

Rudyard Kipling and T. S. Eliot on the Portuguese in Gloucester, Massachusetts

Rudyard Kipling e T.S. Eliot sobre os portugueses em Gloucester, Massachusetts

REINALDO FRANCISCO SILVA*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Os luso-americanos no ecrã, os luso-americanos e os estereótipos, Os portugueses em Gloucester, Rudyard Kipling e os portugueses, T. S. Eliot e os portugueses.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese Americans on the Screen, Portuguese Americans and Stereotypes, The Portuguese in Gloucester, Rudyard Kipling and the Portuguese, T. S. Eliot and the Portuguese.

This essay focuses on the representations of the Portuguese fishermen in Gloucester, Massachusetts, by the acclaimed British Writer, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), during his so-called American phase, in 1892, that is, while he lived there for a spell, and T. S. Eliot's (1888-1965) recollections of this fishing town and beach resort while he vacationed there, and subsequently immortalized in *The Four Quartets* (1943).

Although there are about six well-known American films featuring the Portuguese in the United States – *Captains Courageous*, *Tortilla Flat*, *Mystic Pizza*, *The Accused*, *Phenomenon*, and *Passionada* – the one that will be discussed here is *Captain Courageous* since it (and Kipling's eponymous novel) as well as Eliot's poem both focus on the fishing-town of Gloucester, located North of Boston.

All these films refer to the Portuguese in the United States, especially in the locations where they have settled in the past, but for the purposes of this essay, the aim is to ascertain the ways in which this particular ethnic group in Gloucester was represented by the powerful movie industry based in Hollywood. Intent on producing first-rate entertainment for the world at large, Hollywood, nonetheless, has perpetuated stereotypes of the subordinate Other – even if rendered indirectly or through innuendo as this industry has learned to adapt in times of change, especially in those films marked by postcolonial,

* Centro de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas (CLLC), Universidade de Aveiro.

multicultural, and ethnic discourse. A close-up view of these movies with Americans of Portuguese descent may help us to understand better Hollywood's penchant for "playing in the dark," as Toni Morrison has described in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1993) the representation of blacks and other ethnic minorities in the United States. Representations of the Portuguese in American fiction, for example, are clearly predicated on prevailing theories of race in America during the second half of the nineteenth-century and have persisted throughout most of the second half of the twentieth. Without a doubt, Hollywood was shaped by this ideology even if it tried to reach wider audiences than most writers of fiction. Racism, Morrison contends, is "as healthy today as it was during the Enlightenment" (Morrison, 1993, p. 63). Furthermore, she notes, 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" (Morrison, 1993, p. 63). As I have shown in *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature*, Americans have been obsessed by skin color and that the darker complexion of Southern Europeans has produced anxiety and discomfort in Americans of Northern European stock. As I have shown in section two of this study, this is quite evident in several representations of a few fictional characters from this background.

My aim here is, therefore, to analyze the ways in which the cinematographic adaptation of *Captains Courageous* (1937) either resisted or maintained late nineteenth-century social Darwinist racist discourse to suit the needs of the screen, especially in times when this rhetoric was being toned down in the United States even as totalitarian regimes were establishing themselves in Europe (Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal). Whereas Kipling endorsed the "colonial gaze" (to adopt Homi Bhabha's postcolonial discourse), Victor Fleming's cinematographic adaptations of Kipling's novel either eliminate that gaze altogether, or circumscribe it to a particular Portuguese American character, or simply focus on the "swarthy" look of a given character. These changes suggest that certain film scripts were written so as to expunge – as much as possible – the racist rhetoric applied to the characters in the original novels.

As for the subtle, brief references to the Portuguese in T. S. Eliot's seminal poem, *The Four Quartets*, a series of four poems by T. S. Eliot, these were published individually from 1936 to 1942 and in book form in 1943; the work is considered to be Eliot's masterpiece. Unlike Kipling's novel, Eliot's allusions to or echoes of the Portuguese fishermen in Gloucester are, instead, subtle and indirect and, for this reason, they have not been dutifully acknowledged.

