portuguese descent. In 1969, one year before his death, he published *The Portugal Story: Three Centuries of Exploration and Discovery*, an overall history of Portugal for the general public.[3]

One should not forget that Dos Passos reacted in such a manner because the period where he came of age and emerged as a central figure in American literature (during most of the first half of the twentieth-century) instilled into people’s minds the virtues of assimilation. It is no surprise that individuals with qualms about their ancestry would attempt to comply with this norm. John Dos Passos was undoubtedly shaped by this ideology and his reaction was one of conformity. The history book of his later career, however, is a reflection of his recognition and acceptance of Otherness, which was only possible thanks to the Civil Rights movement of the time. In my view, Dos Passos’ late ethnic awareness has opened the doors to his inclusion in the “Redeeming” generation. As Alice Clemente has noted,

> It has long been a convention for students of ethnicity to speak of three key generations in any ethnic community: that of the original immigrant who, more often than not, retains linguistic, cultural and affective ties to the country of origin even while struggling to become established in the new land; the second generation, the children of the first, who often deny their ethnic roots in an effort to merge finally into the mainstream; the third or Redeeming generation, the grandchildren who seek to reclaim their ethnicity at the same time that they retain their place in the dominant society.[4]

As Monteiro has also suggested, John Dos Passos and John Phillip Sousa, a writer and a composer, are the two central figures in American culture who are exceptions rather than the norm in respect of their reaction to their Portuguese ethnic background. Back then, publicly upholding one's ethnic background was an obstacle to breaking into the Anglo cultural mainstream. In other words, they stand as symbols of ethnically dispossessed people due to the pressures mainstream American culture placed on its non-Anglo citizens, especially on those with artistic yearnings.

More recent writers have not disregarded their ethnic background. They have seen in their heritage a richness worth writing about. Such is the case of the writers whose works will be discussed in this chapter. Moreover, they have found in their status as hybrid or hyphenated Americans experiences worth pondering. And it is writers such as these – not the mainstream, native-born writers we have discussed earlier – who can best write about their ancestral culture. These Portuguese or Portuguese American voices are the ones who can best uncover and give shape to life in Portuguese American

communities. Instead of peripheral observers, they are intensely absorbed in the realities in the immigrant communities. Instead of sketchy renditions, these writers' accounts are replete with Portuguese American themes. In addition, we may want to recall Mary Dearborn's insight on this matter. It is her belief that the ethnic and cultural "outsider can best represent what it means to exist within American culture" and that the "literature by and about those who seem to be on the edges of American culture can perhaps best represent what happens within that culture."[5] Moreover, Dearborn is saying that we must look into the margins since what we will encounter there is, in essence, American culture. In my view, such an argument was unheard of in those days when American culture was synonymous with WASP culture. In his foreword to William Boelhower's, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature*, Werner Sollors, too, claims that "ethnic writing *is* American writing," not a separate category.[6]

Misrepresentation of ethnic minorities, contemporary scholars contend, has been a feature of Anglo-American literature. This has been a common practice in the United States and, as current postcolonial theorists have noted, a trait which does not only belong to colonialism, but also a reality in societies where minority cultures have co-existed with the dominant, mainstream culture. Edward Said's insight on fictional representations in a colonial setting can, as I have noted in chapter two, be applied to the representations of ethnic minorities in several works of Anglo-American literature. I would further argue that postcolonial theorists and contemporary ethnic writers in the United States have – as Said has suggested – the following desire in common:

> Many of the most interesting post-colonial writers bear their past within them – as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a new future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire. One sees these aspects in Rushdie, Derek Walcott, Aimé Césaire, Chinua Achebe, Pablo Neruda, and Brian Friel. And now these writers can truly read the great colonial masterpieces, which not only misrepresented them but assumed they were unable to read and respond directly to what had been written about them, just as European ethnography presumed the natives' incapacity to intervene in scientific discourse about them.[7]

Reading and responding to these misrepresentations are a possible means by which postcolonial theorists and ethnic writers can attempt to set the record straight. Frantz Fanon has noted that African and Arabic cultures have also felt the need to "speak" to the colonizer so as to assert the importance and existence of their cultures.[8] Such an urge to speak out is one of the most distinctive traits of contemporary ethnic literature in the United States. As I will try to argue in this chapter, this also applies to Portuguese American writers. In my view, Portuguese American themes can no longer remain unaddressed.

Postcolonial theorists and writers agree that in a colonial situation the culture in control has often misrepresented and, on occasion, destroyed the cultures of those it has colonized as was the case with, for example, the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas and Native-Americans. Such a pattern, Gloria Anzaldúa contends, has also prevailed in

the United States in respect of how Americans have interacted with Chicano/a culture and people:

> The dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance. By taking away our self-determination, it has made us weak and empty. As a people we have resisted and we have taken expedient positions, but we have never been allowed to develop unencumbered – we have never been allowed to be fully ourselves. The whites in power want us people of color to barricade ourselves behind our separate tribal walls so they can pick us off one at a time with their hidden weapons; so they can whitewash and distort history. Ignorance splits people, creates prejudices. A misinformed people is a subjugated people.[9]

With Anglo-American literature having gradually lost relevance after, say, the middle of the twentieth-century, bell hooks maintains that within "commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture."[10] On this issue, Spivak demands that "ethnics speak for themselves."[11] In this chapter, my goal is to show that Portuguese American voices have also felt this need in their writings.

Redefining the Ethnic Canon: The Portuguese American Contribution

Before we move on to the analysis of individual writers and the texts where the Portuguese are seen grappling with what for them looks like a whole new set of cultural and social challenges, while, at the same time, holding on to their native culture, we should dwell briefly on an important matter. Is there a body of Portuguese American literature with similar importance as,

let us say, African American literature, Chicano/a literature, Jewish American literature, Native American literature, or even Asian American literature? Can the writers in America with a Portuguese background claim a similar recognition, for example, that held by Toni Morrison, Rudolfo Anaya, Philip Roth, Louise Erdrich, or even Maxine Hong Kingston – to name a few? Or are the voices and texts that we shall examine further in this chapter an artless reflection of immigrant nostalgia and homesickness? Or even examples of immigrant literature written in Portuguese? Have the writings about the Portuguese experience within American culture reached the same level of development and maturity as those by the writers just alluded to? These are exactly the issues that will occupy our attention for the next few pages. It is simply impossible to embark on a serious discussion of what this chapter proposes to accomplish without a preliminary statement on the nature of the texts and voices which have written them. In other words, we need to set a framework for the field and show the ways in which it is different from other bodies of ethnic writing.

In an essay titled "A Literatura Emigrante Portuguesa na Califórnia," published in 1983, Eduardo Mayone Dias points out that "o conjunto de escritos denotadores de uma sensibilidade portuguesa produzidos em terras norte-americanas se encontra ainda em estado pouco mais que fetal." Moreover, if one were to compare these writings to other ethnic literatures, one should note the following:

> há que reconhecer que a portuguesa não se lhes pode comparar, quanto mais não fosse pelo facto de não ter ainda atingido – se é que alguma vez o atingirá – o nível da literatura ficcional de segunda geração que encontramos, entre outros, nos

> mencionados grupos italo-americano e mexicano-americano.[12]

This quote may answer some of the questions raised in the previous page, but the state of Portuguese American literature today is not the same as Dias delineated it two decades ago.

In an interview conducted by Nancy T. Baden and now recorded in the transcript with the title "A Literatura Luso-Americana: Que Futuro?— Uma Mesa Redonda," published in 1981, one of her interviewees, Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, when asked about the possibility of the emergence of a Portuguese American ethnic literature, observed that:

> Poderá existir uma literatura em inglês, mas isso aí já constituirá certamente parte da literatura americana. Étnica, pelo menos. A chamada literatura étnica tem também os seus problemas com classificações, mas parece-me claro que, no que diz respeito a uma possível literatura escrita em inglês sobre a experiência imigrante portuguesa, ou ela teria nível literário para ser parte integrante da literatura americana, ou então ficar-se-ia apenas por um conjunto de obras menores com valor sociológico, histórico e etnográfico simplesmente.[13]

In another essay, "The Contribution by Americans of Portuguese Descent to the U.S. Literary Scene," published in 1978, Francis M. Rogers defines ethnic literature as

> a literature of maturity. Almost by definition, ethnic literature normally has to be written by immigrants resident here for many years and by descendants born here. The ethnic literature of Americans of Portuguese descent and birth forms part of American literature, not of Portuguese literature. It treats American problems, not Portuguese problems.[14]

At the time of Rogers' definition, there was not much written about and by the Portuguese in the English language; that is, most of what had been written about the Portuguese experience in the United States was in the Portuguese language.

Compared to other ethnic groups, the Portuguese have not been living in America as long and in such substantial numbers as other ethnic minorities, but they, too, would witness the emergence of their own writings in English as has been the case in the past few years.

Such a relatively short period of Portuguese settlement in the United States, however, is not the foremost reason for an overall lack of Portuguese American ethnic literature. Eduardo M. Dias, also interviewed by Baden, has pointed out in his discussion of Portuguese emigration to America at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century that

> As estatísticas provam, e lamento muito ter que dizê-lo, que 80 por cento da população portuguesa nessa época era analfabeta…. Dado, portanto, o carácter essencialmente rural da nossa emigração, as tendências pragmáticas, utilitaristas que ainda hoje o nosso emigrante reflecte, não me surpreende que haja um certo desprezo, digamos assim, por manifestações culturais…. Infelizmente, lamento muito ter de ser pessimista, mas ainda vejo dentro da nossa comunidade uma hostilidade grande, em muitos sectores, a qualquer actividade de tipo cultural. Nunca me pode esquecer um exemplo que me contou um antigo aluno meu, hoje professor numa universidade americana. Estava fazendo uma recolha sobre folclore e foi bater à porta de uma velhinha, perguntando-lhe se ela conhecia alguns contos populares. A mulher quase que lhe atirou com a porta na cara e disse-lhe. "Ó rapaz, vai trabalhar! Deixa-te de histórias!" Naturalmente esta atitude ainda está muito vincada dentro da

> nossa comunidade. E suponho que a explicação básica é, de facto, a falta de predisposição para actividades de tipo estético ou cultural.[15]

In "Portuguese-American Literature: Does it Exist?," published in 1979, Nancy Baden lists a few additional reasons for the scarcity of Portuguese American fiction and this by way of responding to what Rogers said on this matter. In this essay, Baden raises a pertinent issue:

> The next question for the study of the Portuguese-American contribution is why so little and why so late? … Indeed, the Portuguese have been here for over a century, enough time to have produced a more developed literature. In looking to causal factors, Rogers points to the relative smallness of the community and the general lack of education. He might have further mentioned that the clusters have been frequently (but not always) rural, and thus the Portuguese have not been concentrated in the ghetto - like situation in which one lives exclusively the "ethnic" experience as have blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos. In addition, with the exception of the Cape Verdeans, most of the immigrants have been light-skinned and have melted into the general population and been absorbed as other European groups have been.[16]

This quote stresses the rapid assimilation of the Portuguese into the mainstream except in the case of Capeverdeans, who thus gave a skewed visibility to what Portuguese as a group would be. Unlike, for example, the Hispanics, most Portuguese have not wished to be classified as "unmeltable," thus refraining from identifying with a group that would fall in that category due to "American racism." In the article cited earlier, Rogers even suggests that any creative or artistic impulses the Portuguese may have harbored were stifled if

not completely crushed by the fear of exclusion. In other words, Portuguese artists and writers may have shied away from expressing themselves because of the

> deleterious effect on the Portuguese immigrants and their descendants of American racism, of a tendency of the past especially prevalent in New England to note that most Cape Verdeans were of mixed African-European origin or were black while yet of Portuguese nationality and to conclude that all Portuguese were nonwhite and ipso facto inferior. This noting was not merely oral but very often expressed in writing in works of American literature.[17]

One may argue that this is not a justification for a given writer to stop writing, but the truth is that, for example, Dos Passos was well aware of the encumbrance his ethnic background represented to him. He was writing in a time when America's rhetoric reiterated the benefits of assimilation. In addition, the smallness of the receiving audience for authentic ethnic experience was discouraging for any writer in his circumstances, to say the least.

In "Portuguese-American Literature," Leo Pap noticed a few glimmers of hope for this emerging ethnic literature, one which might eventually become more elaborate after having, like other ethnic literatures, completed the cycle of development. At the very end of this study, Pap concludes that:

> Much of the material cited, the greater part written in Portuguese rather than in English, does reflect the typical immigrant experience, often nostalgically harking back to Portugal, but just as often revealing a growing concern with and for America.[18]

In a more recent article, "Duas Décadas de Literatura Luso-Americana: Um Balanço (1978-1998)," published in

1998, Onésimo T. Almeida argues that during this period, "pouco ou nada se alterou, nestas quase duas décadas, no quadro geral das questões centrais ali tratadas [Baden's article] respeitantes à existência, situação e futuro da literatura luso-americana."[19] I do not agree with this view since Almeida is not taking into consideration the earlier work of, say, Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz. Moreover, in just three years after the date of publication of this article, much has changed. The number of participants, papers, and readings by Portuguese American voices during the conference, "Portuguese-American Literature: The First One-Hundred Years," held at Yale University, April 14-15, 2001 is, in my opinion, evidence of such a change.

What these various opinions show is that Portuguese American ethnic literature is only slightly beyond an embryonic stage, still undergoing a process of development. The sample of authors assembled for discussion in this chapter, however, is intended to dispute this. While all of these writers show a concern for what it means to be a Portuguese living at the margins of the American mainstream, they do not necessarily choose the same language to convey this matter. Whereas a few writers resort to the Portuguese language, others elect both Portuguese and English, while still others exclusively use the English language. What this reflects is a gradual, steady movement towards a truly ethnic fiction in the English language in America. In other words, I would argue that the poems of writers like Thomas Braga and Frank Gaspar as well as the fiction of both Gaspar and Katherine Vaz are far more ethnic than the immigrant writings in Portuguese of writers like José Rodrigues Miguéis and Jorge de Sena. The writings of

Braga, Gaspar, and Vaz are examples of ethnicity in American literature as defined by the traits constituting such a mode of writing. What all these voices have in common is their sense of puzzlement, fascination, and frustration when reacting to the culture of their country of adoption: the United States of America. Furthermore, instead of sketchy, superficial renditions of what lies beneath the skin of a Portuguese individual, with these writers, at least, we get a first-hand account of Portuguese people, their ways, and culture. These writers – not those analyzed in chapters two through five – are the ones I find knowledgeable in terms of how they have dealt with Portuguese American matters.

The United States through the Eyes of the Educated Immigrant: José Rodrigues Miguéis and Jorge de Sena

José Rodrigues Miguéis (1901-1980) is a man who writes about how the United States has shaped the way of thinking of its Portuguese immigrants. In his stories dealing with the cultural clash between Portuguese and American values, Miguéis has placed his continental Portuguese fictional characters within an American setting, mostly in New York City. Miguéis has written in Portuguese and, in so doing, although Miguéis spent most of his life in the United States, he has guaranteed that his writings have been practically unnoticed by American readers.

