

NICHOLAS M. CREARY

Literary Cultural Nationalism in the Black Atlantic: A Comparison of the Harlem Renaissance, *Claridade*, and the New African Movement

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun. Beautiful, also, are the
souls of my people.
Hughes 1926a

*Destrofos de que continente,
de que cataclismos,
de que sismos,
de que misterios?...*

*Ilhas perdidas
no meio do mar,
esquecidas
num canto do mundo
--que as ondas embalam,
maltratam,
abracam...¹*
Barbosa 1935a

1 "The wreckage of what continent, of what cataclysms, of what earthquakes, of what mysteries?...Islands lost in the middle of the sea, forgotten in a corner of the world— that the waves cradle, abuse, embrace..."

When first I heard our tribal songs
 They seemed to me of little worth;
 But now their message echoes in my heart.
 Secrets and timeless passions haunt a lilt
 Inspired by Zululand's sons and their traditions.
 These songs recall a past so swiftly fading
 That now I fear its meaning may elude me
 Although I weep with longing to preserve it.
 The songs that you, O children of Ngungunyana,²
 O Vendas of Thobela,³ have perfected—
 Sung through the years by fathers of our fathers
 Whose huts were large and strongly built,
 Whose pipes were horns of ox or buffalo,
 Whose women chattered underneath the trees—
 Torment my soul with eagerness to match them.
 Vilakazi 1935

In 1926, Black American poet Langston Hughes compared the beauty of Black Americans to the natural beauty of the heavens. He subtly implied that which would become a battle-cry of Black radicals during the 1960s: Black is beautiful. And yet, in its own way and for its time, Hughes' assertion was a radical statement, given the pejorative image of Blacks in contemporary American popular culture (Levine; Saxton). Hughes and other Black literary artists of the 1920s (such as Zora Neale Hurston, Arna Bontemps, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay) were significant figures in the Black American cultural movement known as the Harlem Renaissance.

Nine years later, Cape Verdean poet Jorge Barbosa shared his "panoramic" view of the Cape Verde islands with the rest of the world: they are the unknown wreckage of cataclysmic natural disasters forgotten in the middle of the sea, with which they maintain a relationship that is at once abusive and loving. This contrasts sharply with the idyllic view of one's native land in the works of previous Cape Verdean poets, or in classical Portuguese literature (Araujo; Helgerson). It is even more unusual to find such a description of a part of the Portuguese colonial empire during the extremely

2 Ngungunyana—one of the notable chiefs of the Shangane tribe [sic].

3 "Vendas of Thobela"—Thobela was one of the early chiefs of the Venda tribe [sic].

nationalistic fascist regime of Antonio Salazar. Barbosa was one of several Cape Verdean writers who began a literary and cultural movement that came to be associated with the occasional magazine of "arts and letters" entitled *Claridade* (or Clarity) which was first published in March 1936.

Also in 1935, Zulu poet B. W. Vilakazi expressed pride in the oral artistic heritage of his people, which inspired him to take his place among the Zulu "traditional" poets (*amabongi*, singular: *imbongi*) of old. Vilakazi, generally considered to be the greatest of Zulu poets to write in IsiZulu, was one of the intellectuals associated with the New African Movement, a group of indigenous South Africans who sought to integrate "traditional" African cultures and "modern" Western culture during the early decades of the twentieth century.

The authors of each movement turned to the experiences of the poverty-stricken, predominantly Black masses as the sources of their art, eschewing the elite culture—and frequently the language—of the dominant power. Each resulted in heightened consciousness of cultural identity on the part of Black intellectuals, often resulting in a movement for political or social liberation.

During the 1920s and 1930s, there were four similar movements among people of color who experienced racialized forms of colonial oppression in the Atlantic basin:

1. *Négritude*, the French literary movement identified with the Martiniquais poets Aime Césaire and Paulette Nardel, and the Senegalese poet Leopold Sedar Senghor;
2. *Afro-Cubanismo*, the movement among Cuban writers of African descent such as Nicolas Guillen and Lydia Cabrera;
3. the *Engagé* writers of Haiti associated with the periodical *La Revue Indigène*, such as Jacques Roumain and Jean Price-Mars;
4. and *Modernismo Afro-Brasileiro*, including writers such as Lino Guedes Carolina Maria de Jesus, and Solano Trindade.

The authors of each movement turned to the experiences of the poverty-stricken, predominantly Black masses as the sources of their art, eschewing the elite culture—and frequently the language—of the dominant power. Each resulted in heightened consciousness of cultural identity on the part of Black intellectuals, often resulting in a movement for political or social liberation. All of these movements developed in areas where plantation slavery was practised well into the nineteenth century and, when abolished, was replaced by varying

forms of peonage for people of African descent. Writers in the United States, Cape Verde, and South Africa lived under regimes that practiced legalized segregation in the form of the so-called "Jim Crow" legislation, the *Indigenato* system, and the 1913 Native Land Act and 1936 "Hertzog Bills" respectively. These were intensely racialized and oppressive colonial social systems that privileged the category of White (or European) over the category of Black (or African).

Most scholars who have studied these movements have done so principally within the context of a given "national" history or have studied these movements as contemporaneous cultural expressions of Black authors speaking to one another across the Atlantic or the Caribbean (Araujo; Cobb). My preliminary study of all of these movements, however, suggests that taken collectively these movements comprise an early Black intellectual response to the effects of racialized forms of twentieth century industrial capitalism, and an effort to develop and practice freely their own cultural identities. While Martha Cobb has shown direct links between Harlem, *Negritude*, Haiti, and Cuba, and Norman Araujo a direct influence of Brazil on Cape Verde, my preliminary research indicates that the *Claridosos* knew of and read the *Negritude* authors, which suggests a possible indirect influence of Harlem on *Claridade*. The common thread of Black cultural liberation unites these movements. Clearly, there were significant differences in the respective historical and cultural contexts that gave rise to the literary movements. In any event, no scholar has attempted to explain how or why these seven literary movements developed more or less simultaneously in such geographically disparate areas, and why the authors used such similar strategies in their writings.

This paper posits criteria for literary cultural nationalism and then examines the works of poets associated with these three movements—Langston Hughes, Jorge Barbosa, Balthasar Lopes da Silva, Manuel Lopes, and B.W. Vilakazi—to demonstrate the operation of this literary cultural nationalist ideology. The writers of these movements were not necessarily nationalists per se as they were not primarily concerned with establishing a nation-state or building "the nation" however that concept may be conceived. They were more concerned with the development of positive collective identities of their people and their liberation from the political, economic, and social depredations of racism and colonialism.

The writers of these movements used local and/or folk cultures as the source of the content of their work, including vernacular languages. They employed modern literary forms to portray the cultural groups they

represented; and they used neo-realist portrayals of folk culture to build positive group identities in the face of countervailing stereotypical images within the dominant culture and to critique the oppressive situation and the oppressors.

Several of these movements were linked to contemporary or later political and/or social movements of Blacks for liberation and cultural identities developed and accepted on their own terms, not the negative stereotypes of their constituents that were prevalent in the dominant White society. In the United States, the Harlem literati's ideology diffused through the next generation of Black American writers, such as Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright, and the generation of Black Americans who would lead the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-century. In Cape Verde, Amilcar Cabral and other founders of the African Party for the Independence of Guine Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) studied directly under the *Claridosos* at the only secondary school in the islands. The themes that the South African writers developed, such as Vilakazi's positive portrayal of the Nguni king Dingiswayo and Zulu rebel Bambatha, resonated strongly with Nelson Mandela and other members of the generation of Black South Africans that first fought against apartheid in the 1940s and 1950s.