Unfortunately, a book along the lines of *Italian and Irish Filmmakers in America: Ford, Capra, Coppola, and Scorsese* by Lee Lourdeaux but applied to Portuguese Americans is yet to emerge. Lourdeaux's book focuses on how Italian and Irish filmmakers' contributions to the American movie industry altered the nation's cultural landscape. Understandably, at this point, the Portuguese in America cannot make such claims, since there is no movie on Portuguese American issues directed by a prominent director with a Portuguese background. Moreover, Portuguese Americans do not loom widely in American movies either and the few references to the aforementioned movies are scattered. Before delving at length into both authors and their representations of the Portuguese fishermen in their works (as well as the movie director of *Captains Courageous*), I must first provide a historical synopsis of when and why the Portuguese (mostly Azoreans) settled down in this fishing town on Cape Ann, Massachusetts.

Gloucester: A town that attracted the Portuguese to the local fisheries

In *The Portuguese-Americans*, published in 1981, Leo Pap writes that "To the fishing community of Gloucester, on Cape Ann, a first small group of Azoreans came between 1845 and 1847, and larger numbers were attracted by the fisheries in the next two decades" (Pap, 1981, p. 22). Slowly, this "Portuguese colony" increased during the ensuing years, listing 466 Portuguese residents there in 1885, followed by 711 (1895), 758 (1905), and later on, in 1915, a total of 943 Portuguese-speaking inhabitants (Pap, 1981, pp. 55-56). During the so-called "Dormancy Period, 1922-1958," a time when immigration restrictions were in effect (mostly due to the Eugenics movement and its white supremacy agenda along with the Ku Klux Klan also targeting the Catholics), as of 1960, Pap notes that there were "1,379 at Gloucester (down from 2,000 to 3,000 in previous decades, as some of the fishing people moved south to Georgia, Florida, etc." (Pap, 1981, p. 85). In the early decades of the twentieth-century, with a "shift from hook and line to netting and trapping, plus motorization of vessels, the waning of commercial fishing activities in New England," these changes, notes Pap, "have not been able to prevent the shrinking of the industry. Provincetown, with its largely Portuguese-American population, now lives more on tourism than on fishing. The same is true to a lesser extent of Gloucester" (Pap, 1981, p. 134).

Considering that most of these fishermen and their families were devout Catholics, Pap has written that in "1884 a group of Azorean settlers in

Gloucester, Massachusetts, bought land to build what was going to be their Church of Our Lady of Good Voyage (a fitting invocation for a fishing colony)” (Pap, 1981, p. 178). Although in New England “there is no record of a Holy Ghost celebration before the turn of the century,” Pap mentions that there “was one at Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1902 for the first time” (Pap, 1981, p. 194). Along with these celebrations, the institution of the Blessing of the Fleet, notes Pap, became a regular, yearly practice: “The blessing of the fishing fleet, traditional in Lisbon each April before the departure of codfishing vessels for Newfoundland, was instituted by the Portuguese-Americans at Gloucester in 1944” (Pap, 1981, pp. 273-74). With some of this important historical information on the town of Gloucester and the Azorean/Portuguese people who lived and worked there as a backdrop, let us now ascertain how this ethnic minority was portrayed by Kipling, Eliot, and the movie director of *Captains Courageous*.

An earlier Hollywood adaptation of a novel featuring Portuguese ethnics: From racist fictional representations to ambivalent cinematic uplift

In this section, my goal is to provide a context for Rudyard Kipling’s novel, *Captains Courageous* (1897), featuring Portuguese characters, the manner in which they were represented, and how they were subsequently adapted by Hollywood so as to meet the cinematographic and cultural demands of the time.