In addition to shedding some light on biographical matters, in “Portuguese-American Literature,” published in 1983, Leo Pap notes why Miguéis was more attached to the Portuguese language since he viewed himself as a political

exile and, for that reason, why he chose to remain on the periphery, even though he spent more than half of his life away from Portugal:

> José Rodrigues Miguéis was born in 1901 in Lisbon, where he went through law school. After a few years in legal practice and a brief period of high school teaching, Miguéis left Portugal (which had meanwhile come under the fascist rule of Salazar) in 1929 and spent most of the next four years as a graduate student of education in Brussels…. In 1935, unable to reconcile his leftist liberal views with life under Salazar's leadership, he emigrated to the United States and subsequently spent the greater part of his life in New York City as a translator, a magazine editor, and ultimately a free-lance writer. He briefly resumed residence in Portugal several times after the war but always returned to New York, where he continued to live until his death in November 1980. Although he was an American citizen and fluent in English, Miguéis did most of his professional writing in Portuguese, thus sharply curtailing his chances of becoming better known in the United States and at the same time getting little recognition in his native country. (The new Portuguese régime, however, did award him a high decoration in 1979).
>
> The writings of Rodrigues Miguéis most relevant to the Portuguese immigrant experience and to the American scene are all in the form of short stories, most of them closely based on actual occurrences and some of them only thinly fictionalized. A thread of deep concern for social justice and a mixture of more sadness than humor are woven into most of these pieces, which are generally written in a fairly simple and straightforward style.[20]

While he received little recognition in the past in Portugal due to his exile in America and political views during the Salazar régime, such is not the case today in

that his work has enjoyed extensive publication. In his foreword to the American edition of *Steerage and Ten Other Stories*, George Monteiro has even gone as far as to compare Miguéis to Steinbeck,[21] such was their concern for social issues. Most prominent of these are the conflicts between the proletariat and the industrial/rural tycoons, matters which Miguéis explores in some of his short stories as we shall see ahead.

Onésimo T. Almeida has also argued that Miguéis did not write for an American audience, a decision which destroyed the possibility of his fiction being more widely known in American literary circles. According to Almeida, "Quase todas as referências à América e à imigração na obra de Miguéis destinam-se ao seu público leitor em Portugal."[22] The comments Eduardo Mayone Dias makes on these particular writings further stress the cultural and psychological shock any Portuguese immigrant experiences on American soil. Dias points out that some of Miguéis' fiction deals with the "tema do encontro – ou desencontro – com a nova ambiência."[23] In the stories analyzed in the following pages, my aim is to assess the ways in which Miguéis' fiction dealing with the Portuguese American experience criticizes how some of these immigrants reacted to American culture and ways. Miguéis wishes to denounce American materialism and the consumerism which has produced grotesque and unpleasant individuals who now spend their time scorning their ethnic background and country of origin.

"Gente da Terceira Classe" ("Steerage") is, for example, a vivid substantiation of these attitudes. Basically, it is a story (more appropriately, a travel log of 1935) that describes the voyage from Lisbon to the United States, via Southampton, and the horrifying

conditions Portuguese and Spanish emigrants have to endure since they cannot afford a first- or second-class ticket. The story, however, is more than a mere description of the conditions on board these transatlantic ships. Miguéis wants it to stand as an example of his concern for the changes experienced by some Portuguese in America. As the following quote indicates, he is shocked to learn that their misappropriation of specific American cultural values have shaped these immigrants into materialistic, arrogant, and disdainful individuals, especially towards their own compatriots. The manner in which he conveys this belief is through the story's narrator, especially through his attitude towards the Portuguese *nouveaux-riches* produced by America. Here are a few concrete examples of the people Miguéis finds completely distasteful:

> Dos continentais que embarcaram em Lisboa, com destino à América, alguns inquietam-me, mais do que me inspiram simpatia. Pertencem à categoria dos que só falam de terras, divisórias, frutos, foros, rendas e pensões, e discutem iluminações eléctricas e melhoramentos, que um deles chama «improvimentos» em luso-americano. São loquazes, enfáticos, suficientes como Doutores da Sebenta (imitam-nos, decerto), sobretudo quando, num português poluído de mau americano, louvam as grandezas materiais da pátria adoptiva, por não lhe conhecerem outras, ou os progressos que vieram desencantar na terra-mãe (26).[24]

Or the other one who is returning now to Massachusetts,

> impante, a juntar mais *dolas* para comprar mais terras, arredondar *prupiadades*, deslocar os pobres, rivalizar com os poderosos, fasciná-los, erguer uma casa «moderna» que assassine o carácter da sua aldeia. É o tipo do pobre que nasceu para ser rico, ou do rico que nasceu pobre por engano; do medíocre que aspira a mandar. Deve ser presidente ou secretário de algum

> clube ou sociedade colonial, onde os trampolineiros encartados arrebanham os pategos para melhor lhes falarem de Camões, que nunca leram, e lhes chuparem os dólares. Campónio ganancioso, furtivo e chicaneiro, é o oposto do rural bucólico da lenda: os seus olhos de louvado pesam a natureza inteira em termos de inventário e partilhas, a sua alma é feita de retalhos de bens, de courelas (27-8).

Miguéis concludes his analysis of the abhorrence he feels for such grotesque figures shaped by American materialism in the following manner:

> É diante destes que eu às vezes pergunto, angustiado, se o Povo existe, se ele *ainda* existe. Tudo o que neles era grosseiro e boçal se agravou e acentuou na brutalidade do ambiente que encontraram;e nada ganharam dos valores espirituais que a América tem para oferecer-lhes. Por quanto mais tempo é que os simples e os privados continuarão a confundir cultura com os valores puramente materiais, de aquisição? Quando aprenderão eles que, sem o espírito, sem os princípios, tudo o mais é caos? (29)

Although there are well-known and vilified types in Portuguese society, this is a story about Portuguese immigrants in America. In the nineteen thirties, their villages of origin were lacking in the material resources that awaited them in America. Miguéis continues more or less in the same vein in the story titled "Pouca Sorte com Barbeiros," especially when the narrator confesses why he decided to sail to America, even though, at the time, he was not impressed with its image in Portugal, either:

> A América tinha ao tempo uma reputação tenebrosa em Portugal: terra de *gangsters*, de *racketeers*, de políticos sem escrúpulos. Só os pioneiros da minha espécie ousavam afrontar aquele deserto do Espírito, onde imperava a violência, o

> dolo e a corrupção, e os imigrantes se bestializavam, afundados numa orgia de satisfações materiais (109).[25]

As a sociological piece, this story captures the tumultuous years while Prohibition was taking hold and further emphasizes Miguéis' view of how America's materialism changes the ill-informed immigrant. In "O Cosme de Riba-Douro," we get another view of America as seen through the eyes of an illegal Portuguese immigrant residing in Manhattan, who is willing to die for freedom, democracy, and America in World War II. What is also worth noticing is his perception of America and his sense of frustration when realizing that America, after all, was not the El Dorado he had initially thought it to be. Such a view was, perhaps, conveyed by the flashy, *nouveaux-riche* immigrants when they returned from the United States. He has learned that it is only through hard work and determination that immigrants can make their American dream come true:

> Um dia ouvi alguém estar a contar da América: que o ouro era a pontapés, comida à farta, o trabalho leve, e que os operários só andavam de automóvel! Era de fazer crescer a água na boca a um santo. Nessa noite não preguei olho. Não se me tirava aquela da cabeça. E não tornei a ter descanso enquanto não fugi de casa… Mas esperei anos! Ouro foi coisa que nunca por cá vi. Está bem aferrolhado. Trabalho sim, nessas estradas e pontes (80).

In this story, America, after all, is neither the El Dorado nor the land of opportunities, especially since the Great Depression which brought about many social problems as Cosme has come to realize:

> Não pense que é só a abundância que me agrada nesta terra: isso é muito, mas não é tudo. Não fecho os olhos para o que aí

> vai: sei o que são as bichas de desempregados à espera de uma sopa ou de um café, os *ráquetes*, a política suja, e o resto… Há tudo isso, e pior! A América é assim… (81).

Perhaps in no other short story is Miguéis' criticism of social injustices in America as bitter as is the case in "Bowery '64," a story published in 1983 in *O Espelho Poliédrico*. Here, he openly criticizes American politicians for allowing the gap between the rich and the poor to become so wide. Monteiro's comparison between Miguéis and John Steinbeck is justified since Steinbeck, too, used his fiction not only to denounce but also explore the unfair situations in American society in such works as *In Dubious Battle*, *Cannery Row* or even *The Grapes of Wrath*. Miguéis adopts a similar attitude in this story as well. Miguéis simply cannot understand how such a rich and powerful country allows such striking contrasts between its citizens, especially in New York City, the world's financial capital. His view is that Americans dislike what they perceive as too liberal or Marxist social demands. In other words, many Americans dislike egalitarian or leveling legislation or even programs of social welfare for all. When it comes to social programs, Miguéis, however, views America as an insensitive country, especially in its disdain towards the world of

> Sindicatos, do Contrato Colectivo, do Salário Mínimo, do Horário de Trabalho, da Paga a Dobrar, do seguro Social na Velhice, no Desemprego e na Doença ou Inabilidade, das garantias e regalias que outros homens, com audácia e sacrifício, com frequência ao preço da liberdade e da vida, souberam conquistar para os explorados e oprimidos. Esse «colectivismo» vai-lhes contra o pêlo, invade-lhes a *privacy* e restringe-lhes a

> independência pessoal, seu timbre de anglo-saxões. Não querem sentir-se pupilos da Sociedade, nem que esta os ampare maternalmente….Preferem julgar-se, dizer-se, viver e morrer «livres», a depender do Estado, da Assistência ou de um Sindicato que (na deles) os explora e lhes rouba a iniciativa (211).[26]

In this passage, Miguéis is referring to the period in America around the Great Depression, before the social programs implemented by President Roosevelt. In this passage, he is endorsing what most Americans would consider as Marxist ideology. Moreover, Miguéis is horrified with the notion that such a powerful and rich country allows millions and millions of its citizens to live below the poverty-line, completely at the mercy of the indifferent few who prey upon them. In the context of such a harsh reality, one cannot even imagine the poor, illiterate, and politically-disenfranchised Portuguese immigrant actively demonstrate for the implementation of these social programs when they were denied to the American-born. The result would, inevitably, be like the one we witnessed in McSorley's *The Young McDermott*.

Although most of the Portuguese fictional characters Miguéis has created in his Manhattan settings have come to understand that resignation is their only means of coping with this situation, the narrators in these stories are often the voices through which Miguéis reacts and even questions some of the beliefs endorsed by the prevailing capitalist work ethic. What these stories further stress is that such an educated immigrant as Miguéis does not relinquish his right to criticize what he finds problematic in his country of adoption.

Unlike Miguéis, Jorge de Sena (1919-78) was not only a writer, but also a literary critic and a scholar who

taught, at first, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and, afterwards, at the University of California, Santa Barbara. They both chose to write about America in Portuguese. In the case of Sena, his impressions of America have been collected in *Sequências*, published posthumously by his wife, Mécia de Sena. In this volume are collected the poems about Brazil (a country he went to for asylum and of which he also became a citizen prior to emigrating to the United States) and his "American" poems in a section titled, "América, América, I Love You." Onésimo Almeida has noted that Sena's contacts with the Portuguese communities in America were minimal and superficial. And this mostly because of the distance between these communities and the campuses where he had taught at. "Em face de todas essas circunstâncias," Almeida notes, "não admira que Jorge de Sena não tivesse tido grandes oportunidades de conhecer de facto as comunidades portuguesas na América. As suas presenças ocasionais nos congressos ou festas portuguesas não foram suficientes para penetrar no mundo imigrante."[27] In addition, Almeida questions Sena's immersion in American society as well, noting that his poems in the sequence, "América, América, I Love You" tend to be superficial, naïve, and weak. An important name in contemporary Portuguese literature, Sena, Almeida notes as he paraphrases the classical Roman poet Terence, belongs to a group of "deuses da poesia" who have also written "poemas de barro."[28]

In an interview conducted by Eugénio Lisboa, Sena reiterates his point of view regarding the ideal Portuguese immigrant in America – or any other country – in that he or she should delve into American society and ways and, as much as possible, refrain from interacting

with other Portuguese immigrants or even Portuguese Americans. These Portuguese immigrants, Sena states, should be forbidden from "assarem colectivamente sardinhas, cozerem bacalhau com fervor nacionalista, ou trocarem sôfregamente as últimas novidades do Chiado."[29] This quote emphasizes his aloofness from Portuguese contacts in America, but, as his poems in this sequence also show, his immersion in American society was not as profound as he wished it to be.

Francisco Cota Fagundes has noted that "a esmagadora maioria dos poemas senianos sobre emigração – em oposição a exílio – são poemas do tipo fase de espectador."[30] In my view, this is a correct assessment of Sena's poems about America even if he does not problematize the issues he raises in these pieces. On the one hand, I aim at focusing on Sena's "American" poems so as to note the ways in which an educated Portuguese immigrant reacted to American culture and ways, offering, so to speak, the other side of the debate which the writers discussed in chapters two through five did not make available. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that in Sena's poems we witness the ways in which a Portuguese writer sees Americans in general. In many of these, for example, Sena satirizes the stereotypes surrounding American attitudes towards sexuality and how its puritanical heritage has shaped them. In addition, in some of these, Sena also aims at showing the liberal side of America, namely sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and America's attraction for the naked body. These are aspects which Sena updates, but which are already present in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, especially in the "Calamus" and "Children of Adam" sections. Sena's poems dealing with sexuality are his way of portraying the conservative and liberal sides of a

country of excesses and antagonisms. The poem, “O Culto da Virgindade” (“The Cult of Virginity”), which I quote in full, supports both trends:

> Aquela já fodeu com os rapazes todos.
>
> Mas o primeiro que vier, depois de ser seduzido,/não está livre nunca de que ela, emocionada,/num triunfal desespero, grite por socorro. (107)[31]

The liberal side of American sexual mores is further reflected in such poems as, “As Peúgas” (“The Pair of Socks”), which deals with the theme of homosexuality in that one of the female guests, who had forgotten her pack of cigarettes, returns to the host’s house, to find him and another guest, stretched naked, on the carpet. She steps back, aghast. “Pelo Buraco Aberto Pacientemente” (“The Glory Hole”) uncovers masculine voyeurism and anonymous gay sex. On the other side of the spectrum, the poem “Marido e Mulher” (“Husband and Wife”) portrays a newly-married couple, who having purchased a special pillow and sex manual, engage in sexual intercourse. The wife’s mother, who disliked her son-in-law, steps into their room, and calls the police. The poem ends with the male subject being sentenced to two years’ treatment in a psychiatric institution for having viciously attempted against her virtue, that is, “a virtude da esposa” (99). What is intriguing about some of these poems, Fagundes notes, is that they are largely based on what he views as “observações não observadas, isto é, que são poemas circunstanciais sem circunstância, pois que por vezes constituem conhecidíssimos esteriótipos do americano, sobretudo o de ascendência ou tendência puritana.”[32]

The other poems in this section satirize aspects of American life, culture, and society. The poem, “O Direito

Sagrado" ("The Sacred Right") satirizes the sacrosanct belief in private property. The male subject in this poem is so obsessed with protecting his property and the wildlife in it from trespassers, that he goes as far as to place deadly traps around it. Over time, children, hunters, and incautious lovers are killed. He is never convicted. This poem further stresses how some Americans evince a pathological love for animals and animal rights at the expense of human beings. The poem, "Ser Tratado Pelo Nome" ("On a First-Name Basis") criticizes how certain Americans informally treat each other on a first-name basis and in a friendly manner. Friendships which had lasted for years, suddenly end when someone has to relocate to another part of the country, most of the time, without a good-bye or address where he or she may be reached. While many poems criticize America's conspicuous consumption, the poem "Doença Urgente" ("Sudden Illness") criticizes how most hospitals in America do not admit a given patient without financial guarantees or insurance coverage.