The Harlem literati tried to create a new cultural consciousness and identity for Black Americans so that they could integrate fully into the mainstream of American society, whereas the *Claridosos* sought to create a Cape Verdean culture that was distinct from and equal to that of their Portuguese overlords, and the New African writers sought to facilitate the transition of the "traditional" African masses into a unified culturally and racially pluralistic "modern" South African society. While the Harlem literati benefited from the protection of the First Amendment of the U.S. constitution, they were dependent on White patrons who constrained their artistic freedom and sought to circumscribe the image of Black Americans. The *Claridosos*, however, suffered under the extreme censorship of the Salazar regime, and consequently could not criticize directly the pitiful socio-economic conditions that prevailed for the majority of the people living in the islands. Instead they used literary neo-realism to highlight the experience of the impoverished masses in their works. Like the Harlem literati, the New African literati's writing was also circumscribed by liberal White patrons and publishers. Where Harlem's "New Negro" was a manifesto, the *Claridosos'* creation of the *Caboverdeano* was a subversive act of defiance, and the "New Black South African" was a subtle plea for social inclusion.

Although the Harlem Renaissance was successful in articulating a new cultural consciousness for Black Americans, it failed to integrate Blacks into the dominant American culture because of its elitism, its dependence on the munificence White patrons, and the disappearance of its support with the advent of the Great Depression. *Claridade*, however, in the face of the Salazar regime's aggressive Portuguese nationalism and racist ideology, effected a cultural change that would lead to the rise of Cape Verdean nationalism. Their efforts eventually resulted in significantly influencing Amilcar Cabral and the generation that would establish and lead the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC). Unlike the members of the other movements, the South African literati were also political activists who participated in the various struggles for political, economic, and cultural liberation. They were, however, unable to stem the tide of racist policy in pre-Apartheid South Africa.

Culture and Literary Cultural Nationalism

Building on the work of anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss and Mary Douglas, it is possible to posit the existence of multiple groups within a given social system, or society, and to define a *group* as a social unit of people that lives together and shares common institutions, traditions, and collective activities. Their *culture* is the corpus of beliefs, actions, rituals and symbols which they develop, refine, share, and pass on from one generation to the next. An individual's *identity* within the social group, therefore, is the process of interactions between the various members of the group and with the broader society. In other words, a group of people shares common interests that distinguish it from other groups. Culture is the means by which group members determine how to relate to one another and to social externs. Identity is the actual phenomenon of relating to other members of the social network. The logical locus to effect societal change, therefore, is at the cultural level as it is the matrix that will determine how individuals, or groups of individuals, within a society will see themselves in relation to one another (i.e., how they identify themselves and/or are identified). Significantly, these definitions of culture and identity presume an interaction between the individual and a greater collective, and presume that these interactions and their products change over time, that is, they are historically based. Within this context, *cultural nationalism* was a struggle for the social liberation (i.e., political,

economic, and social equality within a given society) of Black people(s) (Davidson 162-97).

As such, it is possible to characterize the Harlem and New African literati and the *Claridosos* as literary cultural nationalists, or artists who used literary art as a vehicle for the social liberation of Black people. This is not *ars gratiae artis*, but poetry and prose with a purpose. Further, in this context a movement is a group of (literary) artists who share a common vision and compose (literary) art at roughly the same time in communication with or cognizance of each other. Significantly, these artists were seeking the political, economic, and social liberation of their people. They were not necessarily seeking to establish nation-states or to engage in nation-building. Their purpose was to develop positive collective identities as a means to acceptance in the dominant culture.

Cultural change was the professed and/or implied goal of the literary cultural nationalists, and literature was the means to their chosen end. Literature, as a form of cultural expression, is a useful source for understanding how a group of people perceives themselves and the world around them at a specific period in time. As products of a specific culture, literary works frequently contain the culture's ideologies and values, and express them either implicitly or explicitly within the themes the authors employ. Historians of American culture have frequently examined the literature produced by various groups in American society to gain greater insight into their cultural developments, views, beliefs, and practices, as well as the dynamics of inter-group relations (Levine; Saxton; Slotkin; Takaki). In a similar fashion, therefore, it should also be possible to examine the ideological strategies and objectives of these Black Atlantic literary cultural nationalists.

The Harlem Literati

Alain Leroy Locke was ideological progenitor of the Harlem Renaissance. Although he was not a literary artist, he expounded the ideology that made the renaissance possible, and had extensive contacts with the Harlem Literati and other promoters of the movement. Locke graduated from Harvard in 1907, majoring in philosophy and English literature, and became the first Black American Rhodes scholar. In 1910, he studied sociology and Kantian philosophy at the University of Berlin. Returning to the United States in 1912, Locke took a position as a professor at Howard University in Washington,

D.C., where he remained until 1916 when he returned to Harvard to complete his Ph.D. The following year he resumed his career at Howard, until his death in 1954 (Locke 1992, xxxv-xlviii).

In March 1916, Locke presented five lectures that formed the basis for his theory of race as practiced in the United States. In the fifth and final lecture, "Racial Progress and Racial Adjustment," Locke suggested a course of action for Black Americans during the early years of "Jim Crow" segregation. His pluralism called for a group to learn and adopt the language and values of the dominant culture that it needed to survive, but to retain those values of its own that enabled it to develop to its fullest possibility (Locke 1992, 84-87).

According to Locke, Black Americans needed to develop a "counter-theory" to social assimilation that fostered "racial solidarity and culture." Blacks needed this theory of "secondary race consciousness" because, as a group, they needed a "right conception of [themselves] and can only do that through the stimulation of pride in [themselves]." In Locke's view, racial pride was the social equivalent of self-respect. He then argued that race consciousness was a significant feature of the national revival movements and rhetoric for the recognition of ethnic minorities' rights to self-determination sweeping through Europe at the time. Similarly, Black Americans needed to recreate their "race type" because they would only be recognized for their collective contribution to American society as a whole, and the larger society would only recognize a recreated race type "that expresses itself in terms of a representative class or representative [cultural] products." Secondary race consciousness, therefore, was necessary for assimilation of the dominant social culture, but prevented the representative class from being absorbed into the dominant group, and united the representative class to the subordinate group, which stimulated general group progress (Locke 1992, 96-98).

The ultimate goal of racial progress and adjustment, according to Locke, was "culture- citizenship ... [which] must come in terms of group contribution to what becomes a joint civilization." He further stated that there could be no real race recognition until group talents and representative cultural products were developed. Locke concluded that the struggle for artistic expression and recognition was the prelude to political recognition of ethnic minorities in Europe, and thus recognition in music, the arts, and letters was the "gateway" through which Black Americans could obtain culture-citizenship (Locke 1992, 99-100).

Locke's theory is significant for the concept of literary cultural nationalism for several reasons. First, Locke was one of the earliest social theorists to argue that racial identity is socially constructed. His theory argued that groups can and must consciously develop or change their collective identities in order to effect social change. It further argued that American Blacks needed to do so because they suffered from negative images within and negative reactions from dominant White American society. Lastly, it argued that artists would lead the way to equality within American society.

Locke's theory of racial practice was elitist, but established a cooperative ideology, and advocated a similar racial consciousness. It acknowledged the social, economic, and political disparities between groups in the United States and Europe of his day, and mapped a strategy to establish parity between groups, and ultimately to unite them so as to foster a mutual respect among the various groups of a society. The artists of the "representative class" were not merely the delegates chosen to speak on behalf of their constituents; they were the ones to re-present their constituents to the larger society; to fashion and present the new image of their people.