Captains Courageous (1897) was published at a time when social Darwinism was a forceful presence in American and British letters. George Monteiro rightly observes 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” (Monteiro, 1979, p. 172). This novel narrates the changes a rich and spoiled Anglo-Saxon boy undergoes after falling off a passenger ship and being rescued by Gloucester fishermen. His transformation into a mature young man is owing to the valuable experience he has on the schooner *We’re Here* under the tutelage of hardworking multi-ethnic fishermen, especially that of Manuel. These characters of humble background are uneducated but deeply civilized and teach the spoiled boy the values of hard work, loyalty, endurance, and duty. Significantly, the boy’s metamorphosis occurs as the crew struggles against the overpowering forces of an unpredictable and indifferent sea. While the changes Harvey

Cheyne undergoes are central, Kipling's portrayal of Manuel, an ordinary Portuguese fisherman originally from the island of Madeira, is also significant. At first, Kipling depicts Manuel as "showing a pair of little gold rings half hidden in curly black hair" (Kipling, 1982, p. 4), hence associating him with a pirate and later on Harvey suspects Manuel as being the one who had stolen his money. As the novel progresses, these images fade out as Manuel's true humanism comes to the fore.

This synopsis of the novel can help us understand how much had changed in America by 1937 when Hollywood released the eponymous movie. What was kept from the original script, what was discarded, and how did Hollywood adapt this story for the screen and for wider audiences?

Victor Fleming (1889-1949) directed the film in 1937, featuring Freddie Bartholomew (Harvey) and Spencer Tracy (Manuel). Fleming's most popular films were *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939), for which he won an Academy Award for Best Director. *Captains Courageous* was advertised as an MGM coming-of-age classic and a family adventure film. In this movie Manuel Fidello rescues Harvey and initially has a very difficult task in making him drop his haughty ways.

Manuel has a swarthy look even if we are watching a black and white movie. Unlike the overall racial denigration in the novel, Manuel's complexion does not arouse any anxiety among the crew, and the only actor who comments on his ethnic background and ways is Long Jack (John Carradine). He often teases Manuel and makes fun of his spoken English when addressing him: "Listen, Portugoosey" or "Keep out of this, Portugoosey." As I have shown in *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature*, the word Portagee or a variation on it is charged with racist connotations, especially in texts featuring Portuguese immigrants and written by American writers of a predominantly WASP background. While Manuel's (more specifically, Spencer Tracy's) English is certainly a bit funny and often ungrammatical, so is his Portuguese. After supper, he usually enjoys playing his concertina while Harvey listens to him. "Hey ho, little fish, don't cry, don't cry!" he sings to the fish while saying the following to Harvey: "I guess you don't know nothing." While he tells Harvey that ten million people know Portuguese – unmindful of Brazilian Portuguese or the Portuguese spoken by the natives in Portugal's overseas colonies in Africa and elsewhere at the time – he reminisces about the hardships experienced by fishermen: "A vida que leva um pescador!" From Spencer Tracy's lips, what is said to be Portuguese, in fact, sounds more like Italian.

Whereas the novel focuses on Portuguese fishermen “jabber[ing]...in their own language” and “howling” in Portuguese (Kipling, 1982, p. 90), Frantz Fanon has noted in *The Wretched of the Earth* that the use of animal imagery is typical of colonialism, although it also reflects the *fin-de-siècle* naturalist context (Fanon, 1990, pp. 32-33). Despite Harvey being rescued by Manuel, at the end of the novel, Mrs. Cheyne persists in viewing Manuel as a subordinate, since she would appreciate having him as a butler, given his skills in the dining room. After singing about some beautiful lady or *amada*, Manuel reminisces about his father. He tells Harvey that he had been the best fisherman in the whole Madeira Island. Moreover, he had been the one who taught him his trade as a fisherman, and taught him to sing and play his instrument. A skilled fisherman, Manuel is a happy, easy-going man who is generally content with life.