As noted earlier, it is possible to see in these poems a poetic voice which is not well immersed in American reality since several of these pieces have evolved from stereotypes and generalizations about American ways and life. None or very few of these poems seem to come from personal, first-hand experience. Some of the occurrences alluded to in these poems look as if they, over time, had been clipped by Sena from newspapers and, afterwards, caricatured and satirized. Although they try to flesh out a few aspects which, in my view, are quintessentially American (obsession with private property and trespassing), these pieces do not strike me as possessing any references to or descriptions of real

people or situations. In my view, they do not amount to more than generalizations without an individualized, human face. Or, to bring my analysis of Sena's "American" poems to a close, in what ways do these generalizations and stereotypes reflect what Fagundes diagnoses when asking himself about

> quanta da motivação e da temática destes poemas de espectador não constituirão um sintoma de alienação por parte do sujeito poético, alienação que seria parte dessa condição patológica que os psicólogos sociais chamam choque cultural.[33]

"América, América, I Love You" leads us on a trip through the eccentricities and excesses in American life as seen by Sena, an educated and well-traveled man, but it also conveys to us how his professed love for America was ironical and caustic. A first-generation immigrant, dry academic who remained at the margins of mainstream American culture, Sena's peripheral, marginal status enabled him to criticize America – if not in English, at least in the Portuguese language for a Portuguese audience back home.

Alfred Lewis: A Writer of Transition

In Alfred Lewis's [Alfredo Luís][34] (1902-77) *Aguarelas Florentinas e Outras Poesias*[35] (1986), the subtle criticism directed at mainstream values has received little or no attention. Scholars such as Donald Warrin and Eduardo Dias, for example, have been attracted by other themes in Lewis's poetry. Warrin writes that "Alfred Lewis's poetry deals with many topics, both Portuguese and American, but at the core of his work has always been the

immigrant experience."[36] To be more precise, Warrin and Dias have paid particular attention to those poems where Lewis expresses his nostalgia for his island of birth, Flores, his despair upon realizing that he would never return there, his strong attachment to nature, the simplicity of his life in Los Banos, California, farming in the San Joaquin valley and, more importantly, his connectedness with his native culture. In a country such as the United States which, in the past, seldom acknowledged the contributions of its ethnic minorities, Lewis writes to remind himself that his native culture also had a glorious past. More importantly, in the culturally barren immigrant environment that surrounded him, he needed to tap his ancestral culture for the spiritual sustenance he could not encounter in his fellow countrymen. But Lewis was not a highly educated man. According to Baden, the works of Lewis tend to be "written in a simple, unadorned style – a reflection of the educational level and views" of those writers she classifies as belonging to "the first group of immigrants whose works began to appear in the mid 1930s." Miguéis and Sena belong to a later wave of Portuguese emigration to the United States. In addition, Baden views the writings of Lewis and those writers who emigrated to America in the first decades of the twentieth-century as centering on "the immigrant experience, some electing to focus on the Azorean homeland and others choosing to reflect upon the new American experience."[37] Of these, Lewis's poetic writings lean more towards issues related to his native culture and land. Lewis only wrote a few poems that assess Portuguese experience within American culture. But it is exactly these writings which reflect his puzzlement about the mainstream culture that I am particularly interested

in. Although Lewis may have channeled most of his poetic energy into poems imbued with nostalgia for his homeland, the irony is that as a man he was firmly established on American soil, even the embodiment of the American success story, given his professional activity in the insurance and real estate businesses. The more he wrote about how much he missed his native islands, the more he realized he could not really adapt to life there should he choose to return.

If his Portuguese side was stronger than his American one, such was not the case with Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz. Lewis was born on Portuguese soil and lived there until the age of nineteen or twenty. Inevitably, such a background provided him with feelings and experiences he could later use. Alfred Lewis still remains an unknown figure in America even if his autobiographical novel *Home Is an Island*, written in English, was accepted for publication back in 1951 by the prestigious Random House publishers.

Despite this work being an engrossing autobiographical account of the author's life prior to emigrating to the United States, what really concerns me here are his poems dealing with his American experience and its values, writings in which the minor culture challenges the dominant one. Although the rhetoric in these poems is not one that reflects issues centering on ethnicity and assimilation, that is, poems structured around a margin vs. mainstream dialectic, such a framework can, nonetheless, be applied to the poems in the foregoing analysis. *Aguarelas Florentinas* expresses how much America affected him and his compatriots as well as what he thinks about his country of adoption.

In “Cemetery,” Lewis recollects a childhood experience when he and a group of boys were returning from Sunday school and happened to pass by the village graveyard. At the time, the undertaker was busy digging a new grave. The boys, however, simply stood there

> .....in awe as he disappeared
> Into his own crevass
> Until the sound of rotten planks reached us
> And up came the awful shower
> – Tibias , ribs, an empty skull–
> Tainted by the smell of moths.
>
> “Time to remove old Calafona,”
> Our friend, the digger said, heavy with thoughts.
> “Seven years dead; came back with sacks
> Of gold, bought a cow and fed the village.
> A vow to Our Lady. Laughed, winked at the girls.
> Grew fat and died one day.
> That’s the way it is, when you’re old”
> (52-53).[38]

“Calafona” is the name Azoreans traditionally ascribe to the Portuguese immigrants who settled in California. This particular “Calafona” embodies the mentality of most senior-citizen immigrants, especially in their desire to return to their native country to die after having secured a sound financial position for themselves and their children. In addition, this poem indirectly touches upon a recurrent theme in Lewis’s poetry and fiction, namely his realization that America “devours” these immigrants’ vigor and youth. When they return to the Azores after a life of toil in America, they are not more than food for worms. This is the price one must pay when emigrating to another country. But while America kept this “Calafona’s” youth, he earned a decent livelihood there, whereas if he had remained in the Azores, he would have hardly survived.

The voice in “Carta” (”Letter”) longs for the day he will return to his island of birth. He anticipates all the things he will say to his friends and the people he will meet once again. But after so many years, he is no longer the same individual that he was. Lewis suggests that American consumerism has changed him into a different man. He now has his personal belongings to show off, stories of events in America to tell, and a word or two of English to impress the villagers. The poem, however, ends with the poetic voice coming to terms with his foolishness and the realization that he is no longer the humble person he once was: “Pois no caso de ser ‘americano’, / A história muda muito, pois de humano / Par’cerei inda mais bestializado” (164). In this poem, Lewis regrets that for many Portuguese immigrants, the whole paradigm of going to America has not produced anything spiritually and culturally positive when, in fact, America has many wholesome values to offer. But, again, it is unlikely that they would ever pick up on, for example, the values propounded by Benjamin Franklin in his *Autobiography*.

In “Exílio” (“Exile”), Lewis expresses his nostalgia for his native country because life in America is not easy and the type of work he and other immigrants must endure is alienating and back-breaking. The poem contrasts the simple and joyful way of life on the Azores Islands and the hardships immigrants must endure in America, where life is compared to a prison:

> Neste exílio cruel, terra sombria,
> De belezas despida morta, fria,
> Como é duro viver! Senhor! Senhor!

In contrast, the poetic voice longs for those moments of joy he had experienced as a youth back home when he exclaims:

Ó domingos de festa, alegres tardes
- Se de desejos coração não ardes,
Porque não ardes de saudade e amor? (247)

His poems in Portuguese are not first-rate work. While his language is simple and his themes cater to a popular audience, Lewis's poems express the feelings of nostalgia experienced by most Portuguese immigrants.

Poems such as "Aventura: Vietname" ("Adventure: Vietnam"), "Massacre," and "Vietnam: Three Poems" show how much Lewis is interested in the political and social affairs of his country of adoption. The pointlessness and bloodshed of the Vietnam war are matters which he wishes to comment on:

Now it was peaceful, one morning
Even before daylight he found himself
Above the clouds, moving home –
That bit of green and white –
Under the mountain shadows.

Gone were the sound of guns
The smell of caked blood.
Children, half naked, begging to live
The old in bundles, wanting to die.

To him alerted by computer
Somewhere in Washington
Alive, a decoration or two,
Will his dead follow in parade
Stumps, instead of pointing fingers,
In silent accusation?

When will his past become
A fading dream, and his sleep
Be an easy friend at night? (340)

In this poem, titled "Returnee," as much as in his other poems about Vietnam, the veteran never finds inner peace because Lewis wishes to express his disagreement with such a war as well as highlight America's guilty conscience in the entire affair.

Of all the poems where Lewis is “speaking” to mainstream America, “Bicentennial: A Portuguese Salute” is the one where he celebrates the Portuguese contribution to the grandeur of the United States. Whether it was the Azorean sailors on Nantucket or New Bedford whaling-ships, factory workers in New England textile mills, construction workers, dairymen in California, or even the sugar and pineapple plantation farmers in Hawaii, the nameless thousands who do not appear in the annals of American culture, the Portuguese, Lewis affirms, could also proudly exhibit their heritage through a few famous men. In this poem, Lewis believes it is impossible to think of American culture without the heroism of Peter Francisco during the American Revolution, the music of John Phillip Sousa, or even the novels of John Dos Passos. In this poem, as well as in a few by Braga – discussed further ahead – the rhetoric centering on ethnic pride is a byproduct of the nineteen seventies, a time in America when it became socially acceptable to applaud ethnic minorities and acknowledge their contributions to America. It is worth quoting the entire poem since it highlights the love of most Portuguese immigrants for their country of adoption, expressed through hard work and determination:

> Peter Francisco was there; many others
> Of many countries, fighting to defend
> A new concept of freedom, a new land
> Rich of soil, lakes, rivers, mountains white
> And seas, lapping the sand on the shoreline.
>
> And when our Lusitanian hero died
> We came after him, and what we found
> Was good and enduring. We found a land
> Willing to be taken, to give itself
> To all of a good heart, willing to stay
> And call their own their findings anywhere.

We came in various ways: arrived as whalers
We who knew the sea and its green riches
Tempted by sea-captains, freedom, much food
Youth spent at sea, chiefs' daughters, warm fleshed
Wanting us to love them under the palms.

And this we did and more, until one day
The new land called us to walk upon it
Green, all of us, in that immense country
Fenced East by the Atlantic Ocean
And on the West by the gray Pacific.

We came in many ways: became a part
Of you: we joined you in thought; gave our bodies
In that never-ending struggle to conquer
The still untamed soil; many tracts of it.
As Portuguese-Americans became
Fishers, gold miners, owners of dairies
Orchards of fruit, in rows, tingling our taste.

The factories of the East know our hands
Agile, weaving cloth, manufacturing
Many goods as needed everywhere,
For you, for us, who are your loving sons.

Our dead mark in stone cemeteries
From Maine to California; assessors
Mark down our lands acquired by our sweat,
By our desire to be a part of you.

Judges, teachers, men of God, journalists
The marching songs of John Phillip Sousa
The novel ***USA*** by John dos Passos;
So much and many more, gracing your shield
In this year of grace, 1976.

And so, together, all of us as one
Proud of you, proud of our own land
Recalling still the deeds of our fathers
In continents far, our monuments
Representing our struggles and conquests
Salute you with pride and satisfaction
You, who have taken us, who have adopted

All of us, as your sons, to do us proud
By our honest toil and dedication.

Americans, all of us, we join you
As one to say aloud with pride,
Mãezinha, dear, Happy Birthday (348-50).

With Lewis, at least, the stereotypes associated with the Portuguese which I have highlighted in the previous chapters are completely rejected. With the gradual emergence of Portuguese American literary voices, the jaundiced snapshots attached to the Portuguese we discussed in chapters two through five are being replaced by more credible ones, concerning who these people really are and what they have given of themselves in the building of such a great nation as the United States.

Consolidating Portuguese American Writing: The Contributions of Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz

What distinguishes Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz from the previous writers is their attempt to focus on Portuguese American issues in the English language instead of Portuguese. According to Onésimo T. Almeida, as we have already seen, this enables writers like Braga, Gaspar, and Vaz to fulfill one of the requirements of ethnic literature in America. In *Portingales* (1981), however, Braga does not completely dismiss the language of his ancestors since, at least, four poems exist in Portuguese versions. Once in a while he will also sprinkle some of his poems with a word or two of Portuguese. What this indicates is his residual attachment to the culture of his ancestors. With Braga we

are certainly a huge step away from Lewis, Sena, Miguéis, and other immigrant voices such as Dinis da Luz writing in Portuguese. These writers were fully aware of their limitations considering the audiences they were writing for. With most Portuguese immigrants of the time exhibiting little or no interest in cultural manifestations, Sena and Miguéis had no other choice but write for an audience back home. Braga may also be seen as placed somewhere between the first three voices and that of Frank Gaspar and Katherine Vaz. Unlike the first three writers whose minds centered on their native Portuguese culture, Gaspar is more inclined to write about life in a Portuguese American community. This is also extensible to Katherine Vaz in *Saudade* and *Fado & Other Stories*, whereas in *Mariana* she focuses on a classical Portuguese love story between a seventeenth-century nun in the convent of Beja and a French officer. Braga is relatively unknown in American literary circles. Although I will focus on *Portingales*, his first collection of poetry, Braga has also published the following volumes: *Coffee in the Woodwinds* (1990), *Crickers' Feet* (1992), *Borderlands* (1994), *Litotes* (1997), *Motley Coats* (2001), and *Inchoate: Early Poems* (2003). I will limit my analysis of his Portuguese American experience to his first volume since this is the only one dealing exclusively with it.

We learn in George Monteiro's preface to this volume that:

> Thomas Braga is of Portuguese ancestry. Born in Fall River, on Columbia Street (still very much at the heart of the city's Portuguese community), he remains – willy-nilly – a hyphenated American. As a tenured university teacher, his primary field is the French language and its literature, with, officially, secondary

> interests in other romance languages, including the language of his parents and ancestors (11).[39]

Although his poems should not be described as being essentially Portuguese American since they also focus on French and American themes, Monteiro is of the opinion that it is

> absolutely right to call them the poems of a poet who happens to be a Portuguese-American. That is not to say that his poems never touch upon the complexities of being born and growing up as a hyphenated native of the United States. On the contrary; for although some of the poems actually center on that complex experience, all the poems, in my estimation, derive from that same experiential situation (12).