As such, the Harlem Renaissance, or "The New Negro" movement, can be seen as the fulfilment of Locke's vision. The literary movement that began in the early 1920s, came to the fore with the development and proliferation of other forms of Black American cultural expression (such as jazz and the blues) brought about by Black migration from rural areas in the South to urban centers in the North and South during the 1910s and 1920s. Both movements, literal and literary, combined to become the first expression of nascent Black American racial consciousness. By moving themselves from peonage in the rural South, Blacks consciously took control over their own lives in a manner and in numbers that were unprecedented. By publishing their literature, Black Americans declared their cultural independence.

There are two problems with Locke's theory. First, attaining of culture-citizenship depended on recognition from the dominant group. Locke appears to have made no allowance for the outright rejection of Black American efforts at integration that resulted in continued segregation of Blacks from the American social mainstream and necessitated the gradual impetus for the Civil Rights movement of the mid-century (Schuyler 662-63). Secondly, the elitist nature of the movement created a disparity between the Harlem literati and the majority of Blacks who lived in poverty. Aside from obvious acknowledgment of Black poverty within the content of their literature, it seems that Locke and other Harlem literati made little effort to

address the dire economic situation of their constituents. Although there may have been a significant Black readership of the Renaissance literature, Black Americans were not in a position to support the literati financially. The Harlem artists, consequently, became dependent on the largess of White patrons and promoters, such as Charlotte Osgood Mason and Carl Van Vechtin, who used monetary influence in efforts to make their client-artists conform to the patrons' concepts of "proper Negro art" (Lewis). This not only circumscribed the artistic freedom of the literati, but also left them vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the Great Depression, which has often been seen as causing the end of the Renaissance (Huggins; Lewis).

Langston Hughes entered Columbia University in Harlem, New York City in 1921 and dropped out and took a series of odd-jobs in Manhattan in 1922. Over the next two years, he worked on a steamship and traveled to Europe and Africa, and he worked in a night club in Paris. In 1924, he returned to Washington, D.C., and in 1925 he won first prize in the Opportunity magazine poetry contest, which led to an offer from Alfred A. Knopf to publish a collection of his works. In 1926, he enrolled at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and graduated in 1929 (Dickinson 5).

Also in 1926, Hughes issued his manifesto, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in which he excoriated the Black middle class for essentially wanting to be White, and turning their backs on "the low-down folks, the so-called common element." He argued that middle-class Blacks (artists in particular) have imitated Whites to such a degree that they have taken on the same prejudices and stereotypes of the Black majority who live in poverty. The "racial mountain" that Black artists face is to overcome these prejudices and stereotypes and find the wealth of colorful, distinctive material [that they provide] for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations. And perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself. Whereas the better-class Negro would tell the artist what to do, the people at least let him alone when he does appear. And they are not ashamed of him—if they know he exists at all. And they accept what beauty is their own without question (Hughes 1926b).

A "Negro artist" need not go "outside his race" to find "a lifetime of creative work." And if he were to choose to explore the theme of race relations, "the Negro artist can give his racial individuality, his heritage of rhythm and warmth, and his incongruous humor that so often, as in the Blues, becomes ironic laughter mixed with tears." The obstacle to an authentic Black

American culture expression was not White racism, in Hughes' view, it was rather, the "Nordicized Negro intelligentsia" that eschewed its very own people and heritage. Hughes concluded with the declaration to

[l]et the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing Blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand. Let Paul Robeson singing *Water Boy*, and Rudolph Fisher writing about the streets of Harlem, and Jean Toomer holding the heart of Georgia in his hands ... cause the smug Negro middle class to turn from their white, respectable, ordinary books and papers to catch a glimmer of their own beauty. We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too.... If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

Hughes' first collection of poems, *The Weary Blues*, was published in 1926. In many of his works, he demonstrated several literary nationalist criteria. For example, in "Aunt Sue's Stories" Hughes showed a clear awareness of the significance of slavery in the Black American past; he used and highlighted the importance of folk culture; and he showed a positive, realistic experience emanating from it (see Appendix, #1). The speaker recalls being cradled in his aunt's lap during the summer, and listening to her many, heartfelt stories of days long ago, when his forebears worked as slaves and sang "sorrow songs," the artistic ancestors of the spirituals and the blues, to comfort themselves. He evokes the sense of his aunt singing these songs to him as a part of the telling of the tales. And the speaker is aware of the reality of the stories: he implies not only a consciousness of the historical Black experience in America, but also a passing on to the next generation of the consciousness of a strong-willed intelligent woman who survived slavery. Listening intently, the speaker learns what being Black in America meant in the past, and has instilled in him an awareness of in which direction to progress. Slavery and slave songs are no longer causes for shame, but bonds that unite generations, inspire hope for the present and future, and plant the seeds of a critical consciousness.

In a similar fashion, Hughes portrayed the inspiring strength of a woman encouraging her child in "Mother to Son" (see Appendix, #2). Here Hughes validated vernacular Black English, demonstrating that it is an effective vehicle for the artistic expression of quotidian Black experience. The speaker used the

metaphor of a staircase to describe the hardships of her life to her son. Her life "ain't been no crystal stair." In other words, she has had to struggle to get to this point in her life, enduring discomfort ("places with no carpet"), pain ("tacks," "splinters," and torn up boards), and uncertainty ("goin' in the dark where there ain't been no light"). And yet, she exhorts her son not to turn back, not to stand still, but to keep moving ahead with hope, if for no other reason than because she hasn't stopped in spite of all the hardships ("Ise still climbin"). The travails and successes of an individual woman become an exhortation to a people.

Hughes also shows a keen sense of social criticism in his craft. In his "Lament for Dark People," Native Americans and African Americans speak as the victims of European Americans (see Appendix, #3). Whites have expropriated land from Native Americans and taken Blacks as captive labor. In losing the land, the trees and "silver moons" Hughes implies that the dark peoples have ceased to be people and, having lost their humanity, are "caged" like beasts at a "circus"(an implicit reference to the reservations and ghettos set aside for Native Americans and Blacks respectively), a side-show amusement for the "civilized" (White) world. In "The White Ones,"(see Appendix, #4) the speaker implies that Blacks are beautiful "whirling lights of loveliness and splendor" as are Whites, and then gives vent to the question that burns in the heart of every oppressed people and individual: why? Why do the oppressors use violent, physical force to cause intense suffering? And yet, as irrational as it may be, the speaker does not give in to hatred, for he sees the "white strong ones" as fellow human beings, at once both beautiful and worthy of love. Taken in the hortatory, "The White Ones" is not merely a plaintive cry for mercy from Whites, rather it is a call for peace and unity—to both Blacks and Whites. This, then, is the call to Locke's vision of culture-citizenship; a vision to which Hughes gives artistic form:

We have tomorrow
Bright before us
Like a flame.

Yesterday
A night-gone thing,
A sun-down name.

And dawn-today
Broad arch above the road we came. (Hughes 1926a)

Hughes' work bears a noticeable optimism. And yet that optimistic perspective did not blind him to the reality of American race relations in the early twentieth century. He clearly demonstrates literary nationalistic consciousness and ideology.

Cape Verde: The Historical and Social Setting

The Cape Verde islands are located approximately 300 miles west of the coast of Senegal in the Atlantic Ocean. The arid conditions associated with chronic lack of rain fall, combined with centuries of poor ecological practices, have resulted in an extremely harsh environment in which to live. Consequently, there has been historically significant emigration of Cape Verdeans to other parts of Africa, Europe, and the United States. The archipelago was uninhabited when Portuguese explorers and slave traders navigated down the West African coast during the mid-fifteenth century. They first settled in Cape Verde in 1460 on the island of Santiago. The original settlers were farmers from southern Portugal, as well as deported criminals, exiles, and Jews persecuted by the Inquisition. The settlers soon began importing slaves from West Africa, and miscegenation resulted in the "creation of the majority *crioulo* [creole] population" (Lobban 10-25). Plantation slavery continued in Portuguese colonies until the late nineteenth century when it was replaced by *the parceiro* (sharecropping) and *rendeiro* (tenant-farming) systems. Slave labor was supplanted by contract and forced labor "which persisted until the last days of colonialism in 1975" (Lobban 26-35).