Lourdeaux argues that Catholics (Italians and Irish) held on to their religion even if they discarded other ethnic signs (Lourdeaux, 1990, pp. 12-13). In this film, this dynamic also applies to Manuel in the sense that he has made an effort to integrate within the mainstream of American life on board a fishing boat, for he is somewhat proficient in the English language and American ways, but he also stresses his Catholic religious convictions and biblical insight. He comes across to Harvey as a very religious man; on occasion, he compares their plight on the *We're Here* to the biblical passage in *Matthew* where Christ tells Simon to cast the net into the Sea of Galilee. He has also vowed to light candles in his father's memory at Gloucester's Portuguese church. Manuel's respect and admiration for his own father have a strong impact on Harvey's spirit, for the boy's eyes are once seen brimming with tears. Harvey tells Manuel he is not sure he wants to go back home and live with his father. He wants to stay with Manuel and learn to become a skilled fisherman like him.

During a race back to the Gloucester port against the *Jennie Cushman*, Manuel volunteers to climb to the top of the mast to furl the sail, but he is injured when the mast collapses due to the bad weather. Tangled by the ropes and badly hurt, Manuel drowns while Harvey screams in anguish. As Manuel is sinking, the camera zooms in on the cross on his necklace, which further highlights his religious zeal. Not only has Harvey lost a surrogate father, but he has also lost his best friend.

The movie ends with the remaining crew arriving safely in Gloucester. Long Jack gives Manuel's penknife to Harvey as a token of friendship and possibly to atone for his arrogance. Harvey also keeps Manuel's instrument. He walks to the local Portuguese church on Portagee Hill and lights three

candles – two for Manuel’s father and another one for himself and Manuel and prays for a few minutes while his own father is eavesdropping. As I will show ahead à propos of T. S. Eliot’s literary references to Portagee Hill in “The Dry Salvages” section of *Four Quartets*, this part is saturated with Portuguese culture, and the Lady of the Cape is the Statue of the Virgin Mary located at the local Portuguese church. Harvey asks God for an extra seat in the dory with Manuel and his father. The last scene takes place by the statue honoring the Fishermen of Gloucester – to those who go down to the sea – where a memorial service is presided over by a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister so as to acknowledge this community’s religious diversity. Together, both church representatives call out the names of the drowned fishermen while family members cast a wreath of flowers into the sea. When Manuel Fidello’s name is mentioned, Harvey and his dad throw a bouquet of flowers, too. With tears in his eyes, Harvey is the only one left to mourn him. He is the surrogate son Manuel never had the chance to father.

Compared to the novel, Harvey has evolved into a sensitive human being and is accepting of Otherness. For a Hollywood movie released in 1937, it is quite amazing to realize that the racist rhetoric current scholars of multiculturalism, ethnic studies, and postcolonialism have identified as still thriving during the late thirties has been, in fact, practically expunged from this film. The skimpy criticism this movie has received misses out on this awareness. While Geoff Andrew has written in *The Time Out Film Guide* that this movie, “based on a Kipling story,” is “hardly great art, but it passes the time,” the unnamed reviewer in *Halliwel’s Film Guide* notes that *Captains Courageous* is a “semi-classic Hollywood family film which is not all that enjoyable while it’s on but is certainly a good example of the prestige picture of the thirties.” It “also happened,” this reviewer contends, “to be a good box-office” success (Milne, 1991, p. 197). Whereas these reviewers stress the incipient artistry of the movie, they nonetheless overlook its concern with issues related to ethnic realism and awareness – well before such trends became popular – a concern which contemporary scholars of literature and film studies highly value when revisiting such classic movies. The ambivalence and racial stereotyping on display at the end of Kipling’s novel are hardly seen in this film because, on the one hand, Harvey’s mother remains estranged, and, on the other hand, the two males – father and son – have become accepting of Otherness. The same apology could be made for Hollywood; in just forty years after the original story was published as a novel, in this movie, at least, the script-writers (John Lee Mahn, Marc Connelly, and Dale Van Every) resisted

“playing in the dark.” This was also the case with Eliot, as we will now move onto, in the “The Dry Salvages” section of *The Four Quartets*.