Further evidence that Braga wishes to connect with the culture and language of his ancestors is his dedicating *Portingales* to "Vovó," that is, his grandmother. As we shall see in some of his poems, this woman is an emblematic figure because she represents the ties with the culture on the other side of the Atlantic. As Gardaphé has shown, in Italian American writing, too, the

> key to reading the literature produced by third-generation Italian Americans is observing the role that the grandparent plays in connecting the writer to his or her ancestral past. A significant difference between second- and third-generation writers, then, is this presence of a grandparent figure who serves to reconnect the protagonist to a past out of which the protagonist fashions an ethnic identity.[40]

Apart from the various themes Braga explores in this volume, the ones that are of interest for this study can be grouped together into three major categories. The first

deals with writings that touch upon matters related to ethnicity; the celebration of Portuguese American heroes; and a Portuguese reaction to mainstream values, beliefs, and practices. The second one focuses mostly on Portuguese values and traditions and how they are kept alive within a dominant culture, which has traditionally encouraged ethnic minorities to assimilate and forget their ancestral culture. The poems in this group also highlight what is quintessentially Portuguese, that is, what distinguishes this ethnic minority from other ethnic minorities in the United States. Finally, the last one deals with the country and culture of Braga's ancestors. The rhetoric in most of these poems is also a reflection of the times. Published in the early nineteen eighties, the poems in this collection were shaped by the discourse of the Civil Rights and feminist movements in America.

What is perhaps the most fascinating aspect in "Below the Hill," a poem from the first group, is how Braga views his city of birth during one of his

> Digressions
> through haunted Ghetto
> and stagnant streets
> ramble once again
> in the Psyche
> of a too reflective
> Ego (17).

In viewing Fall River as a "haunted Ghetto" where the Portuguese live their own ethnic experience, deeply entrenched in their own ethnic enclave, Braga's perception calls into question Nancy Baden's contention that "the Portuguese have not been concentrated in the ghetto-like situation in which one lives exclusively the 'ethnic' experience as have blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos."[41]

As noted earlier in this study, the Portuguese have not experienced a way of life similar to that of these ethnic minorities, but the truth is that they have tended to stay together and even avoid the mainstream, especially the first and, perhaps, the second generations. With the Portuguese, the process of assimilation is much quicker compared to other ethnic minorities. Unlike, for example, Hispanics, who resist communicating in the English language, a practice that spans a few generations, first- or second-generation Portuguese parents encourage their children to learn English as quickly as possible. Perhaps that is why numerous Portuguese American children have exhibited some difficulty in communicating with their parents or grandparents in the ancestral language. To remedy this situation – and also out of ethnic pride – these children are sent off to Portuguese school in the evening. But others never get to attend it – such is their parents' desire to become fully Americanized or indifference to night school labors. In the case of Braga, he also took lessons in Portuguese. Not only his command of written Portuguese but also his childhood recollections of the school he attended seem to attest to this. It is still so vividly imprinted on his mind that he even refers to it during one of his strolls through the streets of Fall River:

> On the other side,
> Escola,
> where crucifying
> hours taught
> Subject to "have"
> Knowledge,
> but not to love
> Truth (19).

He is certainly being critical, but perhaps more of the purposes than the program per se. This passage highlights

the sacrifices involved in the effort to learn the ancestral culture and language when, for example, the poetic voice would rather be home doing something else such as watching TV or playing soccer. An equivalent occurrence can be found in Maxine Hong Kingston's novel, *The Woman Warrior*, where Chinese American children are enrolled in an after-school Chinese program. Such a practice is typical of the ethnic experience in America.

The poem also contains a few snapshots of the people in this community, the poet's house of birth, the church he attended, and the city, which is compared to a wasteland. Perhaps its most important feature is how the poet views himself in relation to this ethnic community and how it has shaped his outlook on life. With such a background, he would see life with Portuguese American eyes:

> It is I – 'Guee who speak,
> inviting Anyone
> to walk with me
> and peek at Corners
> of Obsessions'
> Soul (17).

The phrase "I – 'Guee" also means something else. If we isolate it from the rest of the poem it does not only represent the emphasis he places on himself as someone who has been shaped by Portuguese culture. In a broader sense, he is calling our attention to how a hyphenated American spends most of his life shifting back and forth from the private sphere of his native culture and that of the public, official mainstream represented by school or one's profession – an aspect Richard Rodriguez has touched upon in *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. When defining the "scholarship boy," Rodriguez notes that:

> What he grasps very well is that the scholarship boy must move between

> environments, his home and the classroom, which are at cultural extremes, opposed. With his family, the boy has the intense pleasure of intimacy, the family's consolation in feeling public alienation. Lavish emotions texture home life. *Then*, at school, the instruction bids him to trust lonely reason primarily. Immediate needs set the pace of his parents' lives. From his mother and father the boy learns to trust spontaneity and nonrational ways of knowing. *Then*, at school, there is mental calm. Teachers emphasize the value of a reflectiveness that opens a space between thinking and immediate action.[42]

Moreover, Braga is pointing to his status as a "'Guee" whose other self is constantly being challenged by the demands of a mainstream culture based on the principles of Emersonian self-reliance and individualism, here represented by the "I." One need only observe how the Chinese American children react to the "I" in Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* to fully understand the inner tensions Braga is alluding to here.

The poem "Independence" is Braga's reminder to mainstream culture of the Portuguese presence – here symbolized in the figure of John Phillip Sousa – in the celebration of a key date in American culture, Independence Day:

> With Sousa marches we parade
> through city streets, parks and suburbs,
> pageantries democratized, e
> pluribus, we have an unum.
>
> We civilize with bubble gum,
> soda, libations Amerindian,
> England's laws made new Saxon con-
> stitution, space's self-reliance.
>
> But man in every state remains
> what his species earns, compliance,
> and builds upwards a politic,
> a striped cause for identity.

> Adam calls home earth endemic,
> all governments disassociate,
> all master plans proliferate--
> metamorphic conformity (53).

Can anyone imagine a Fourth of July parade without patriotic marches? What this poem shows is that mainstream culture has often neglected the contributions of its ethnic minorities, but on Independence Day it cannot do without the music of Sousa, a Portuguese American. When alluding to Emerson and Whitman through the references to "self-reliance" and "Adam," Braga is certainly elevating Sousa to a similar status. With Sousa there is a little bit of Portugal in Independence Day. Instead of referring to these festivities as Fourth of July parades, Braga deliberately alludes to them as "Sousa marches" so as to acknowledge the composer's ancestry. Apart from this poem's stress on ethnic allegiance, Braga is also expressing the pride he feels in sharing the same ethnic background as Sousa especially when he and other fellow Americans proudly parade "through city streets" at the beat of "Sousa marches." In addition, this poem is a reminder of what has gotten lost, that is, one's ethnic identity, at a time before the nineteen sixties when the official discourse in America urged ethnic minorities to assimilate as quickly as possible and forget one's ethnic background. In Braga's words, Americans have been urged to adopt the values of "compliance" and "metamorphic conformity," noting, in turn, how this philosophy leaves ethnic minorities completely depersonalized.

In "Chants Fugitifs" (especially the section "Amélie America") the poetic voice criticizes the insipidness of modern life in America. In such a materialistic society where personal income dictates which social class one

belongs to, Braga is questioning the assumption that these matters are prerequisites for personal happiness. The American belief that one's freedom lies in one's purchasing power and the satisfaction one may extract from it may, indeed, be a subtle form of slavery. One need only recall what Henry David Thoreau has said on this matter in *Walden*. Braga's position is that there is something missing in American life. Perhaps it is too impersonal, too business-like and mechanical, where people tend to have no time to create lasting and spiritually-fulfilling relationships:

> Amélie, my dear America
> You have a cancer in your mechanism.
> You yourself inhale the pollution of technocracy,/a great success ready to wear, ready to throw away.
> Amélie America, my vertical bronze liberty
> I flee from your vicarious visions, your tombstone skyscrapers,
> Your atonal systems, your racist computers.
> Amélie, we are all your fugitives.
> Your Venus has no derrière, your abundance knows not/friendship, your abrupt greetings are without buttocks.
> Your technique reveals (itself) a dead whore illuminated without colors, in the rot of the contemporary
> That oozes and stinks the insipidity of the century,
> Amélie, my dear America, where shall we go, fugitives? (54)

Images such as "cancer," "pollution," "tombstone skyscrapers," "rot of the contemporary/That oozes and stinks" attest to the degradation in American life and values while positing no way out of this moral wasteland.

A quick glance at the poem "Judith Melo" may suggest a criticism of the practice of Anglicizing foreign names, but an in-depth analysis will reveal that it is more than

an affirmation of one's ethnic background. Below a surface reading lie important historical matters other than the marriage of a Portuguese Jew and a Portuguese Catholic:

> Judith Melo,
> come, make litanies
> with Luso Manuel
> and let sullen
> Providence
> smile, sneer, smite
> your dark Semite
> countenance.
>
> The priests and I
> remember dolefully
> Judy pouting,
> whispering reverently:
> "I hate the name
> Judy;
> my name is Judith
> Melo."
>
> Judith at Mass
> celebrated at Newport
> heard the non sum dignus
> echoing with the candles.
> Judy sighed and giggled
> while the choir, incense,
> temple lisped Sephardic
> chants, melo-dias.
>
> Judith Melo,
> forget the tribe,
> forsake the tiles
> Converso,
> mememtoes of crucified
> Book – Azulejo.
> Call me your spouse
> Ecclesiastical (57-58).

Words such as "Newport," "Sephardic," "candles," and "Converso" (a Jew who has converted to Christianity) are charged with meaning. What Braga mainly aims at uncovering for mainstream readers is the role of Portuguese Jews in America and how much they have contributed to the grandeur of this nation. According to Pap:

> Portuguese Jews [were] driven from Portugal, first by the forcible conversion order of 1496 and then by the continuous persecutions (even of those who had forcibly embraced Catholicism) throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Other Jews of Portuguese descent, together with many originating from Spain had found refuge in England and in eastern Mediterranean countries. During the second half of the seventeenth century, and through the eighteenth, many of these Spanish-Portuguese (Sephardic) Jews made their way to the American colonies.

One particular group settled in Newport, Rhode Island, where they "laid the cornerstone of what is now the oldest extant synagogue in America, the Touro Synagogue in Newport." Moreover, Portuguese Jews were

> instrumental in introducing the sperm-oil industry to America…. The development of Newport under Aaron Lopez and his associates helped pave the way for the leading role which New England was to take in whaling in the nineteenth century, with New Bedford as the center. It is likely that the whaling ships operated by Lopez, like those going out from Nantucket and New Bedford in later years, recruited part of their crews in the Azores, and thus provided the "jumping board" for some of the earliest Azorean settlers in the American colonies.[43]

Not only has the oldest synagogue in America been founded by Portuguese Jews, they have also contributed with their expertise to one of the most financially-rewarding industries in nineteenth-century America, especially in New Bedford and Nantucket. Most whales and the sperm oil, after all, were transformed into the "candles" that this poem alludes to and which illuminated the nation's homes. Moreover, this important New England industry was located not too far away from Newport.

Braga's "Judith Melo" wishes to convey to mainstream readers that there is certainly more of Portugal in American culture than mainstream people often wish to acknowledge, or perhaps know about. In addition, the lines "Providence/ smile, sneer, smite/ your dark Semite/ countenance" are ironical. It is not divine Providence or God, says Braga, but rather mainstream America that has viewed Jews as possessing dark complexions, often comparing them to blacks as Karen Brodkin has shown in *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America*.[44] In other words, it is the city of Providence, Rhode Island, where members of the dominant culture would sneer at her despite her people's contribution to their culture.

The poems that belong to the second category stress how firmly Braga is rooted in the culture of his ancestors. Not only are such poems as "Ash Wednesday," "Codfish Cakes," "Bacalhau," and "Fennel" a substantiation of this, they also highlight how specific Portuguese beliefs, traditions, and ethnic foods are preserved within these ethnic enclaves. As Donna R. Gabaccia has shown in *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, contemporary interest in ethnic food in the United States was preceded by a time when the emphasis in its food industry was placed on homogenization, industrialized canning, milling and meatpacking, and processed, mass-produced foods.[45] Despite the fast food eating-habits of most Americans, it is worth noticing how Braga responds to this contemporary interest in ethnic food. He enjoys the tastes and foods that distinguish the Portuguese from other ethnic groups. While "Ash Wednesday" attests to the Catholic fervor of the Portuguese, the poem

“Codfish Cakes” points to the Catholic observance of a fish diet on Fridays during Lent:

> No meat today, don’t ask!
> No red sacrifice, instead the sea
> will confess our sins in white
> make us pure in a frying pan.
>
> It’s Fri-day, herbs, black aprons
> dress friends – mackerel, flounder, cod
> Parsley, onions, green sauce anointed
> fill our souls with sanctity marine.
>
> Codfish cakes sizzle in holy oils
> greasy hosts dished out to each
> in kitchens of briny Ports
> shawls chanting waves of the catch.
>
> Salty patties, water, poesy, place
> make the sea our sod, sanctuary
> as we sail through centuries, grace,
> eating codfish cakes, kale, statuary (29).

In this poem, Braga touches upon quintessential aspects of life in Portuguese American fishing communities such as Provincetown or Gloucester. The fishing culture which the Portuguese immigrants had brought with them to America is, as this poem shows, similar to the one that had shaped them back in the old country. As the poem indicates, traditionally, the widows put on “black aprons” or “shawls” so as to mourn their shipwrecked husbands. Others simply wear dark clothes all the time since there is no joy when a loved one is away for days or months at a time. Fishermen, their wives believe, only come back to life when coming ashore. Moreover, the mood in this poem is marked by a certain feeling of fate (“fado”) and nostalgia (“saudade”), aspects which, some believe, characterize the Portuguese temper. The perils involved in catching codfish in Newfoundland for about half a year, the storms and the imminent shipwrecks, and the wives or mothers who long for

their husbands or sons are issues which this poem touches upon – even if indirectly. With the sea possessing such a symbolic value in Portuguese culture, it has, indeed, shaped the Portuguese outlook on life: that of a people subject to its whims. In addition, the poem's religious diction in such phrases as "red sacrifice," "confess our sins in white," "pure," "holy oils," and "sanctuary" further attest to these women's Catholic beliefs and how they cling to God since He is the only One capable of bringing their loved ones ashore.

"Bacalhau" is a good example of the Portuguese fondness for codfish, but also a hymn to all the fishermen who sail to Newfoundland to catch it:

> In search of hallowed cod,
> all salted, all preserved,
> in high rubber boots shod,
> 'Guees sail, for brine reserved.
>
> Hauled into port, the fish,
> loyal friends sacrificed,
> dressed in oils, eggs, the dish
> in garlic, onions diced
>
> with olives, potatoes,
> lemon and paprika,
> for some with tomatoes,
> Bacalhau America
>
> in ethnic savours best.
> With memories repast,
> dark seaweed spirits rest
> by sirens lured, barques past. (45)

Although codfish cakes are a Portuguese delicacy, their taste, as the poem reminds us in the last strophe, may not be as pleasant if we recall those unfortunate sailors whose "spirits" and bodies were trapped in the "dark seaweed." By capitalizing "Bacalhau America," Braga wishes to stress its importance in Portuguese gastronomy and how these traditions are kept alive in the Portuguese ethnic

enclaves of America. As Brodkin has also shown, food and cooking are at the center of the ethnic experience.[46]

In this poem, Braga wishes to attach a sense of sacredness to the lives of these fishermen and their catch since there is so much at stake. The poem is also replete with religious overtones. Braga stresses the Catholic fervor of the Portuguese through the Eucharistic images embedded in the poem, namely the "hallowed cod" and the "loyal friends sacrificed." Whether they will or will not encounter the fish they are looking for lies in the hands of God.