Whites always comprised a very small portion of the population, from two to four percent; Blacks were also a minority consisting from 20 to 36 percent; and *Mesticos* made up the overwhelming majority with from 60 to 75 percent. This is the historical result of early and frequent miscegenation between the aforementioned Portuguese groups and their slaves, taken primarily from Wolof- and Fula-speaking groups as well as Beafada-speakers and their neighbors from what are now Senegal, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau. Over time a creolized fusion of Portuguese and the various African languages developed into the language presently known as *Crioulo*, as did a concomitant culture that is, likewise, a synthesis of both African and European elements (Lobban 45-85).

From 1747 to 1970 there were 58 years of drought induced famine, which had devastating death rates. In 1832, 10 percent of the population died; in 1854-1856 approximately 25 percent died; in 1902-1903, 15 percent died in

a famine. During the 1940s, the overall population of 160,343 reported in 1940 dropped to 148,331 in 1950, or a net population decrease of 7.5 percent. In addition, during both of the twentieth century famines, 20,000 people were exported from the islands as contract labor. This resulted in severe economic dislocations, including loss of crops and livestock, significant unemployment and emigration, and a disproportionate ratio of elderly, women, and children in the population (Lobban 1995, 62-63; Carreira 1985, 15, 24).

The Portuguese monarchy was abolished in 1910 and the first republic proclaimed in 1911. This window of liberalism was short-lived, however, due to the rise of the fascist *Novo Estado* regime of Antonio Salazar in 1926. One of the principle objectives of the Salazar regime was the promotion of Portuguese culture and "Christian civilization" throughout its colonial empire. To that end, the government passed the Colonial Act of 1930 which established the *Indigenato* system that essentially established legalized racial segregation. With few exceptions, Africans were classified as *indigenas* (i.e. natives), and wards of the state. *Indigenas* could not vote, attended inferior schools, and required official permission for a wide range of economically significant activities such as travel, buying power tools, and selling crops. They were also subject to a head tax and vagrancy laws that subjected them to conscript labor. For males, subsistence agriculture was a form of vagrancy. Effectively, they were relegated to low-paying manual labor, and could be paid less for the same labor as "civilized" citizens of the state. They were also subject to corporal punishment or forced labor for minor offenses for which Portuguese citizens would be fined (Meintel 1984,129).

According to the *Indigenato* system, those Africans who acquired a certain degree of "portugalidade" (or "Portuguese-ness") could become *assimilados*, or "civilized." To qualify for *assimilado* status, Africans had to be at least eighteen years of age, fluent in written and spoken Portuguese, have no police record, and maintain a standard of living and lifestyle similar to those of Europeans. Ironically, many white Portuguese would not have qualified to become *assimilados*. For example, in 1950 approximately 45 percent of the population of Portugal was illiterate. From 1940 to 1950 only 0.7 percent of Africans in Portuguese territories (excluding *mestizos*) qualified for *assimilado* status (Meintel 1984,129-30).

Cape Verdeans were classified as *assimilados* owing to their alleged "cultural similarity to the Portuguese." This was more than likely because Cape Verde had little arable land or need for inexpensive labor that white Portuguese settlers desired to expropriate for themselves, as was the case in

Sao Tome and Principe where the significant *mestizo* population was classified as African, or *indigenas* (Meintel 1984,130).

From the late 1880s through the 1930s, indigenous populations throughout Guinea-Bissau offered direct physical resistance to Portuguese efforts at conquest and colonization. There was also resistance in Cape Verde. However, as more islanders gained access to education and Portuguese methods of repression became more severe, resistance "was expressed in cultural and literary forms" (Lobban 1995, 42). In 1917, the Liceu Gil Eanes opened on the island of Sao Vicente, many of whose graduates found jobs in Guinea-Bissau's colonial administration. By 1926, Cape Verde had a higher literacy rate than the metropole (Araujo 1966,12-13,25-28; Lobban 1995,38, 78; Meintel 1984, 133-36). Thus, beginning in March 1936, *Claridade* became a significant vehicle for Cape Verdean cultural expression and resistance, and its founders had to contend with a repressive fascist regime that espoused a racial ideology which held all that was white and Portuguese as superior to that which was black or African, cultivated general illiteracy as a means of social control, and censored the press heavily.

The *Claridosos* and *Claridade* as a Vehicle of Cultural Change

Although many authors contributed to the pages of *Claridade* during the course of its publication, the three who are known as *Claridosos* were Jorge Barbosa, Baltasar Lopes da Silva, and Manuel Lopes.

Jorge Barbosa was born in Praia in 1902 and received little formal education. He worked as an official in the customs house on the island of Sal, eventually becoming its director in the 1950s. Barbosa published his first collection of poems, *Arquipelago*, in 1935. It served as a herald for the coming of *Claridade* the following March. He continued to work on Sal and publish his poetry until his death in 1971 (Araujo 1966, 99-110; Lobban 1995, 79-80).

Baltasar Lopes da Silva (Baltasar Lopes hereafter) was born on the island of Sao Nicolau in 1907 and received a degree from the faculty of Law and Letters of the University of Lisbon. He returned to the islands in the early 1930s and began teaching at the Liceu Gil Eanes, where he became the rector and ultimately stepped down from the post so as to devote his efforts to teaching. During the 1940s he refused an appointment to the faculty of the University of Lisbon and remained at the Liceu, preferring instead "to live, write and die in his native Cape Verde." Baltasar Lopes published his novel *Chiquinho* in 1947, and several works of poetry under the pseudonym Osvaldo

Alcantara becoming one of the most important figures in the development of Cape Verdean literature. He retired from the Liceu in 1972, and died in 1989 (Araujo 1966, 132-45; Lobban 1995, 79).

Manuel Lopes was born on the island of Santo Antao in 1907 and received a degree from the University of Coimbra in Portugal. He worked for Western Telegraph and traveled between his home on the island of Sao Vicente, the Acores, and Portugal. In addition to writing and publishing poetry and short stories, Manuel Lopes is best known for his novels *Chuva Braba* (The Beating Rain) and *Os Flagelados do Vento Leste* (The Victims of the East Wind), published in 1956 and 1960 respectively (Araujo 1966, 111-32; Lobban 1995, 80).

Although it is not clear how and when the *Claridosos* met one another, it is probable that Baltasar Lopes and Manuel Lopes knew each other from their student days at the Liceu Gil Eanes, and that Jorge Barbosa and Jaime de Figueiredo (the artists who designed the tide pages and provided much of the artwork in the journal) were acquainted via the exiled Portuguese poet Antonio Pedro. According to Baltasar Lopes, the group came together because of their collective concerns about the appalling social and economic conditions in the islands. Seeking some way to take action against the oppressive Portuguese colonial regime, and aware that direct political action was not a viable option, they chose a literary journal as their weapon (Ferreira 1986, XXII-XXIII).