The Portuguese fishermen from Gloucester in T. S. Eliot’s *The Four Quartets*

Lady, whose shrine stands on the promontory,
Pray for all those who are in ships, those
Whose business has to do with fish, and
Those concerned with every lawful traffic
And those who conduct them.

Repeat a prayer also on behalf of
Women who have seen their sons or husbands
Setting forth, and not returning:
Figlia del tuo figlio,
Queen of Heaven.
“The Dry Salvages,” IV (T. S. Eliot, 1980, p. 135)

In a recent article, Nancy D. Hargrove has called our attention to T. S. Eliot’s allusion to the “Lady, whose shrine stands on the promontory” in Part IV of “The Dry Salvages” as a possible reference to Our Lady of Good Voyage Church on Portagee Hill above the harbor of Gloucester, Massachusetts. This church, which I had the opportunity to visit in May of 2001, is located on Prospect Street, one of the highest points on Cape Ann. Eliot scholars are indebted to Hargrove for clarifying a few details and dates related to this issue since Eliot has often misled his readers when referring to the passage in question. Not only has Hargrove indirectly called our attention to the presence of Portuguese cultural motifs in what, in my view, is Eliot’s most famous poem, *The Four Quartets*, collected in 1943, she has also, in passing, whetted our appetite for a fuller understanding of the contributions of Portuguese immigrants to the local economy. The “invisible minority” in the United States which M. Estellie Smith noticed – and complained about – when referring to the Portuguese less than three decades ago, are more visible than we are often aware of (Prologue: Vieira, Gomes, and Cabral, 1989; Smith, 1974, pp. 81-91). This passage is, without a doubt, a case in point. While Hargrove has definitively – and convincingly – linked Eliot’s passage to Our Lady of Good Voyage Church, my goal is to contribute to this on-going discussion with a few cultural,

economic, and ethnographic elements related to the Portuguese presence in this New England fishing town so as to analyze the impact of Portuguese emigration to Gloucester, while providing an understanding of how Portuguese immigrants were received there and how Portuguese culture was transmitted to and received in America. In questioning this “invisibility,” especially in the most famous poem of the twentieth-century, I would, for the moment, argue that this is typical of the Portuguese experience in the United States as I have shown in chapter one of *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature* (2008). The Portuguese are, in fact, present in numerous works of American fiction, but the study of the fictional representations drawn from this ethnic group has received little or no attention by Portuguese American scholars. This poem is another example of how certain canonical writings produced by American writers are saturated with Portuguese elements. What the poem begs for is that someone bring these to the fore.

Hargrove states that this matter has occupied her attention since 1974 when she was doing research for her book, *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (1978) (Hargrove, 2001, p. 2). The two pictures in this book which I am particularly interested in, are the one of the Virgin and the other of the front façade of Our Lady of Good Voyage Church in Gloucester. When linking landscape with Eliot’s passage, in this book Hargrove offers no clue in what concerns the “ethnic signs” – to quote William Boelhower – which permeate the fourth section of Eliot’s “The Dry Salvages” (Boelhower, 1987, p. 36). Hargrove identifies the shrine on the promontory as belonging to “Our Lady of Good Voyage Church high on a hill overlooking Gloucester Harbor.” “The Virgin of this church,” she further adds, “is the patroness of the Gloucester fishermen, their protectress and guardian,” without any ethnic attribution (Hargrove, 1978, pp. 179-80). Hargrove omits any discussion of the fishing subculture which the Portuguese fishermen brought to the Gloucester shores. Although this section of Eliot’s poem is soaked with themes which are quintessentially Portuguese – *fado* and *saudade* – to my knowledge, no one has ever assessed them effectively. This passage is replete with “ethnic signs” and is waiting for someone to flesh them out (Boelhower, 1987, p. 36).