The last group of poems stresses Braga's fascination with, pride in, and knowledge of the culture of his ancestors. "Cravo" is a homage to the Democratic Revolution that took place in Portugal on April 25, 1974 and which marked the end of a forty-eight year dictatorship. It was known as the carnation ("cravo") revolution since there was virtually no shedding of blood. Instead of bullets, soldiers let red carnations be put in their rifle barrels as a token of peace and victory. With Marcello Caetano's régime offering little resistance, the military quickly took control of the situation as the bystanders and sidewalk florists cheered them on. Braga is fully aware that this episode is a watershed in twentieth-century Portuguese history since it brought a sense of hope for the future. Moreover, it represented the downfall of the Portuguese colonial empire:

> A baroque calyx
> stirs in my cup
> as I read the headlines:
> April 25, Captains' Coup.
> My morning festooned
> with serrated cravos,
> hopes, awaits dawning
> vermilion phallus Portingale

While the phallic images contained in “calyx,” “cravos,” and “vermilion phallus Portingale” attest to the energy and determination of these soldiers, the poem pays tribute to those who took part in this revolution. It also celebrates Portugal’s glorious past represented by the Discoveries in the sixteenth century. In addition, it stresses the role of Luís de Camões (“one-eyed poets”), and of *The Lusiads* (1572):

> Melodiously
> like a field of blue
> Azorean hydrangeas,
> One-eyed poets bloom
> in verdant, sombre humus,
> Afric blossoms, violet hues
> of crucified sails in late
> spice-scenting sun,
> voyages, navigation of lost
> caravels assimilated in Cristo.
>
> A kiss in chocolate night,
> Flor, Bela, Verso, Cravo,
> plaid ‘Guees and Dons
> woo new exotic Donas.
> My empty coffee cup reads:
> Spinola, Soares, Cunhal
> but where is the dark, light
> demure Manueline Rosa? (46-47)

Portugal’s independence, Braga reminds us, came to an end when King Sebastian, anxious to retrieve Portugal’s former strongholds in North Africa, was captured in Alcasar-Kebir. His “madness,” Braga claims, cost the Portuguese their independence for sixty years. While aiming to establish a parallel between both moments in Portuguese history, that is, that of the Spanish annexation of Portugal and that of the forty-eight year dictatorship (1926-1974), the Portuguese, Braga claims, experienced oppression, misery, and poverty. During both periods, the Portuguese had to wait for better days and fight for freedom:

The afternoon caresses
the monocled Dom Sebastian
in the blaspheming ruddy sun
of Maroc sands, Alcasar-Kebir;
Lusian Cravo and Tomé
sown by António
burst forth in the mud puddle
perfuming my saucer
with revolution, empire's freedom. (46-47)

"In the Glass Dome" touches upon the notion of a past that has crystallized in the poet's mind, replete with stories conveyed to him by his grandmother, and from which he draws spiritual sustenance. As in so many ethnic literatures, the figure of the grandmother is emblematic for she is the link between the ancestral culture and the future generations. In this case, a very religious woman, she is the one who caters to his need for ethnic materials. He, in turn, is the one who gives shape to the stories she had narrated to him much earlier. The fragments of life in a fisherman's community such as the ones alluded to below emphasize the poet's indebtedness:

It's all in the glass dome:
hours with Grandmother all alone,
the saints, the candles, the neighbor woman,
teas, nights saying the rosary –
It's all in the glass dome.

It's all in the glass shade:
angels, youth's streets,
hushed voices, holy water,
high Masses sung in the temple –
It's all in the glass shade.

It's all in the glass cover:
old ladies, fishmongers, bakers:
– "Tell us what you ate today."
– "I ate fried fish and hot bread" –
It's all in the glass cover.

In Grandmother's glass dome 'tis
All there born in bloom, mourning –
gardens, smiles, sunflowers,

little birds, autumns, suns –
It's all in the glass dome (42).

While this poem attests to this writer's Catholic upbringing, the religious fervor of his grandmother, and the evenings spent with her as she fingered the decades on the rosary, it also casts a brief glance at the time when the poet used to spend time with his friends in what he refers to as "youth's streets," an aspect he dwells on more at length in "Below the Hill." The reference to the "old ladies, fishmongers, bakers" allows us to recall specific moments in an ethnic community. Buying fish at the fishmonger's or Portuguese rolls and sweet bread at the local bakery is yet another opportunity to listen to the latest news and gossip. Not only these but the lavish flower and vegetable gardens ("gardens"; "sunflowers") the Portuguese grow – and, presumably, his grandmother as well – in their backyards are a source of materials which the poet can draw from to write poems and stories. As I have noted earlier, the grandparent figure is at the heart of ethnic writing. For the ethnic writer, the grandmother figure and her grasp of the ancestral culture are the modern day equivalents of the muses of classical antiquity. Whereas for Whitman, who yearned for a democratic literature, his muses could be found among his kitchenware and his endless catalogs of professions, places, and objects; for the contemporary ethnic writer it is the materials and stories his or her grandmother has to offer which is the new source of inspiration.

At first, "Portuguese Lullaby" may look like the poet's recollection of the bedtime lullabies his grandmother used to sing to him, but the poem is an important one because it evinces Braga's skill in pulling together different allusions to Portuguese history and

culture. Its most intriguing aspect, however, is the poet's ability to hear his Azorean ancestors calling him, reminding him of his cultural and ethnic background:

> Sleep, child. It's late. You must go out to sea.
> O lo-lo-ro chiar do mar, nanar.
>
> Aquamarines, ancestors, pearls
> I hear across generations
> Blowing my paralytic sails
> Calling me with divinity's
> Ebb and flow, conscience, age's conch:
>
> Sleep, child. It's late. You must go out to sea.
> O lo-lo-ro chiar do mar, nanar.
>
> Whalers, fishermen, company,
> Black beards, no land, no island home,
> Maids, enclaves, baroque progeny
> Newfoundlands, colonies, flotsam
> Steer blood's briny imperative:
>
> Sleep, child. It's late. You must go out to sea.
> O lo-lo-ro chiar do mar, nanar.
>
> Vovó's breasts, waves, feasts, lullabies
> Chant like crucified caravels
> Lapping soul's circumference, shells.
> Our crusader winds, cradles, kin
> Tow azurely with sirens' ring:
>
> Sleep, child. It's late. You must go out to sea.
> O lo-lo-ro chiar do mar, nanar.
>
> Not now but soon blue poesy,
> Indies' rites, spirit's absolutes
> Will bear me back from heresy
> Drowning Thomas sacraments, roots
> With pater noster's elements:
>
> Sleep, saint. It's late. We must go out to sea.
> O lo-lo-ro chiar do mar, nanar (63-64).

Like Whitman, who was fond of catalogues and instant flashes, Braga's poems are also laden with images. A poem that on a first reading looks more like the call of the ethnic (to adapt Jack London), it also evokes other matters such as Azorean fishermen, their contribution to the local and New England whaling industries in the nineteenth-century, as well as the feeling of isolation typical of island life. On the one hand, the image of the "crucified caravels" (sails stamped with Christ's cross) takes us back to the sixteenth-century while, on the other hand, "circumference" echoes the age's desire to circumnavigate the world and reach uncharted lands as was the case with Magellan (Fernão de Magalhães).

With Braga, Portuguese American literature is evidently beyond an embryonic stage. Whereas José Rodrigues Miguéis, Jorge de Sena, and Alfred Lewis expressed their interest and, most of the time, dismay, frustration, and anxiety about what America represented to them in the Portuguese language, Braga's poems in English focusing on Portuguese American themes offered him a wider range of possibilities. Moreover, his status as a native speaker of English allowed him to write for greater audiences. This and his talent as a poet, in turn, made his voice a more compelling one when conveying to mainstream America what it means to grow up in America as a hyphenated Portuguese American.

With the assumption that one of the basic requirements for a truly ethnic literature in America is the use of the English language, in the poetry of Frank Gaspar this is evident. Unlike Braga's, Gaspar's use of Portuguese is minimal. He only sporadically uses a word or two in some of the poems that compose *The Holyoke* (1988), winner of the 1988 Morse Poetry Prize. Although I will

mainly focus on this volume, I shall also look at a few Portuguese American poems in *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death* (1994), winner of the 1994 Anhinga Prize for Poetry, *A Field Guide to the Heavens* (1999), winner of 1999 Brittingham Prize in Poetry, and his first novel, *Leaving Pico* (1999). With Gaspar we are much closer to the heart of a truly ethnic literature. Another aspect that differentiates Gaspar from Braga is that he seldom criticizes the American mainstream or even feels the need to "speak" to it. This is due to his perception of where he is positioned in American society. He does not view himself as an outsider. As Alice Clemente has noted, Gaspar belongs to the "Redeeming" generation, an issue I have touched upon earlier in this chapter. According to her, "Frank Gaspar, the grandson of immigrants who came to Provincetown from the Azores to continue their lives as fishermen in a more beneficial environment, is indeed such a redeemer."[47]

Gaspar does not even seem to identify himself with the status of a hyphenated American. The impression one gathers from his poems in *The Holyoke* is that he views himself as fully American, although with some weak recollections of a childhood in Provincetown. Unlike Braga, in *The Holyoke* Gaspar's references to his ancestral culture are very superficial. In *Leaving Pico*, however, such is not the case. As Clemente has also noted, this "is a novel that fleshes out the characters and the Provincetown world of the earlier works in a way that poetry could not."[48] It allows him to probe deeper into his ancestral culture through Josie and his grandfather, John Joseph, who, in the course of the story, tells him the tale of Carvalho, an adventurous explorer and competitor

of Christopher Columbus. In addition, in *The Holyoke*, Gaspar will not trouble himself – or perhaps is not aware of – what it means to belong to a minor culture within a dominant one for he belongs to the mainstream. He will settle for observing his childhood community and leave it at that.

Mary Oliver's assessment of these poems in her preface is an interesting one because she thinks that Gaspar does not resort to the subterfuges of most writers nowadays. She claims that the writers of today are obsessed with readers' opinions that it was worth their time to read these writers' work. This is not the case with *The Holyoke*:

> Poems nowadays often address the reader with obvious insistence. "Let me tell you about my life," they say, "and I will make it fancy enough that you won't be bored." Frank Gaspar, I believe, has something else in mind. He is speaking to the reader – but also to himself, or perhaps to some hazy divinity, or to the blue sky. I felt in his voice no attempt to persuade me of anything.

In my view, what is missing in this quote is that Gaspar also wished to "speak" about his ancestral culture in some of these poems, even if lightly. Oliver also writes that the "poems tell the old story: a young man's passage from boyhood to maturity, in a small town by the sea. His people are Portuguese and Catholic."[49] Upon closer inspection, *The Holyoke* may be seen as a Portuguese American version of Robert Frost's *A Boy's Will* since there are several parallels between both volumes of poetry. Both works deal with a boy's growth and how nature and the community assist the process of maturation.

The setting in most of *The Holyoke* is clearly that of Provincetown. “Who is Hans Hofmann and Why Does the World Esteem Him?” and “The Woman at the Pond” show us a group of artists engaged in their work. “August,” for example, alludes to the nearby town of Truro. Oliver adds more particulars on this issue and even makes an interesting comment on how these mainstream artists view the people they stay with temporarily while vacationing in Provincetown, where the majority ethnic group is composed of Portuguese, more specifically Azoreans. According to Oliver, most of these mainstream artists believed it was unthinkable that in a community composed mostly of fishermen a poet such as Frank Gaspar would have ever emerged:

> Because I have lived in Provincetown, Massachusetts, for many years, it was impossible not to recognize the place-names of this manuscript. Provincetown has been, and still is, a town where artists and writers, Hans Hofmann among them, come to live and to work. Over the years there has been a lot of talk about what the “creative” people have added to the town – opinions voiced mainly by the creative people themselves. Perhaps a sense of elitism is inevitable in such a situation, perhaps not. None of us was born here. *And no one, if you get my meaning, ever considered the possibility of a Frank Gaspar*. That I was engaged by his work has nothing to do with Provincetown but with the poems themselves, naturally. But this part of the story, I decided, was also worth the telling (italics mine; xiii).

Undoubtedly, this quote stresses the recognition of the falseness of their “sense of elitism,” making Oliver’s comment about how “no one, if you get my meaning, ever considered the possibility of a Frank Gaspar” self-evident. Artists who flocked to Provincetown during the

Summer had never considered the possibility of the birth of a writer in a town made up of Portuguese fishermen and clam diggers.

Although Frank Gaspar may be considered a Portuguese American writer, in *The Holyoke* we do not encounter a poetic voice torn between both cultures. What we witness is a mature Gaspar reminiscing about how his childhood was shaped by his Portuguese family. But even in some of these poems, we do not really get a close-up picture of the family either. In my view, the way in which he writes about such an ethnic past leads me to believe that it was not as strongly ethnic as that of Braga who, like Gaspar, was also born on American soil. Gaspar's poems obviously possess a Portuguese flavor but they also evince how much this writer is not comfortable with Portuguese issues. This may be due to his lack of ease with the ancestral culture and language, something we did not encounter in the writers discussed earlier. Or even in Katherine Vaz, whose familiarity with the language and culture is stronger than Gaspar's. A keen observer, he is nevertheless an outsider who does not probe deeper into some of the Portuguese American issues he raises in his writing. In my view, Frank Gaspar may be compared to the Italian American writers Gilbert Sorrentino and Don DeLillo regarding their position within the American mainstream and how they manifest their ethnic signs. Gardaphé has noted that the writings of these Italian American voices have very few signs of *Italianità* because of their comfortable integration within the mainstream and their weak ties to the ancestral culture.[50] The same applies to Gaspar in *The Holyoke*. A brief analysis of some of his poems will certainly support this argument. Furthermore, in a volume composed of forty-five poems,

only about eight of them touch tangentially on Portuguese themes.

The religious zeal of most Portuguese has already been pointed out earlier. And Gaspar does not relinquish his opportunity to focus on how Catholicism occupies much of the time of Portuguese women. “Tia Joanna” (“Aunt Joanna”) is a good example of a devout woman who spends much of her time in church either praying the rosary, going to confession, or trying to connect with God through mystical experiences. Perhaps the poem’s uniqueness lies in the manner in which it captures how Provincetown Portuguese women reconcile their spiritual lives with their role as housekeepers and wives of fishermen:

> .....The soft kerchiefs
> of the women, the dark cloth
> of their long coats, the kale cooking
> on the oilstoves in the redolent kitchens,
> the checkered shirts of the husbands,
> the fish they bring to the doorways....
> .....
> She likes that, thinks of the host she will receive
> in the morning, *His* light shining in her eyes.
>
> But tonight still there is mackerel to pickle
> with vinegar and garlic in the stone crock,
> her husband’s silver hair to trim, the bread
> to set rising in the big china bowl
> on the stool tucked close to the chimney (7-8).

In this poem, Gaspar does not dwell on the sense of fate and mourning that traditionally has characterized the Portuguese temperament and how in this poem this is conveyed through, for example, this woman’s dark clothes. Another important aspect is how this particular couple

still holds on to their native language in this “ethnic enclave.” This can be seen in the following line: “Go wash, she says in the old tongue” (8). Although the “old tongue” is often alluded to, as readers, we do not really hear its sounds. The other poem, “Ernestina the Shoemaker’s Wife” dwells on the mystical experience of a woman who claims to have met St. Francis in the woods when she was a young girl.