The themes that the *Claridosos* developed in the pages of *Claridade*, and their other works are significant. It is important to remember that extreme degrees of censorship under the fascist Salazar prevented any outright criticism of Portugal, its culture, or its exploitation of its colonial peoples. Baltasar Lopes noted that it was forbidden to publish the word *fame* ("hunger/famine") because the regime did not want it known that such conditions obtained in the empire. For similar reasons he had to go to great lengths to publish his short story "A Caderneta," (The Notebook) about a woman forced into prostitution for survival, because the censors refused to acknowledge that prostitution existed in Cape Verde. The *Claridosos*, therefore, had to be very subtle in the themes they developed. Using the quotidian experience of the impoverished masses, two of the themes they developed were the islands as a prison with dreaming as the only means of escape, and of Cape Verde as a mother. Through these themes it is possible to detect an incipient Cape Verdean nationalism.

In "Ecran," Manuel Lopes expressed the longings of an islander whose only means of escaping the archipelago was in his dreams (see Appendix, #5). The ocean and the furrows take on the image of battlements and trenches which enclose the speaker and give a sense of isolation from the rest of the world and boredom within the confines of the islands. The ship seems "anxious" to "abandon" the islands, as one who is free is loathe to be reminded of its absence. Ultimately, the speaker is left to contend with all of his internal contradictions and "delirious" dreams of the civilized world beyond the prison of the islands as he watches his ship of dreams set sail without him.

Similarly, Manuel Lopes used irony to express the dreams of a person trapped in the islands and longing to experience a better world beyond in "*Poema de Quem Ficou*" (The Poem of One who Stayed Behind—see Appendix, #6). Once again the speaker can only dream of a world better than that which he knows in the islands. But he also consoles himself by flying to a world that is "greater [and] more beautiful" than the one in which the returning émigré takes pride. His dreamworld lacks the "anxiety and ... revulsions" of the real world that his fellow countryman experiences, and contains riches which the real world has never known.

Jorge Barbosa implied that Cape Verde is his motherland, and evoked nationalist sentiments with his poem "*Presenca*" (see Appendix, #7). Here Cape Verde takes on the image of a physically old, yet young-at-heart, loving mother who looks after her children. The warm, radiant smile is on her dark ("morena") face. This is a blatant reference to the predominantly *crioulo* population of the islands, and a slap in the face of the dominant Portuguese racial ideology that held that that which is African is ugly, and that which is Portuguese is beautiful. Sitting in the comfort of her lap the speaker feels the lyric voice of his race, which is crucified between the ancient and competing roots of Cape Verdean culture: the Portuguese and the African; White and Black. The voice resonates from the deep recesses of his "land of tortured hopes" that die and are reborn in his mother's constant prayers and affection. Using the images of a sailor traversing the seas and of a young knight-errant, he implored his mother to join him on a journey to "unattainable destinies," implying a desire to bring his motherland out of its suffering: "Come with me: continue with me your way of the ages ... We shall go hand in hand toward your destiny, toward my destiny ... so young and so old" (Barbosa 1936a). In seeking rebirth in the speaker's mother's kiss, Barbosa implied that his

motherland (i.e. Cape Verde) has the power to regenerate her withering children; that one need not go elsewhere to find life.

Similarly, Baltasar Lopes used the image of Cape Verde as mother in "*Mamai*." Instead of Barbosa's youthful and strong mother with the power to heal, however, Baltasar Lopes presented a mother afflicted with the travails of the world (see Appendix, #8). The mother Baltasar Lopes presented was very much a *mater dolorosa*. The speaker comes before her wishing to pray for her and himself, and to ask forgiveness for himself and all the other Cape Verdean children who have abandoned their forlorn mother for the corners of the globe. He asks that she not be angry with him and his siblings for having destroyed the creative element of her being. Baltasar Lopes created a passion play in which the *mater dolorosa* experiences a violent lingering death and is abandoned by her loved ones. Unlike Christ's disciples, her loved ones cannot find the tomb where she is buried, and thus the hoped for resurrection remains in doubt.

On another level, Baltasar Lopes implied that his own people are watching their motherland die and are powerless to save it, except for hope. He cried that the land cannot feed the people, and expressed the anguish of one who wants to feed her children bread but can only give encouraging words. Although there is no direct criticism of the Portuguese or their colonial system, the implicit critique is quite obvious.

Jorge Barbosa used the realism of the common Cape Verdean's experience to foster a sense of national identity and to celebrate his "brother" Cape Verdean (see Appendix, #9). This was his fanfare for the common Cape Verdean man, who has crossed the seas risking life and limb in hellacious seafaring; or trying to eke out a living from the desiccated earth and fickle elements which often yield only drought and famine. This is the common experience that binds Cape Verdeans together, that distinguishes them from the Portuguese and all the other seafaring peoples: they live on the brink of survival, often without success in a land where failure means certain death. The Cape Verdean is a seafarer out of necessity, because of his niggardly native soil; not by choice, with dreams of commercial wealth as were the scions of Vasco da Gama. This is why the Cape Verdean "bring[s] to the national dances your melancholy at the depths of your joy, when you play the *mornas* with the heavy bearings of the guitar ... (The *morna* ... it seems that it is the echo in your soul, of the voice of the Sea, and of the longing for distant lands to which the sea invites you, the echo of the voice of the rain desired, the echo of the voice within us all, of the voice within our tragedy without an

echo! The *morna* ... possesses from you and the things which surround us the expression of our humility, the passive expression of our drama, of our revolt, of our silent melancholic revolt!" (Barbosa 1936b.)

If the precarious life of hardship is the soil from which the Cape Verdean was born, then, according to Barbosa, the *morna* is the spirit that sustains him. This most quintessentially Cape Verdean art form gives voice to the common misery that the entire Cape Verdean people share; expresses the quiet human dignity that every Cape Verdean struggles to maintain; and contains the seed of their rebellion. With the *morna* burning within the heart of the Cape Verdean, he no longer needs to travel to America, and can relegate the perilous journeys on the sea to "stories of the past you tell... with joyful laughs that cannot hide your melancholy" (Barbosa 1936b). It then becomes possible to seek and live out one's destiny within the homeland: "To live stooped over the land, our land poor ungrateful beloved!... or some other end humble anonymous ... Oh Cape Verdean humble anonymous,—my brother!" Without directly confronting the colonial authority Barbosa challenged and subverted it. At a time when the civil and political societies in the islands would have all the islanders think themselves Portuguese, Barbosa called on them to be Cape Verdean. There can be little doubt, then, that the *Claridosos* had among their agenda the desire to change the existing cultural ideology from one in which Cape Verdeans saw themselves as subservient to the Portuguese to one in which Cape Verdeans saw themselves as a nation inter pares with their colonial overlords.

Clearly, then, the *Claridosos* were literary cultural nationalists. Furthermore, they contributed to the formation of a distinct Cape Verdean identity. Early in the liberation struggle against the Portuguese, Amílcar Cabral said something to the effect that young African nationalist leaders had to learn that they were Africans, i.e., that they were not Portuguese (Lopes 2002, 223; Cardoso). Thus, in the process of "re-Africanization" Cape Verdeans had a decided advantage over their Lusophone African confreres in that they already possessed a Cape Verdean identity that saw themselves as distinct from yet comprised of both African and Portuguese cultural sources, as Jorge Barbosa's poem "Povo" ("People") clearly demonstrates (see Appendix, #10).

The Poet of the Nation: B. W. Vilakazi

B. W. Vilakazi was born in 1906 at Groutville mission in Natal. His given names were Bambatha Wallet, although he took the name Benedict while a

student at the Catholic Mariannahill mission in the 1920s (Peterson 2000, 87-90). From 1922 to 1935, Vilakazi taught at a variety of Christian mission schools in Natal until he accepted an appointment as the first African academic at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg in 1935. Wits University Press published both collections of his poetry, *Inkondlo kaZulu* (Zulu Songs) in 1935, and *Amal'eZulu* (Zulu Horizons) in 1945.