It is possible that most Americans may not be familiar with these terms and what they represent. Briefly, *fado* can mean at least two things. Whereas in both the English and Portuguese languages it means fate or destiny, in Portuguese, however, *fado* is also a genre or type of music – sung either in Lisbon or by certain students enrolled at the University of Coimbra – in which its lyrics and music are overwhelmingly sad and charged with a sense of fatalism.

Katherine Vaz's story, "Math Bending Unto Angels" in *Fado & Other Stories* (1997), blends both nuances quite effectively. When Helio asks Clara if she knows how to sing any *fados*, we learn that these "were the Portuguese songs of fate, a kind of possession by love and sadness that must start below the diaphragm and reverberate in the throat before leaving the singer's body" (Vaz, 1997, p. 45). In the story "Fado," Vaz has also noted that the "*fados* wailing from our record players remind us that without love we will die, that the oceans are salty because the Portuguese have shed so many tears on their beaches for those they will never hold again" (Vaz, 1997, pp. 97-98). This is a perfect explanation of the mood evoked by Eliot's passage. In what regards *saudade*, in the cover-page of her first novel, *Saudade* (1994), Katherine Vaz translates this as a "Portuguese word considered untranslatable. One definition: Yearning so intense for those who are missing, or for vanished times or places, that their absence is the most profound presence in one's life." These are the feelings Eliot arouses when he invokes Our Lady of Good Voyage to bring solace to those women whose son or husband have perished at sea.

It should be noted, however, that James M. Darby S.M. identified and associated the "Lady" in Eliot's poem with the Portuguese Catholic church in Gloucester much earlier than Hargrove. In the essay "Our Lady of Good Voyage," published in 1956, not only does Darby quote Eliot's passage under review, he also associates the church with the Portuguese community on Portagee Hill and invites the "vacationing pilgrim" in Gloucester for a visit to the church and to the Blessing of the Fleet on St. John the Baptist, held each year on June 24th" (Darby, 1956, p. 13).

Most critics agree that the excerpted passage expresses a "concern with the life of a community." A. D. Moody goes on to argue that in stanzas four and five of "The Dry Salvages" Eliot "might be thinking of the fishermen of Gloucester, Mass., about whom he had written in 1928, 'There is no harder life, no more uncertain livelihood, and few more dangerous occupations... Gloucester has many widows, and no trip is without anxiety for those at home'" (Moody, 1979, p. 225). Eliot does not single the Portuguese out since there were also fishermen from other ethnic backgrounds working on Gloucester's fleets. But, as Alice Rose Krueger has shown in the pamphlet, *History of the Parish of Our Lady of Good Voyage*,

For three generations the Portuguese-American fleet out o' Gloucester played a prominent part in the fishing industry of New England and the United States. The men who manned this fleet have stood out as skilled, strong, daring, and

religious. They were men who struggled through the gales of the North Atlantic in search of a livelihood for themselves and their families. Such a life makes a man and his family realize with singular intensity their absolute dependence on God for success in their work and for their safety. It was men and women of this type who made up the parish of Our Lady of Good Voyage. (Krueger, 1989, p. 16).

In the first citation, Eliot explores the feelings of anxiety and loss Gloucester widows have experienced. He argues that these transcend ethnic barriers and, thus, have a universal appeal. Krueger's quote, however, supports my reading of Eliot's Portuguese fishermen and widows as a people historically subject to the whims of fate. And this regardless of whether it took place while fishing or, as in the past, that is, during the Age of Discoveries, when sailing to uncharted lands. While the Italians in Gloucester relied on St. Peter, the Portuguese sought the protection and solace of Our Lady of Good Voyage. Before I delve into this unexplored Portuguese contribution to the local culture and economy, I must first address a few matters.