“Potatoes” is an unusual poem because it highlights the fondness the Portuguese evince in growing a vegetable or fruit garden in their backyards. This is an aspect that characterizes immigrant life in the United States – especially immigrants from agrarian societies – and shows that even in an industrial setting as is, for example, the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey, the Portuguese still plant vegetable and flower gardens today. In their need to hold on to an ancestral way of life, they find in these gardens a spiritual connection with the old country. Or, perhaps, like the mother figure in Alice Walker’s “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens,” this may be their only means to express their spirituality since most of these immigrants – like most Blacks after Reconstruction – were predominantly illiterate. Despite the obvious differences between both ethnic groups, the garden metaphor is what brings meaning into their lives of toil. Walker tells about how her mother found beauty, creativity, and spirituality in her elaborate gardens; the Portuguese, too, feel the same way when in their vegetable and flower gardens. What is fascinating about the gardens in *The Holyoke* is that they have a little bit of everything. Apart from potatoes and even corn, one also has a patch of kale (to make the famous Portuguese kale soup) as well as a “patch of anise” (10). The episode of Gaspar’s mother

digging for potatoes comes in the tradition of Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) in which the narrator digs a few potatoes to make a chowder. Fortunately, the old New England way of life that Jewett so eloquently wrote about at the turn of the century has not entirely disappeared since it is in a way kept alive by the Portuguese. The Portuguese are not the only ethnic minority interested in growing a garden, for as Boelhower has noted,

> It is truly surprising how frequently the garden appears in Italian-American narratives – from the spice garden of Marietta Simone (with its *basilico*, *finòcchio*, Italian parsley, and leaf-chicory in Jo Pagano's novel *Golden Wedding* (1943) to Rosario's garden of basil, sage, chives, garlic, and peppers in Joe Vergara's autobiography *Love and Pasta* (1968)…[51]

"The Old Town" and "Descent" aim at capturing the carefree attitude and simplicity in childhood experiences. While in the first poem the author and his "old friend Santos" (32) have gotten together for a bottle of beer, reminiscing about how they spent their time capturing birds, the second one describes the time when the boys used to dive for eels and other fish. Judging from the surnames in both poems, Santos and Carvalho, this suggests that the Azorean community in Provincetown was a very closely-knit one and that the boys socialized only with those belonging to their own ethnic background.

"Ice Harvest" is a poem that highlights the New England practice of cutting ice from ponds for business purposes. Like so many other poems in this volume, "Ice Harvest" fulfills one of Emerson's tenets for American literature – the celebration of the commonplace. But the

poem also reminds readers of the scarcity of references to Portuguese culture and language in this volume. When mentioning his “mother’s / favorite uncle William” (49) among the ice-cutters, Gaspar shows that the process of Americanization among his family members is well under way. Within just one or two more generations, surnames like Santos or Carvalho will be all that is left pointing to their Portuguese ethnic background.

In the poem “Leaving Pico” we are introduced to a group of nostalgic Azoreans in a living room, talking about their native island of Pico and the beautiful things they had left behind, especially the

> green and clay roads, they said,
> and the rolling walls
> brushed white with lime,
> and how many trunks
> in the hold of a ship,
> what dishes, what cloth, how many
> rosaries and candles to the Virgin,
> and the prayers for the old dead
> they left to sleep under the wet hills
> (the green hills, and at night
> light from the oil lamps
> and sometimes a guitar keening
> and windmills that huddled white
> over the small fields of the dead)
> and all the time they were
> preparing themselves behind
> their violet lips and heavy eyes
> to sleep in this different earth
> consoled only by how the moon
> and tide must set themselves
> pulling off to other darkness
> with as little notion of returning (9).

In this poem, it is only the older generation who yearn for their place of birth or even remember it with fondness. Gaspar, however, manifests absolutely no interest in visiting Pico or any curiosity about it. His attitude towards the ancestral land and culture is one of

detachment while the members from the older generation get together every now and then to reminisce about it.

"The Old Country" focuses on a superstitious belief some of these immigrants had brought with them from the Azores. After so many years, the poet still remembers how his "mother would never sweep at night, / would never let us sweep. The broom / rustling, she said, would bring the dead up" (55). The reason why the poet's mother had never questioned such a belief was because she was afraid her ancestors' ghosts would come to haunt her and say this to her: *"We never came/ from the old country to live like this"* (55). Is it the new lifestyle these immigrants adopt in America or the manner in which they slowly drop – one generation after another – their distinctive "ethnic signs" that these ghosts are rebelling against? What is obvious is that the poetic voice completely resists them:

> And this old country is any place
> we have to leave. The voices
> calling us back are dust.
> I have traveled to the far edge
> of a country now, fearing the dead.
> They still want to speak with my mouth (55-56).

Gaspar might be acknowledging that he will try to fulfill their request even if that proves a difficult task since he is more of an American than a Portuguese. His ties with Portugal are weak. To add to this, as an adult he has moved to California (for professional reasons) and is physically distant from the ethnic roots he had left behind in Provincetown. *The Holyoke* contains no poems with explicit references to Portuguese history and culture. Moreover, Gaspar's command of written Portuguese does not seem as proficient as Braga's. A glance at the poem "Ernestina the Shoemaker's Wife" confirms this since the word he uses, "hervas," should have been spelled "ervas."

A conflation with ‘herbs’ reveals how much closer he is to English language and culture than to that of his ancestors. While this example attests to his unfamiliarity with the ancestral culture and language, it also stresses the rapid process of assimilation of the Portuguese into the American mainstream.

As these ethnic communities receive fewer new emigrants from Portugal, the collective memory from the old country will gradually disappear, leaving us with only Portuguese surnames. Such is the current situation in Hawaii. Perhaps this might soon be the trend in continental U.S.A. as well, especially as Portugal has developed so much after having joined the European Union in 1986. In this sense, the Portuguese are no different from the waves of Eastern Europeans, Germans, Poles, and Italians who arrived in America at the end of the nineteenth-century or during the earlier decades of the twentieth-century. At this point, these ethnic groups have been fully assimilated into the mainstream. The Portuguese are no exception because they are marrying people from other ethnic backgrounds. Contrary to those scholars who have insisted on the melting-pot theory as anachronistic in American culture – arguing that it should be replaced by the mosaic theory – the melting-pot, after all, is still alive in America even if it takes a few generations to, so to speak, bring it to a “full boil.” These are issues which I have already dealt with in my analysis of Stanley’s *My Son*.

What we may safely conclude is that the closer one is to the ancestral culture, the stronger the urge to criticize the American mainstream is. Such was the case with José Rodrigues Miguéis in such stories as “Steerage,” “Cosme,” and “Bowery ‘64” (at times, he criticizes

Portuguese immigrants, too); Jorge de Sena's "American" poems; Alfred Lewis in, for example, the poem "Bicentennial: A Portuguese Salute"; and, to some extent, Thomas Braga in the poems "Chants Fugitifs" and "Judith Melo." This is made possible because these voices are well aware of the major differences between both cultures. In the case of Gaspar, the opposite tends to prevail. The more one is distant from the ancestral culture and, in turn, completely immersed in the culture of the mainstream, the more uncritical such a voice will be in relation to the mainstream. Such a voice will explore other issues; often, those related to the poetic self as is the case with Gaspar. While Miguéis in, for example, the story "Bowery '64" felt compelled to denounce certain political and social excesses in American society (gangsters and racketeering during and after Prohibition), knowing, at the time, that other alternatives existed elsewhere, Gaspar, is fully accommodated to the mainstream.

If *The Holyoke* comprises only eight poems touching upon Portuguese American issues, *Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death*, which is divided into three parts, contains even fewer. For the purposes of this study, I am particularly interested in part one, because it is the one dealing with Gaspar's Portuguese American background. The setting in part I of this book, "Chronicle," is Provincetown during the poet's youth. The poems in parts two and three, "Lamentation" and "Psalm," range from the poet's days in the navy during Vietnam to his days as an undergraduate and graduate student in California, life in the Golden State, the drought, illegal Mexican immigrants being assisted by family members, the youth culture of the

60s, the border scene, the 70s road culture, women and sex.

The three poems from part one which I will focus on are “Reliquary,” “Acts,” and “Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death.” “Reliquary” focuses on the Portuguese contribution to the New England whaling industry through the figure of the great uncle, who had left a few whaling artifacts behind as family heirlooms:

> Bone of the manatee
> and the carved yellow tooth
> of the sperm whale, the number
> of barrels of oil tried from its fat
> penciled next to the old name
> in the tooth’s hollow – whale killed
> in 1912 by my great uncle,
> this from memory…

In the following sequence, the poetic voice laments their disappearance. His mother had been forced to sell these objects to antique dealers because of the hard times during the long New England winters which kept fishermen ashore:

> …… for the relics
> have been bargained away from our door
> by the traveling antique dealers,
> my mother remembering the hard times
> of some previous winter and letting
> everything go for a thin rick of dollars:
> brass compass boxed in mahogany, harpoon’s
> lily, case-knife, the blue serge uniform,
> even the coffin flag, for little goes down
> to the lockers of death with the body as once
> it did, the daggers of the old sailors
> laid by their sides in the burial boats,
> the boats laid under the rich bogs
> to fester in the holy nitrogen
> where nothing followed and no one
> came after, and above, on the crown
> of the earth, the mourner’s foot
> stepping quietly to a song.…

Such a past does not exist any longer because the activity has been discontinued and the objects which testified to its former existence have vanished from the family's abode:

> …… *Mother,*
> *what winter was it that stripped us*
> *of all the implements of that life*?
> I remember snow moaning up the ditch
> from the harbor and fog on our breath
> in the bedrooms. Now I must
> remember everything. *Where is our bone?*
> *Where has that scored tooth gone?* (18)

As the poet must find some consolation in recollection so as to retrieve such a valorous – yet perilous – past, in "Mass for the Grace of a Happy Death," he also remembers those times when the Provincetown youngsters got together to discuss their family's poverty, the losses at sea, and the dead-end life of their progenitors, most of whom had been humbled by a dangerous life at sea. The heroism of the trade did not appeal to them since they had witnessed too many shipwrecks and knew too many families who had been torn apart. As native-born Americans, they knew America had more to offer them than a life of toil at sea since they, unlike their parents, were not affected by the language barrier. They all agree not to follow in their father's footsteps:

> A bunch of us
> always standing in doorways
> down by the center of town
> opposite the drugstore or
> over by the Bowlaway with its
> five lanes of candlepin – in
> a city you might think a gang,
> but not here in our little
> blue village, tourists gone
> for the season and us bumming
> cigarettes from one another,
> rain coming down in the dark,
> somebody telling jokes, punching,

the usual stuff because nobody
wanted to sit at home like his
father or uncle or older brother,
stuck and humbled, no point
to much of anything, every
now and then a broken window or
some stolen hootch, sometimes
the solemn story repeated
from mouth to mouth on the same
gloomy steps, like a prophecy,
like when one of the boats went
down in December cold, all hands,
and we knew every one of them,
gave our versions, told our
reasons – too much weight
up on deck, out too far in
bad seas, greedy, too young
to be in the pilot house, bad
luck: Every one of us under
those drizzly eaves repeating
the mysteries until we were
satisfied, for a while, that
what finally rose from us was
the benediction unspoken – *not me,*
not me, not me – and waiting
awhile after that prayer finished
itself before we drifted off
along the sidewalks to our houses,
knowing that we'd stayed away
long enough, that the lights
would be out and everyone asleep. (24-5)

With the summer vacationers gone, and the realization that there was nothing more promising in this fishing town, the Portuguese American youth of Provincetown solemnly swear to renounce a life of peril, poverty, and uncertainty on the sea. As a university-trained man, Frank Gaspar renounced the dangerous life evoked in this poem and he can now write about these occurrences rather than, like his grandfather, live them.

The third poem which offers us another perspective of ethnic life in Provincetown and even invites us into a Portuguese American kitchen is, for example, "Acts." A popular foodstuff available in most Portuguese communities

in the United States or even found in major supermarkets across the nation is sweet bread, which Americans often eat toasted with butter for breakfast or a late afternoon snack. In “Acts,” baking sweet bread is a community ritual which he, as a child, has had the opportunity to witness. Because I find it such an interesting piece, I cannot resist quoting it in full:

> As if there were no bitterness
> in their lives, as if no dark ever
> slid outward from the sills of
> those kiltered windows, the house
> would suddenly fill with women
> and the rooms would float in heady
> yeasts while my mother, powdered
> to the wrists in flour, would pound
> the dough in the great bowl, yellow,
> sugared, egg-heavy, warm in the gossip
> and coal-smoke of a winter morning.
> And the gravid bowl set by the chimney
> filled each corner with lingering
> spirits, the sweet bread swelling,
> buttock, breast, belly, plump tub
> of the world where the women even then
> were softly disappearing into their
> envies and wishes, and where the men
> also slipped toward shadows as they waited
> for the hot slabs tendered from the oven,
> greased with butter, to dredge
> in milked coffee after a freezing day
> at the wharves: and the oldest
> among them all, maple-skinned, gaunt
> under her rough apron, brushing
> the heel of her hand in the Sign
> of the Cross over still-rising loaves,
> a devotion she would never again
> make over loaves like these,
> never again in exactly this way,
> the earth, in the rife bounty
> it heaps upon the favored, letting
> go of all of this forever: If such
> sweet bread were ever blessed or holy,
> let them take it now, quickly – and eat. (19)

This poem stresses this community’s strong ties, given that baking sweet bread was an opportunity to bring its

women and men together. Moreover, it is laden with religious imagery, namely that associated with Christ's Last Supper. The old woman's blessing of the sweet bread before it is baked, its distribution after it is taken out of the oven, and the communal ritual of the men eating it together reminds us of holy Eucharist. A poem centering on a popular Portuguese delicacy, *pão doce* or *bolo da Páscoa*, also has the effect of highlighting the old woman's Catholic fervor – and the Portuguese people in general – living in this Portuguese American community.