Vilakazi's works were very much products of an extremely tumultuous period in South African history: the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 significantly transformed the political landscape of Southern Africa, culminating in the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Vilakazi was born in the same year of the Bambatha Rebellion, the last major instance of African primary resistance to the imposition of colonial rule, specifically monetary taxation. Bambatha's revolt was the first attempt by African leaders in the twentieth century to stem the effects of encroaching industrial capitalism on "traditional" African societies.

The early twentieth century in South Africa was a period of efflorescent cultural nationalisms. Particularly notable were the rise of Afrikaner nationalism among the descendants of the Dutch settlers who lost the Anglo-Boer War but ultimately won the peace with the passage of the Union Act of 1909, and the proliferation of cultural awareness and activism on the part of African groups, as noted in the founding of vigorous African language newspapers in SeTswana, IsiXhosa, and IsiZulu.

The Union parliament passed a landmark piece of legislation, the 1913 Native Land Act, that effectively expropriated roughly seven eighths of the land of South Africa from Africans and designated it for White occupation and use. This paved the way for the large-scale proletarianization of the male African population, many of whom became migrant laborers in mines under the Rand and on White-owned farms throughout the union. The Afrikaner-dominated "Pact government" of J. B. M. Hertzog furthered an agenda of White supremacy with a series of legislation in the 1920s that culminated in the removal of Africans from the voters rolls of the Cape province in 1936. For their part, Africans did not let these developments pass unchallenged. They formed the South African Native National Congress (the precursor to the African National Congress) in 1912, and promptly sent a delegation to London in 1914 to petition for the repeal of the 1913 Land Act. African mineworkers' grievances flared in violence in the early 1920s with the formation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU). The

frequent reading of the Hertzog Bills in Parliament resulted in the formation of the All-African Congress (AAC) in 1935.

Vilakazi was active in the Natal branch of the ANC during the period in which he wrote most of the poems in *Inkondlo ka Zulu* (prior to 1935), and he was a founding member of the Zulu Society, which was organized by the Natal Bantu Teachers' Association in 1935 (Peterson 2000, 89, 95). He also had contact with the ICU *yase* Natal. More importantly, however, it appears that Vilakazi began to identify more with the struggles and plight of the oppressed African masses on the Rand during this period. In a review of *Amal'eZulu*, Herbert Dhlomo noted a significant difference in Vilakazi's second collection of poetry from *Inkondlo kaZulu*:

His *Amal'eZulu* reveals a revolutionary change or development in the poet's soul, mind or, at least, attitude towards art and life. In the past, Vilakazi's poetry revealed the mind of a scholar obsessed with the idea of classicism, an artist worshipping devoutly in the shrine of art for art's sake, a poet so enamoured of the beauty and music and meaning of Nature that he was oblivious of the grim tragedy, the struggle, the pathetic conditions and the call of his people ... In "Ngoba ... Sewuthi" ("Because ... You now say") and "Ezinkomponi" ("In the Gold Mines") we find him speaking on behalf of the masses ... This is the new Vilakazi. We think by identifying himself with the struggles of his people, the poet had gained in breadth, strength and stature. That a spiritual revolution is taking place in the poet is evidenced by the number of introspective, meditative personal poems (Dhlomo).

In his poetry, Vilakazi exhorted Zulus to take pride in and preserve their past and culture through the innovative use and adaptation of *izibongo* (i.e., "traditional" Zulu praise poems)—which are laden with culture-specific content, symbols, and images intended to rouse "national" pride—to modern poetic forms; by employing references to major figures and events of Zulu history such as Shaka, Cetshwayo, Mbuyazi, Solomon Dinizulu, and the Battle of Ndongakusuku as well as folk tales such as Nanana the Frog ("NgoMbuyazi eNdongakusuka" [Mbuyazi at Ndongakusuku] and "Imfula yoMhlaba" [Rivers]) and myths such as how death came into the world ("UNokufa" [Death], "UMamina") and the woman banished to the moon for carrying firewood on a sabbath day ("NgoMbuyazi" and "Nayaphi" [Whither]) (Ntuli 1984, 29-33). Similarly, Vilakazi's poems are replete with criticism of colonial industrialization and urbanization along racist lines and their effects on Zulu culture, most notably in works such as "Woza Nonjinjikazi" ("Come Monster of Steel"), "Ngoba ... Sewuthi" ("Because ... You now say"),

"Ezinkomponi" ("In the Gold Mines"), and "Wo, Ngitshele Mntanomlungu" ("Tell Me, White Man's Son").

In his study of Vilakazi's poetry, D. B. Z. Ntuli noted the traditions upon which Vilakazi based his borrowings from the *izibongo*, and leveled an extensive criticism of the poet's use of a verbatim passage from Shaka's praises in the poem, "USHaka kaSenzangakhona" ("Shaka, Son of Senzangakhona"): Once a traditional poem has been composed it becomes a fund from which anyone can draw whatever sounds impressive or is applicable to his personality or deeds or circumstances. It is probably in this spirit that Vilakazi borrowed so freely from the well-known praises. He sometimes transferred portions into his poems without changing them at all. Some sections are altered in the new poem. In other poems he only employed the style of *izibongo* (Ntuli 1984, 18-19).

Perhaps another way to read "USHaka kaSenzangakhona" is to take it together with "Ngizw' ingoma" ("I Hear a Singing ...") and "Ithongo Lokwazi" ("The Muse of Learning"). At the beginning of "Ngizw' ingoma," the narrator (presumably Vilakazi) finds "little worth" in Zulu "tribal [sic] songs" which eventually "haunt" him, "[echo] in [his] heart," and ultimately inspire a "longing to preserve" Zulu traditions. The songs that poets of the past "have perfected" now "torment [his] soul with eagerness to match them." In "Ithongo Lokwazi," the speaker implores his muse to give him "knowledge of his people's heritage, /That I, endowed with power to record it,/May pass it on to Zulus yet unborn!" In this context, then, the first four lines of "USHaka kaSenzangakhona," taken directly from the praises of Shaka, serve as an epigraph. The three stanzas that follow are addressed to the Zulu people/nation and serve as a clarion to awaken them and to reacquaint them with the glories of their past so that they will remember and preserve their cultural heritage. In these lines, presuming that Vilakazi is himself the speaker, Vilakazi demonstrated his "return to the source" by declaring that he had discovered and was taking up "his true vocation:/to sing in praise of Shaka." Calling the Zulu people "ignorant" and "uninstructed," he grew "weary" of their "folly and indifference," and vested himself in the garb of an *in* while announcing to them that he was preparing to sing Shaka's praises:

Give me the skin to wrap around my loins! Give
me too my feathered head-dress! Give me as
well my assegai!—
For I am about to sing my song of praise

*Of spears that stabbed the very flanks Of
waves upon the seashore.*

The poet-turned-modern imbongi then offers 18 stanzas of praises directly to Shaka before returning to address the Zulu people again, this time calling them to unite and "dance, unfettered, in his honour!"

*So let us dance or use our eager pens
In praise of all the victories
Of him they spoke of as "The Hoe"—
Of Shaka, the mightiest Hoe of all!
Let us tell how tribes once reeled and fell,
Their blood congealed with shock and terror!
(Vilakazi 1935)*

Within this context, and in light of Ntuli's assertion that Vilakazi frequently employed the *style* of *izibongo*, therefore, it is possible to consider the last half of *Inkondlo kaZulu* as modern *izibongo* that sing the praises of Shaka, Vilakazi's natal home at the Groutville Mission near Dukuza (Shaka's great place), Solomon Dinizulu (the grandson of Cetshwayo), Ghanaian scholar J. E. K. Aggrey, Death, and the Roman Catholic mission at Mariannhill.