Practically all of the poems in *A Field Guide to the Heavens*, Gaspar's third volume of poetry, are about California, the poet's home. This volume conjures up the memory of lost ones as it also focuses on the poet's immediate family, his wife and son. There are no kale and potato gardens, but, instead, a rose garden in the backyard. The nights are spent either star-gazing through a telescope or reading books – John Milton, *The Teaching of Buddha*, the ancient Greeks, Dante, Allen Ginsberg, George Herbert, João Cabral de Melo Neto, and Fernando Pessoa. Only two poems in this collection hark back to the poet's Provincetown days, namely "February" and "The Standard Times." While "February" continues the author's treatment of the theme of poverty and the uneventful lives of fishermen on the very tip of Cape Cod, in the figure of the poet's stepfather, in "The Standard Times" we find the poet reminiscing about his boyhood as he delivered the *Cape Cod Standard Times*, before dawn, which paid his "lunches/at school, most of the time" (73). Apart from these two poems, the one that I find the most representative is, "I Am Refused Entry to the Harvard Poetry Library," which I quote in full:

Rightly so: for who am I but a tired question

squatting, in those days, somewhere up on
Beacon Hill, snow equally tired, crusted and dirty,
crouching in striated piles along the ancient curbs—
such a homely winter. And so there should
be books at my elbow! And there were rumors
of that splendid room: imagine sitting in
the warm, thick air, among the sons and daughters
of the sons and daughters, among the thin spines,
among the soft chairs, I would not eat all
day but linger there and let the gray light slant
through the gothic windows, or the square windows,
or from brass lamps, or from fluorescent lights,
the exact details so impossible to imagine
that they roll and flicker and agitate
the manic breath and heart: walk to the T and lay
my coins down, count the stops, hunch in
the chill morning to coffee and sugar at the vendor's
cart near the square, then advance, certain I can
talk my way into the sanctified places, sure
I can find in my pocket some scrap of card,
some guarantee I might pass. And if the world
has its own ideas, and if they are not in accord
with my own wishes, and if the mild young woman
shakes her head firmly and explains how I in
general never have, and never will, live a qualified
day in my life, I must not be afraid of the cold gray
sky and the sprawling yard – I must walk among
the gay colors of the coats and scarves, the backpacks
of the deserving: there are other buildings open
for roaming, and though I might be regarded
with the sideways look reserved for my kind,
someone will soon lay down a book or some other
thing that will fit a hand, and swiftly it will be
mine. (62)

This poem is about refusal, about not being allowed into the Harvard Poetry Library. Only the best students in the nation and the privileged are eligible there. I am not sure if the poem is about not qualifying for study there or, instead, if the poetic voice is denied entrance since

he is on a day trip to the Harvard campus. While he may visit other buildings on the site, the “splendid room” is not for him. To me, it is an updating of Virginia Woolf’s plea in *A Room of One’s Own*, but from the ethnic – not feminist – perspective. What is the reader to make of, we are told, the “mild young woman/[who] shakes her head firmly and explains how I in/general never have, and never will, live a qualified/day in my life” or even when he “might be regarded/with the sideways look reserved for my kind”? Is this a reference to how visitors are treated by mild but patrician librarians? Or, instead, the poet’s fear of not being admitted into the hall of fame of poets, canonization, if possible? To me the phrase about letting “the gray light slant/ through the gothic windows” echoes Emily Dickinson’s poem, “There’s a certain Slant of light” in which an overall mood of depression prevails as Dickinson questions Emerson and Thoreau about the therapeutic qualities of Nature as postulated by the writers of the American Renaissance or even the English Romantics, namely William Wordsworth in *The Prelude*. In the light of this verse, Gaspar may have also in mind Dickinson’s fear of not being well received by her audience, her fear of publication, and rejection, which she has distilled into, for example, “Publication – is the Auction.” In addition, Gaspar is suggesting that this poem also be read as the saga of a Portuguese American from a poor fishing town with artistic yearnings, but who cannot qualify for Harvard given his limited financial resources. “I Am Refused Entry to the Harvard Poetry Library” is a Portuguese American rendition of the fears and uncertainties of a given writer, Frank Gaspar, about his audience, literary merit, and fame.

Leaving Pico (1999) is a novel about Azorean immigrant life in Provincetown during the 1950s and 60s and how this community reacts to – or resists – American ways. This novel captures quite well the antagonism between the Portuguese from the Azores, represented by Josie's family, and the *Lisbons*, that is, those from the Continent, represented by Carmine, who is courting Josie's mother, Rosa. This conflict, which I have already touched upon via Leo Pap, is further highlighted through the characters of Madeleine Sylvia, a *Lisbon*, and Great Aunt Theophila, the narrator's great aunt and a "Pico" woman:

> My great aunt had also been active in church, a moving force in the Holy Rosary Sodality, and she had been a great fighter for the *Pico* side of things in the Portuguese-American Social Organization, a powerful if *Lisbon*-dominated civic club that conducted all important functions in our town and held whist parties on Friday nights. It was in the PASO Hall that battles raged long and hard between *Picos* and *Lisbons*, fought with wrath and passion, almost exclusively by the women. When the snooty *Lisbons* tried to relegate the *Pico* ladies to mere cleanup duties after a feast, it was my great aunt who would pound the table and spit furious old-country oaths at the like of Madeleine Sylvia. She was strong and demanded respect. The *Picos* could cook salt fish with tomato sauce as well as anyone, and the damned *Lisbons* could wash the pots!
>
> For a while Great Aunt Theophila seemed bound to take control of the entire organization.… (4-5)

In this novel about Josie's coming of age, there are numerous references to the Azorean presence on the very tip of Cape Cod: the kale and potato gardens, the social clubs and club bands, the fish served during the two clambakes that take place in the course of the novel, the

names on the fishing boats, most of which highlight this community's strong Catholic beliefs (the *Coração de Jesus*, the *Amor de Deus*, etc.), the *fado* music that is played at parties and social gatherings, and the rituals associated with their Catholic calendar throughout the year, namely, the sodalities, the festivals with their street processions, the Blessing of the Fleet, etc.

As Clemente has noted, "Gaspar structures his narrative around two clambakes."[52] During the first, we meet a gay couple, Roger and Lew, who have rented an upper room for the Summer season at Josie's house and the two women, Cynthia and Amalia, John Joseph (the narrator's grandfather) is flirting with. What is appealing about the character of John Joseph is – unlike most first-generation Portuguese immigrants – his willingness to interact with individuals from beyond his ethnic enclave and eagerness to know more about American ways. At a point when the clambake is well under way and all the Portuguese guests had already arrived, we learn that:

> behind them came two women. They were not townspeople, but summer people, wearing long flowery dresses and big, wide-brimmed straw hats. A ripple of distress passed through the *Pico* ladies sitting by the door. I watched my great aunt calculate their arrival. Yes, they were friends of John Joseph, some of those people from away that he invariably ran off with every summer, those women who sat along the wharves and painted bright senseless pictures of the fishing boats – painted pictures of John Joseph, even, in that poor hat of his and with his unshaven face. These were the people from the Other World, and without John Joseph we would never have had any contact with them…. The two worlds of townspeople and summer people existed side by side, like parallel universes, but no one traveled between them except for my grandfather (28).

The clambake enables its community members to get together and, in the process, reminisce about the old country and revive some of its traditions:

> John Joseph and I brought out the lobsters and clams and fish and bread and corn. Their smells spread a lushness in the air, and the women softened and talked and laughed as we all ate. Everyone celebrated my grandfather's cooking, and cartons of ale were now stacked along the duckpen fence. Sometime after the clatter and slosh of eating had subsided, Jaime Costa, Juney's younger brother, pulled his guitar out of its battered case, and in his ragged voice began singing *fados*, those sad, old-country songs of fate (29).

The second clambake is held in chapter eighteen, the very last chapter in *Leaving Pico*. Everybody has gotten together to mourn John Joseph, who had perished at sea. Between both episodes, this novel depicts the times when the boy went sailing with his grandfather and the stories he told the boy about the mythical ancestor from Portugal.

Before moving on to my analysis of Katherine Vaz's fiction, I would like to end this discussion of Gaspar's works by stating that *Leaving Pico* is, in my view, the best Portuguese American novel to date because we get a very detailed and engrossing portrayal of life in a Portuguese ethnic enclave in the United States. The other contender is *Saudade*, a novel in which Katherine Vaz also attempts to capture specific moments in the lives of Portuguese Americans in California. Her first novel has a different scope to that of Gaspar because she is more interested in highlighting the clash between two worlds, the Old and the New, as represented through Clara and Father Teo Eiras, as I will try to show ahead.

Saudade is about a self-reliant, deaf-mute young woman, Clara, who through much effort tries to regain the piece of land in California that her uncle Victor had bequeathed to her mother, Conceição Cruz. In the Azores, Father Teo Eiras had managed to convince her mother to sign the deeds to the land over to the Church. Afterwards, both Clara, an orphan, and the priest emigrate to California, and over time, she seduces him, gets pregnant, but, to her dismay, never becomes the legal owner of what originally belonged to her family.

Vamberto Freitas has noted that "Em 1994, Katherine Vaz, uma autora americana filha de pai português (açoriano, da Ilha Terceira) e de mãe irlandesa, publicou o que provavelmente virá a ser considerado o primeiro grande romance étnico luso-americano."[53] To some extent, I concur with this assessment and I also agree with Freitas when he notes that "*Saudade* não é o primeiro romance étnico/imigrante português nos Estados Unidos (foi precedido por, entre outros muito menos conhecidos, *Home is an Island*, de Alfred Lewis, publicado pela Random House, em 1951)."[54] But this comment was made before the appearance of Gaspar's *Leaving Pico*, which I do not hesitate to rank as the most representative Portuguese American ethnic novel in the English language centering exclusively on the Portuguese experience in an American ethnic enclave – Provincetown. While *Home is an Island* focuses on Lewis's life prior to emigrating to the United States, Vaz's *Saudade* bridges the Old and New Worlds.

The ethnic appeal that Freitas is referring to is the way in which Vaz's novel contains – as if in a nutshell – the major themes related to Portuguese culture and traditions. Within a story about Clara's saga to

retrieve her land, *Saudade* also contains references to the myths related to the origin of the Azores as the last remnant of the submerged continent of Atlantis; legends; nursery rhymes; Portuguese food and convent sweets made by nuns; the Portuguese golden age of the Discoveries in the sixteenth-century; references to Luís Vaz de Camões's *The Lusiads* and the Adamastor episode; the myth surrounding the arrival of King Sebastian on a foggy morning; the feasts and processions Clara witnesses in the Azores as she tries to trace her family and roots; the immigrants she encounters there from Canada and the United States; the garden in an immigrant's backyard in California and why this is so meaningful; an attempt at defining *saudade* and *fado* for an American audience; and the role of the successful Portuguese American business men in California's dairy industry.

Most importantly, *Saudade* focuses on Portuguese American life in California but, in my view, it does more than just that since Vaz has captured hybrid, hyphenated realities when blending Portuguese and American realities into this narrative. In other words, *Saudade* is a story about how the values, culture, and literature of a country from the Old World have come into contact with those of the New World. In this novel, Vaz has, for example, attempted to bridge the literary traditions of both Portuguese and American literature, more specifically, two novels concerned with the issue of a child that has been fathered by a priest. While the American classic dealing with this matter is Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the Portuguese counterpart is Eça de Queiroz's *O Crime do Padre Amaro*,[55] which has been translated into English as *Father Amaro's Sin*.

The priest and the protagonist of *Saudade*, Father Teo Eiras and Clara, are representatives of both worlds. Father Teo Eiras is an Azorean immigrant whose mentality does not change regardless of whether he finds himself in the Azores or in California. He is a representative of the first generation Azorean immigrant who has arrived in America and has kept the values of the Old World intact. The same does not apply to Clara, who was taken there when she was still a child. While he embodies the Azorean attachment to land, she has very few – or none – of the traits traditionally expected in an Azorean woman. Clara knows what she wishes for herself or with whom she wishes to associate. The subservient, male-dominated traits of some Azorean women from the past are nowhere to be seen in her personality. Clara is an autonomous, psychologically strong woman, who does not bow to male authority.

Maria Fernanda Enes has shown in chapter five of *Reforma Tridentina e Religião Vivida (Os Açores na Época Moderna)* that some Azorean women during, for example, the eighteenth century and afterwards were stigmatized by men and the Church as the source of evil, witches, sorceresses, sexual temptresses, and the agents of the devil.[56] In my view, Clara does not embody any of these stigmas which were deeply rooted in Azorean culture and superstition. Instead, Clara is a determined, self-reliant character who has been inspired by her American cultural and literary forebears, most of whom were renowned for their autonomy such as Margaret Fuller, Kate Chopin, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton as well as the fictional Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening* and Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*. When creating Clara, Vaz undoubtedly had in mind both real and fictional autonomous women.

This cultural clash is also present in the story, "Original Sin," the first story in her second work, *Fado & Other Stories*, which is composed of twelve pieces. I will limit my analysis to "My Hunt for King Sebastião" and "The Remains of Princess Kaiulani's Garden" because they deal with Portuguese American themes. The first story is about Dean, a third-generation Portuguese American, who, through his father, is engaged in tracing his ethnic roots in the Azores. He has traveled to Angra do Heroísmo, in the Azores, to retrieve some piece of family land. While he is having dinner – a banquet, by his American standards – a strong gust of wind slams the door and everybody says it is the ghost of the ill-fated King Sebastian who has just walked in. Dean being ignorant of this story, his Uncle David and cousin tell it. Over the next few days, he spends some time watching the bullfight in the streets, going to church, and meeting his extensive family. In the process, he learns that he had a brother in the Azores who had died at the age of sixteen of influenza. His father had married at the age of seventeen and his wife died during childbirth. He emigrated to America and promised that he would send for his son when he succeeded in America. The boy stayed with his Aunt Mafalda and when his father finally earned his law degree, the boy refused to leave the Azores since he had gotten used to life there. Within this story about family roots, we learn a lot about how these roots are either denied or affirmed. When referring to his father, Dean tells us that:

> He married my mother, a native Californian of Italian and German descent, after meeting her at the All Saints Church fair in Hayward, and they were determined to be unethnic, in the style of their time. They named me Dean, because they wanted me to make the dean's list some day. Other than

> the Holy Ghost festival every year, and my hazy certainty that any girl refusing the honor of being named Queen would be struck dead within the year, my only link to what I was on my father's side, other than seeing in my mind that princely and ghostly immigrant that he had been, was to speak my broken Portuguese with him now and then. I was mostly self-taught. And I was, at least tangentially, part of the Lusitanian community, a Luso-American – Portugal being called *Lusitania* by the ancient Romans.

His parents' decision to be "unethnic" was not only a personal choice but, as we have already seen, an attitude which prevailed in America. He was to be the all-American, college-educated young man with a promising future ahead of him. Ethnicity, his parents believed, would stigmatize him. It is possible to see a few traits of the author herself in this depiction for both Dean and his creator describe themselves as identifying more with their father's ethnic background than with their mother's. In addition, their ethnic background has forced Dean and Vaz to reflect on their own identity:

> Nowadays people like to claim that they're the product – and I mean exactly that – of the land of their ancestors; it suggests ceremonies and royalty and flights of fancy, more glamorous than the shopping lists we make of our days. I'm like that myself. My parents wanted to be American, but people my age want to take the most exotic portion of their blood and paint themselves a character out of it. The problem is that we collect quick impressions and pretend that they're sensations we've earned. I plead guilty to that as much as the next guy should. But I do have one Lusitanian quality that has the strength of instinct in me, without my faking it or pumping it up: Portuguese fatalism gravitates to the absolute (19-20).

On the one hand, in this quote Vaz is stating that ethnicity is something one can fake, that is, put on like a suit of clothes. On the other hand, in this story Vaz also attaches a great importance to one's ethnic roots. Whereas in the past, the Azoreans in the United States were ashamed of their ethnic background and wished to assimilate mainstream values as quickly as possible, in just two or three generations later, their descendants, instead, uphold them. Such is the case of Katherine Vaz, who, like Frank Gaspar, is also a "Redeemer."

The setting in "The Remains of Princess Kaiulani's Garden" is not California, but, instead, Hawaii. This story focuses on the Azoreans working in Hawaii's sugar cane and pineapple plantations, but also deals with the musical contributions they have brought with them from the Azores – the ukelele. King Kalakaua "had heard about the marvelous new instrument that the Portuguese had brought to his country and wanted to hear it for himself. He was tired of the instruments made of gourds and pebbles." Frank Vasconcellos, who was an excellent musician, took advantage of this opportunity since he had "completed his sugar contract the previous year and decided he wanted to make more than ten dollars a month, and was now one of Oahu's best *braguinha* makers and players" (112). The story goes on to center on the Vasconcellos' upward mobility and success, while focusing on the historical changes sweeping through these islands in that the Hawaiian royalty were being stripped of their power and invaded by American colonizers and missionaries.