Similarly, taking the first two poems from *Amal'eZulu* ("Ugqozi" [Inspiration] and "Imbongi" [The Poet]) together shows Vilakazi consciously and intentionally taking on the role of Zulu national royal *imbongi*. In the former, the speaker is called to Dukuza (Shaka's great place) and receives his commission as *imbongi* from Mnkabayi, Shaka's great-aunt:

*Thus now I can never be silent
Because in the depths of the night
Mnkabayi arouses me saying:
"Arise, O you son of Mancinza!
Your destiny bids you to waken
And sing to us legends of battle:
This charge, I command you, fulfill!"*

In the latter, Vilakazi praised the amabongi of the past, acknowledged them as the source of his inspiration, and took his place along side them:

*O how can I capture thoughts which haunt me now?
Are these my words or yours, O deathless Muse?*

*And do I voice the truth or fatuous nonsense?
Before you claimed my soul, the earth was dark,
Pathless, mysterious: then I, inspired by you,
Could open my ears to singers of the past, And
grasping the poet's staff, pursue his path. O let
my songs as well, blaze trails on earth!*

Conclusion

This preliminary study of poets associated with these movements suggests that taken collectively, the movements comprise an early Black intellectual response to the effects of racialized forms of twentieth century industrial capitalism and an effort to develop and practice freely their own cultural identities. Scholars such as Emmanuel Eze have shown the development and operation of European racial ideologies in the Atlantic world dating to the early sixteenth century (*Race and the Enlightenment*). With the abolition of slavery as the principle mode of production throughout the nineteenth century, these ideologies significantly informed the subsequent models of "free labor" associated, for example, with the rise of the corporate-sponsored industrial and mineral revolutions in the United States and South Africa respectively, or the state-sponsored collective agricultural schemes of the Portuguese government. In the case of the United States, Black migration from the rural South to urban areas in the North and South set the stage for the Harlem Renaissance, as did African migration to mines and cities on the Rand in South Africa for the New African movement, whereas emigration from Cape Verde prepared the ground for *Claridade*.

The *Claridosos* knew of and read the Negritude authors, which suggests a possible indirect influence of Harlem on *Claridade*. Harlem literatus Claude McKay wrote of Cape Verdean sailors in his novel *Banjo*. Similarly, that Tim Couzens has shown the influence of Locke's seminal essay, "The New Negro," on Herbert Dhlomo's thought, that Brian Willan has highlighted Sol Plaatje's address to the 1921 Pan-African congress in Paris and his interactions with W.E.B. Du Bois, and that Bhekizizwe Peterson has demonstrated the influence of Langston Hughes' poetry on several of B.W. Vilakazi's works establish that there were definite links between Black Southern African literary cultural nationalists and the other movements (Couzens 1-35; Willan 300-25; Peterson 102).

Ohio University

Appendix

#1. Langston Hughes, "Aunt Sue's Stories"

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.
Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.
Summer nights on the front porch
Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom
And tells him stories.

Black slaves
Working in the hot sun,
And black slaves
Walking in the dewy night,
And black slaves
Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river
Mingle themselves softly
In the flow of old Aunt Sue's voice
Mingle themselves softly
In the dark shadows that cross and recross
Aunt Sue's stories.

And the dark-faced child, listening,
Knows that Aunt Sue's stories are real stories.
He knows that Aunt Sue
Never got her stories out of any book at all,
But that they came
Right out of her own life.

And the dark-faced child is quiet Of a summer night
Listening to Aunt Sue's stories. (Hughes 1926a, 57)

#2. Langston Hughes, "Mother to Son"

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—

Bare.
 But all the time
 I've been a-climbin' on,
 And reachin' landin's,
 And turnin' corners,
 And sometimes goin' in the dark
 Where there ain't been no light.
 So boy, don't you turn back.
 Don't you set down on the steps
 'Cause you finds its kinder hard.
 Don't you fall now—
 For I've still goin', honey,
 I've still climbin',
 And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
 (Hughes 1926a, 107)

#3. Langston Hughes, "Lament for Dark People"

I was a red man one time, But the white men
 came. I was a black man too, But the white
 men came.

They drove me out of the forest. They took me away
 from the jungles. I lost my trees. I lost my silver moons.

Now they've caged me In the circus of civilization. Now I
 herd with the many-Caged in the circus of civilization.
 (Hughes 1926a, 100)

#4. Langston Hughes, "The White Ones"

I do not hate you,
 For your faces are beautiful, too.
 I do not hate you,
 Your faces are whirling lights of loveliness and splendor, too.
 Yet why do you torture me,
 O, white strong ones,

Why do you torture me?
 (Hughes 1926a, 106)

#5. Manuel Lopes, "Ecran"

*Para alem destas ondas que nao param nunca,
 atras deste horizonte sempre igual,
 no extremo destes sulcos brancos sobre o mar azul
 (cinzento nos dias de ventania)
 que as helices deixaram, impelindo
 os cascos inquietos dos vapores...
 -(Sonhos rolando sobre um abismo de Iroia:
 promessas de outro mundo mats lindo,
 -o meus gritos interiores!...)*

*-ha outros gritos diferentes,
 os olhos cheios de outra imagem do mundo,
 nemos febris picados do delirio da civilizacao
 que a distancia do Atlântico dissolve antes de chegar;
 ha o «homem no meio da multidao»;
 ha as grandes perspectivas dos continentes
 aonde nao chega a cancao evocativa do quebra-mar;...*

*E fico mudo
 ouvindo o vento a cantar na penedia,
 olhando as ondas que nao param nunca,
 o horisynthe sempre igual,
 e este sulco branco que umas helices deixarem no mar
 (onde se desfazem os ultimas esgares numa longa ironia
 e no extremo do qual
 flutua ainda
 o perfil dum vapor que nao me quis levar)...(Lopes 1936a)⁴*

"Beyond these waves that never cease, behind this horizon ever the same, at the farthest limit of these white furrows about the blue sea (ashen in the days of the high wind) that the propellers abandoned, pushing the anxious hulls of the steamship—(dreams swirling about an abyss of irony; promises of another more beautiful world, oh my internal cries!— there are other different cries, the eyes full of another image of the world, febrile sinews pierced with the delirium of civilization which the distance of the Atlantic dissolves before arriving; there is the "man amidst the multitude"; there are the grand vistas of the continents where the evocative song of the seabreak does not reach...And I remain silent listening to the wind sing on the rocks, watching the waves that never end, the horizon

#6. Manuel Lopes, "Poema de Quern Ficou"

*Eu nao te quero mnal
par este orgulho que tu trazes;
Par este ar de triunfo iluminado
com que voltas...
...O mundo nao e maior
que apupila dos teus olhos:
tem a grandeza
da tua inquietafao e das tuas revoltas.*

*...Que teu irmao quejlcou
sonhou coisas maiores ainda,
mats be las que aquelas que conheceste...
Crispou as maos a beira-do-mar
e teve saudades estranhas, de terras estranhas,
com bosques, com rios, com outras montanhas,
-bosques de nevoa, rios de prata, montanhas de oiro— que nunca viram teus olhos
no mundo que percorreste..?
(Lopes 1936b)*

#7. Jorge Barbosa, "Presenca"

*Nao seiporque e que traces
essa interrogafao inquieta
no teu olhar...
eu conhefo-te; tens acompanhado a minha sombra
nem sei ha quantos seculos!*

always the same, and this white furrow that the propellers leave in the sea (where they undo the last frowns of a long irony and at the farthest end of which still floats the outline of a steamship that did not want to take me)..."