In my view, Vaz's best piece of fiction to date is *Mariana*, a novel in which Vaz has elaborated on a classical love story from seventeenth-century Portuguese

literature by Soror Mariana de Alcoforado in *Cartas Portuguesas*. Not only has Vaz translated the love letters this Portuguese nun had written to the French officer she had fallen in love with, she re-creates the ambiance in Beja in the seventeenth-century as the Portuguese struggle, with the aid of the French, to break free from Spanish rule. *Mariana* is further evidence of the author's love for her ancestral cultural roots. So far, *Mariana*, *Saudade*, and *Fado & Other Stories* have been translated into Portuguese and published in Portugal. *Mariana* was also translated into five other languages and published in more than a hundred countries. As Portuguese American writers, Vaz and Gaspar have kicked open the door to mainstream American literature and are widely read and appreciated in America and abroad.

With Thomas Braga, Frank Gaspar, and Katherine Vaz Portuguese American literature has come of age. That is why some of the issues raised at the beginning of this chapter are in need of reassessment. The writings of Braga, Gaspar, and Vaz belong to fully-fledged American ethnic literature since they completely satisfy Onésimo Almeida's and Francis Rogers' criteria for what constitutes ethnic literature in America. A truly ethnic literature emerges when a third-generation American-born voice attempts to retrieve his or her ancestor's roots so as to learn more about where he or she came from. That is what we witness in most of the works of Braga, Gaspar, and Vaz. While most contemporary ethnic writers resist tags from the past – especially the anxiety associated with attempting to produce the great American novel — in my view, the great Portuguese American ethnic novel encompassing all the areas and ways of life where the Portuguese have settled in America, however, is yet to be

written. Frank Gaspar and Katherine Vaz have both written a great Portuguese American novel of Provincetown and California so, with these two, at least, we are certainly a step closer.

Notes

[1] George Monteiro, "'The Poor, Shiftless, Lazy Azoreans': American Literary Attitudes Toward the Portuguese," *Proceedings of the Fourth National Portuguese Conference: The International Year of the Child* (Providence, R.I.: The Multilingual Multicultural Resource and Training Center, 1979), pp. 193-94.
[2] Monteiro, p. 196.
[3] Leo Pap, "Portuguese-American Literature" in Robert J. Di Pietro and Edward Ifkovic, *Ethnic Perspectives in American Literature: Selected Essays on the European Contribution* (New York: MLA, 1983), p. 192.
[4] Alice R. Clemente, "Of Love and Remembrance – the Poetry and Prose of Frank X. Gaspar," *Gávea-Brown: A Bilingual Journal of Portuguese-American Letters and Studies* 21 (2000): p. 25.
[5] Mary V. Dearborn, *Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), pp. 4-5.
[6] William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987), p. 3.
[7] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 34-5.
[8] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 169-72.
[9] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), p. 108.
[10] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), p. 21.
[11] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), p. 40.
[12] Eduardo Mayone Dias, "A Literatura Emigrante Portuguesa na Califórnia" in *Arquipélago* (Ponta Delgada: Instituto Universitário dos Açores, 1983), pp. 470-71.
[13] This interview is recorded in Maria Angelina Duarte *et. al.* "A Literatura Luso-Americana: Que Futuro? – Uma Mesa Redonda," *Gávea-Brown* 2 (Providence, R.I.: Gávea-Brown, 1981), p. 26.
[14] Francis M. Rogers, "The Contribution by Americans of Portuguese Descent to the U.S. Literary Scene" in *Ethnic Literatures Since 1776: The Many Voices of America*, ed. Wolodymyr T. Zyla and Wendell M. Aycock, Part 2 (Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech Press, 1978), p. 425.
[15] Duarte, pp. 29-30.
[16] Nancy T. Baden, "Portuguese-American Literature: Does it Exist?" *MELUS* 6 (Summer 1979), p. 27.
[17] Rogers, p. 427.
[18] Pap, p. 195.
[19] Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, "Duas Décadas de Literatura Luso-Americana: Um Balanço (1978-1998) *Veredas* 1 (Porto, 1998): p. 327.
[20] Pap, pp. 192-93.
[21] José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Steerage and Ten Other Stories*, ed. George Monteiro (Providence, R.I.: Gávea-Brown, 1983), pp. 14-15.
[22] Quoted in Duarte, p. 24.
[23] Eduardo Mayone Dias, "Literatura da Diáspora: Escritores Açorianos nos Estados Unidos" in *Da Literatura Açoriana: Subsídios para um Balanço*, ed.

Onésimo Teotónio Almeida (Angra do Heroísmo: União Gráfica Angrense, 1987), p. 217.

[24] References to Miguéis' stories "Gente da Terceira Classe" and "O Cosme de Riba-Douro" are taken from José Rodrigues Miguéis. *Gente da Terceira Classe*. Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1983. For the English version of these stories, see *Steerage and Ten Other Stories*, ed. George Monteiro.

[25] "Pouca Sorte com Barbeiros" can be found in José Rodrigues Miguéis, *Leah e Outras Histórias* (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1982).

[26] "Bowery '64" is contained in José Rodrigues Miguéis, *O Espelho Poliédrico* (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1983).

[27] Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, "Também a Jorge de Sena nada Humano Era Alheio," *L(USA)LÂNDIA: A Décima Ilha* (Angra do Heroísmo: n.p., 1987), p. 199.

[28] Almeida, "Também a Jorge de Sena nada Humano Era Alheio," p. 207.

[29] Eugénio Lisboa, "Falando com Jorge de Sena," *O Tempo e o Modo* 59 (April 1968), p. 417.

[30] Francisco Cota Fagundes, "Ser-se E/Imigrante e Exilado e Como: Subsídios para o Estudo de um Problemático Drama Seniano em Versos," *Para Emergir Nascemos… Estudos em Rememoração de Jorge de Sena*, ed. Francisco Cota Fagundes and Paula Gândara, (Lisboa: Salamandra, 2000), p. 208.

[31] Poems taken from Jorge de Sena, *Sequências* (Lisboa: Moraes Editores, 1980), pp. 85-117.

[32] Fagundes, p. 212.

[33] Fagundes, p. 214.

[34] The Americanization of names was a common practice of the time given the assimilation rhetoric, which prevailed well into the middle of the twentieth-century. See Leo Pap, *The Portuguese-Americans*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), pp. 206-8.

[35] Rogers translates the title of Lewis's definitive edition of poetic writings as *Aquarelles of Flores*, the name of Lewis's native island. See page 415.

[36] Donald O. Warrin, "You Can't Go Home: The Theme of Emigration in the Poetry of Alfred Lewis" in *Portugueses na América do Norte: Comunicações Apresentadas no Colóquio da Universidade da Califórnia / 1983*. Ed. Eduardo Mayone Dias (Lisboa: Peregrinação, 1983), p. 217.

[37] Baden, p. 18.

[38] All references to Lewis's poetry are taken from *Aguarelas Florentinas e Outras Poesias*. (Braga: Editora Livraria Cruz, 1986).

[39] All references to Thomas Braga's volume are taken from *Portingales*. (Providence, R.I.: Gávea-Brown, 1981).

[40] Fred L. Gardaphé, *Italian Signs, American Streets: The Evolution of Italian American Narrative* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996), p. 120.

[41] This passage was quoted earlier. See Baden, p. 27.

[42] Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p 46.

[43] Leo Pap, *The Portuguese-Americans* (Boston: Twayne, 1981), pp. 9-12.

[44] Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1999), p. 2.

[45] See chapter six of Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998).

[46] Brodkin, see p. 16.

[47] Clemente, p. 25.

[48] Clemente, p. 39.

[49] References to Frank Gaspar's volume are taken from *The Holyoke* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1988), see page xi.
[50] Gardaphé, pp. 154-55.
[51] Boelhower, p. 114.
[52] Clemente, p. 41.
[53] Vamberto Freitas, "*Saudade* de Katherine Vaz: Arte e Memória," *Diário de Notícias* 4 Jul. 1996: 4.
[54] Freitas, p. 4.
[55] The first version was published in 1875, in *Revista Ocidental*, without the author's permission. The second one appeared in 1876 and was followed by a third – and definitive – version in 1880. See Jacinto do Prado Coelho, *Dicionário de Literatura*, 4th ed. Vol. 1 (Porto: Livraria Figueirinhas, 1997): 228-29.
[56] Maria Fernanda Enes, *Reforma Tridentina e Religião Vivida (Os Açores na Época Moderna)*, (Ponta Delgada: Signo, 1991).

CONCLUSION

It should be clear from my analysis in chapter two that several older mainstream American writers produced prejudicial and racist fictional portraits of the Portuguese. This was the result of so-called scientific racism and social Darwinist beliefs that were deeply rooted in many American minds at the end of the nineteenth-century and which have continued well into the twentieth. Such a discourse inevitably found its way into fiction, which became a vehicle for writers to display it. An attraction to issues involving race was prompted by a myriad of factors, but these stemmed from erroneous beliefs as to who the Portuguese were as a people. This attraction was also motivated by their slightly darker complexion and some cultural affinities and intermarriage with peoples of African descent, some of whom – as was the case of Capeverdeans – had settled in the United States. With many of the writers discussed in chapters two through five having created voiceless characters, it is evident that the objects of racist discourse could not defend themselves. Practically all these narratives were written by Americans of Anglo-Saxon descent. It is, therefore, no surprise that what we get in them is a reflection of their own beliefs and prejudices. Because of this unsympathetic angle of vision, the Portuguese are often dealt with in a sketchy manner, and the ordinary reader finds it difficult to detect specific ethnic traits pertaining to this ethnic minority. Whereas in New England, writers were obsessed with racial matters, this does not mean that the

Portuguese were not dealt with in a racist manner in the other geographical locations where they have settled in the United States.

In a society where the dominant, WASP mainstream culture has looked at its margins prior to the middle of the twentieth-century with jaundiced eyes to justify its superiority, such anti-Portuguese racial stereotypes would not have sustained themselves without the assistance of additional stereotypes. Violence, association with sexual license, filth, drunkenness, trafficking, bootlegging, and stupidity are a series of traits ascribed in American writings from about the 1850s to the 1950s. By the middle of the twentieth-century, however, many of these stereotypes had disappeared or lost some of their impact. In the context of postcolonial discourse, the colonizer or dominant culture has found in stereotyping and denigration a means to justify its oppression of the colonized, subordinate peoples or those belonging to a minor culture. But what is most striking is that none of these stereotypes could be made to stick to the Portuguese. Through a close-reading of the narratives in which these stereotypes appear, it is evident that most of the writers in question struggle to convince their readers of their beliefs. Such is the case with the stereotype that associates the Portuguese with violence. These novelists do not emphasize that their Portuguese characters are rebelling against exploitation at work, unemployment, inhumane treatment, or even economic changes. Again, the intensity in these outbursts is much higher in New England industrial settings because of their ambience of class tension rather than in the less stressful Californian rural landscapes. Of all the regions where the Portuguese settled in the United States, the Yankee stronghold has

been the most intolerant towards the Portuguese because of their “darker” complexion and Catholicism.

The same applies to New England narratives centering on sexual motifs, some of which are charged with a puritanical censoriousness. Whereas for some of the writers discussed, the Portuguese are associated with sexual license, for others, as was the case of Edith Wharton, the Portuguese are a subterfuge through which she could express her sexual fantasy and alleviate the frustration of her marriage. In addition, stories such as “Drowne’s Wooden Image” reflect Hawthorne’s sexual preference and how he eroticized the slightly dark complexion and eyes of a Portuguese female character for private sexual arousal and satisfaction. Writers as Hawthorne and Wharton are responding to their own fantasies about innocence and depravity and perhaps, in so doing, sublimating their sexual frustrations.

Other unfounded stereotypes were applied to this ethnic group when attempting to find a scapegoat for bad occurrences in American society. During Prohibition, as we have seen in *The Sea Fox: The Adventures of Cape Cod’s Most Colorful Rumrunner*, it was a few Portuguese along with the gangsters of Irish, Jewish, and Italian ancestry who defied the law. As the twenty-first amendment to the Constitution made clear, Prohibition was an absurdity and the Portuguese – along with every other social group – were entitled to a drink. There is no way the Portuguese could avoid dirt and sweat when performing their jobs which consisted of tilling the land, milking cows, keeping sheep on dusty roads, or in the claustrophobic New England sweatshops and textile mills. Dirt and sweat are inevitable in jobs such as these. So they can hardly be

held accountable for an imagined failure to maintain domestic decencies, which for the most part they did.

With such a plethora of unfounded stereotypes, the voices belonging to this ethnic minority are the ones who can best speak for themselves and not those from the mainstream, dominant culture. Who else, besides Portuguese Americans, can understand the nostalgia Portuguese immigrants felt towards their country of birth? Or their despair and frustration upon realizing they could not adapt to their stressful jobs in factories? How they coped with layoffs and unemployment? What about other matters such as the realization, as we have witnessed in *My Son*, that their children were becoming Americanized in just one generation? How about overt American materialism and individualism and how they have molded people who formerly did not identify with these values? And the famous Portuguese Americans like Peter Francisco, John Phillip Sousa, and John Dos Passos? And the unknown and faceless Portuguese who dared to confront the whales in the South Seas, converting sperm-oil into money and, thereby, injecting this wealth into the nineteenth-century American economy? What about the fortunes amassed in the dairy industry or even in farming in California? And the bridges, highways, and airports the Portuguese built to facilitate America's sacrosanct mobility? And the nannies and housekeepers white-collar New Yorkers hire to make life easier for themselves? And what about the greater access to and success in obtaining university degrees in the fields of teaching, law, medicine, accountancy, etc., which Portuguese Americans are rightly deserving? And the role of local politicians; Congressmen such as Tony Coelho; New Jersey's Essex County Sheriff; the current New Jersey First Lady; real estate agents; businessmen;

brokers; secretaries; travel agents and other professionals of Portuguese ancestry who contribute with their intelligence, determination, and hard work to the United States? If it is not Portuguese Americans who write about these people, then who will? As this study has shown, mainstream American voices have been ignoring or busy denigrating the Portuguese with their unfounded stereotypes. If Portuguese American voices fail to seek recognition, it is not to be expected from the mainstream, because it has overlooked the contributions of this ethnic minority in the past.

The margins in American society are finally getting the attention they deserve and have been demanding for such a long time. With the advent of multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and ethnic studies, the walls of hostility, prejudice, silence, misunderstanding, and neglect between the mainstream and the margins are finally crumbling. As Robert Frost says in "Mending Wall," "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." In addition, one need only recall Melville's *Moby Dick* to see how strong Ishmael's desire to strike through walls and "pasteboard masks" really is. The desire to tear down walls and spaces in American culture has always existed. In a country where democracy and openness are important values, it would not make sense that these walls and spaces between the mainstream and the margins would persist much longer. The current discourse on ethnicity and the study under consideration are a part of the process of doing away with them.

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