5 "I do not wish you ill for this pride that you bear; For this air of illuminated triumph with which you return...The world is not larger than the pupil of your eyes; it has the greatness of your anxiety and of your revulsions...That your brother who remained dreamed things greater still, more beautiful than those that you knew...He wrung his hands at the edge of the sea and had unknown longings for unknown lands, with forest, with rivers, with other mountains,—forests of mist, rivers of silver, mountains of gold— which your eyes had never seen in the world that you traversed..."

Mamaizinha

*quando dormita na cadeira de balanco
par certo nao e tao velha
como o teu sorriso moco
que rompe na tua face morena
como flor de cardeal
abrindo ao sol...*

*Eu sinto
para alem da tua epiderme dejambo dourado
o lirismo antigo da minha rafa
crudficada
na encruzilhada
de duas sensibilidades...*

*Que segredos sao esses
que trazes na bandeja sorridente
do teu beijo crioulo?*

*...talvez a avozinha muito velha
que vem Id de trds,
dos corredores sem fundo das geracoes
nesta minha terra de torturadas
esperancas
que morrem todos os dias—
e nunca morrem
porque cada dia ressuscitam
na aleluia perpetuadora
dos teus beijos...*

*Mas quero renascer
no beijo dos teus labios morenos! (Barbosa 1936a)⁶*

6 "I don't know why is it is that you carry that uneasy questioning in your gaze...I know you; you have accompanied my shadow for I know not how many centuries! Darling Mother when you sleep in the rocking chair certainly you are not so old like your young smile that breaks on your dark face like a sunflower opening to the sun...I feel beyond the skin of your golden leg the ancient lyricism of my race crucified in the crossroads of two sensibilities...What secrets are those that you carry in the smiling banner of your Creole kiss?...perhaps the ancient voice that comes from behind, the depthless corridors of the generations in this my land of tortured hopes that die every day and never die because they arise in the perpetual alleluia of your kisses...But I want to be reborn in the kiss of your dark lips!"

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#8. Baltasar Lopes da Silva, "Mamai"

*Mamai-Terra,
venho rezar uma oracao ao pe de ti.
Teo filho vem dirigir suas suplicas a Deus
Nossenhor por ele
par ti
pelos outros teus filhos-espalhados
na superfine cinzenta do teu venire matir, Mamai-Terra.*

*Mamaizinha,
dorme, dorme,
mas, pela Virgem Nossa Senhora,
quando te acordares
nao te zangues comigo
e com os outros meninos
que se alimentem da ternura das tuas entranhas.*

*Mamaizinha,
eu queria dizer minha oracao
mas nao posso;
minha oracao adormece
nos meus olhos, que choram a tua dor
de nos queres alimentar
e nao poderes.*

*Mamai-Terra,
disseram-me que tu morreste
e foste sepultada numa mortalha de chuva,
O que eu chorei!
Sinto sempre tao presents no meu coracao
o teu gesto de te levatares
buscando o pao para as nossas bocas de riancas
e nos dirigires a consolanca das tuas palavras sempre animadoras...*

*Eu procurei o teu tumulto e nao o enmntrei.
E depois,*

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*na minha dor de filho angustiado,
me disseram que te haviam sepultado numa
migalha de terra
no meio do mar.*

*Embarquei num veleiro
E fui navegando, navegando...*

*Nao morreste, nao, Mamaizinha?
Estas apenas adormecida
para amanha te levatares.
Amanha, quando saires,
eu pegarei o balaio
e irei atras de ti,
e tu sonirds para todo o povo
que vierpedir-te a bencao.
Tu nos deitards a bencao.
E eu me alimentarei do teu imenso carinho..
Mamaizinha, afasta-te um bocadinho
e deixa o teu filho adormecer ao pe de ti...
(Alcantara 1936)*

7 "Mother-Earth, I come to pray a prayer at your feet. Your son comes to dkect his supplications to God Our Lord for him [self] for you for your other sons—spread out on the ashen face of your martyred womb, Mother-Earth. Mama, sleep, sleep, but, by the Virgin Our Lady, when you wake up don't be angry with me and with the other children who feed on the tenderness of your heart. Mama, I want to speak my prayer but I can't; my prayer sleeps within my eyes, that cry for your pain because you wish to feed us but you can't. Mother-Earth, they told me that you died and were buried in a tomb of rain, Oh what I wept! I always feel so present in my heart your grimace of your rising [and] searching for the bread for our children's mouths and you give us the consolation of your words, ever sustaining...! sought your grave and I could not find it. And after, in my pain of an anxious son, they told me that they had buried you in a coffin of earth in the middle of the sea. I set sail in a sailboat and I was sailing, sailing...You didn't die, did you, Mama? You're only sleeping for tomorrow you will arise. Tomorrow, when you depart I shall take the lute and I shall follow you, and you shall smile for all the people who will come to ask your blessing. You will leave us your blessing. And I shall feed myself on your immense love...Mama, step back a little and let your son sleep at your feet."

#9. Jorge Barbosa, "Poema"

*Cruzaste
mares na amntura de pesca da baleia,
ness as viagens para a America
de onde as vezes os navios nao voltam mais.*

*Tens as maos calosas, de puxar
as enxdrcias dos barquinhos no mar alto;
viviste horas ed expectativas crueis
na luta com as tempestades;
aborreceu-te esse tedio maritmo
das longas calmarias intermindveis.*

*Sob o color infernal dasfornalhas
alimentaste de carvao as caldeiras dos vapores em
tempo de paz
em tempo de guerra.*

*E amaste com o impeto sensual da nossa gente as
mulheres nos portos estrangeiros!*

*Em terra
nestas pobres ilhas nossas
es o homem de enxada
abrindo levadas a agua das ribeiras ferteis,
cavando a terra seca nas regoes ingratas
onde as vezes a chuva mal chegada
onde as vezes a estiagem e uma aflicao
e uma cendrio trdgico defame?⁸
(Barbosa 1936b)*

⁸ "You crossed seas in the dangerous enterprise "You crossed seas in the dangerous enterprise of whaling, on those journeys to America from where boats sometimes don't return. Your hands are calloused from pushing the shrouds and stays of the sailboats on the high sea; you've lived hours of cruel expectations in the fight with the storms; you were bored by the maritime tedium of unending doldrums. Beneath the infernal heat of the fireboxes you fed on the coal in the boiler of the steamships in times of peace in times of war. And you loved with the ardor of our people women in foreign ports! On land in these our poor islands you are the man of the hoe opening levies to the water of fertile streams digging the dry earth in ungrateful regions where at times the rains come poorly where at times drought is an affliction and a scene of famine!"

#10. Jorge Barbosa, "Povo"

*a Osorio de Oliveira
Conflito numa alma so
de duas almas contrarias
buscando-se, amalgamando-se
numa secular fusao;
conflito num sangue so
do sangue forte africano
com o sangue aventureiro
dos homens da Expansao;*

*conflito num ser somente
de dois polos em contacto
na insistente projecfao
de muitas geracoes...*

*N'alma do povo ficou
esta ansiedade profunda
—qualquer coisa de indedso
entre o dim a tropicale o espelho de Portugal...
(Barbosa 1935b)*

"People"
to Osorio de Oliveira

Conflict in one soul only
of two conflicting spirits
searching for each other, amalgamating each other
in an age-old fusion;

conflict in one blood only of the strong african blood with the
adventurous blood of the men of the Expansion;

conflict in one being only of two poles in contact in the insistent
projection of many generations...

In the soul of the people
 remained
 this profound anxiety
 —any indecisive thing
 between the tropical climate
 and die mirror of Portugal...

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