In *The Composition of Four Quartets*, Helen Gardner notes that:

The Dry Salvages and the Little Salvages lie about a mile east-north-easterly from Straitsmouth Island off the northern point of Cape Ann. The official *United States Coast Pilot, Atlantic Coast, Section A: St. Croix River to Cape Cod* (4th edn. 1941) describes the Dry Salvages as 'a bare ledge about 15 feet above water near the middle of a reef about 500 yards long in a northerly direction'. (Gardner, 1978, pp. 51-52).

T. S. Eliot was very familiar with the region since he, as a child and young man, had spent his summer vacation in Gloucester. Peter Ackroyd has noted that in 1896, Henry Ware Eliot had built a house there, Eastern Point, from which, we learn, could be seen the harbour of Gloucester and the Atlantic itself, the coast stretching up towards the Rockport Dry Salvages. From Gloucester Eliot went sailing (at first under the anxious tutelage of his mother) in a wherry and then, in his Harvard days, in a catboat or a small-boat cruiser. In later life he remembered those days with great joy, and the presence of the sea always instilled in him feelings of serenity and well-being (Ackroyd, 1984, p. 22).

Gardner is certainly right when she states that "*The Dry Salvages* is soaked in memories of childhood and youth" (Gardner, 1978, p. 46). "There can be no question," Sam S. Baskett argues when referring to St. Louis, Missouri, and

New England, “but that the American landscape made a profound and lasting impact upon Eliot, especially the geographical features of the two sections of the country where he had grown up” (Baskett, 1982, p. 148). As I hope this essay will show, Gloucester is, without a doubt, a case in point.

Hargrove has also noted that there has been a lot of confusion surrounding Eliot’s last visit to Gloucester. A. D. Moody, Eliot’s biographer, is responsible for this since he wrote the following:

In May 1948 the three-day celebration preceding the blessing of the fishing fleet of Gloucester, Mass., opened with the arrival of a wooden statue of Our Lady of Good Voyage (Mary, Star of the Sea), which the fishermen had purchased from Lisbon. Eliot had not known of the existence of a statue of the Madonna when he wrote *The Dry Salvages*, though apparently there was one on a church in the town, but had ‘thought that there *ought* to be a shrine of the B.V.M. at the harbour mouth of a fishing port’.

In a footnote to this passage, Moody has noted that this information was taken “From TSE’s typescript note, signed and dated ’14.8.47’, attached to a postcard which Charles Olson had sent to Ezra Pound with the comment: ‘Here is my Lady that Possum stole.’ ‘Mr Olson’, Eliot recorded, ‘is in error. I have never returned to Cape Ann or to Gloucester Mass. since 1915’” (Moody, 1979, pp. 232-3; 362). This information, we learn, is contained in a picture postcard of a statue of Our Lady of Good Voyage with a “handwritten note identifying it as one atop the façade of Our Lady of Good Voyage Church, dated June 14, 1947, and addressed to Ezra Pound, Esquire, St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, Washington, D.C., from Charles Olson, the poet whose three volume major work *The Maximus Poems* is focused on Gloucester” (Hargrove, 2001, p. 3). The wooden statue of Our Lady was not ordered from Lisbon, as Moody notes, but from Oporto, Portugal. Krueger’s piece on the history of this church is, once again, helpful in resolving some of these points.

There have been two churches of Our Lady of Good Voyage on Portagee Hill, on the same site on Prospect Street. The first church is alluded to in, for example, Rudyard Kipling’s *Captains Courageous* (1897), a novel which George Monteiro defines as a “work written to exalt the common fisherman,” that is, Kipling’s attempt at writing the “romance of commercial fisherman” in Gloucester (Monteiro, 1979, p. 72). Manuel, a sailor from the island of Madeira who is working on the *We’re Here* schooner, off of Gloucester, says the following 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.” (Kipling, 1982, p. 48)

Town records regarding the history of Gloucester prior to the publication of Kipling’s novel indicate that the “Portuguese residents of the town formed a church in November, 1890, the pastor being Rev. Francis De Bem. At the present time they are engaged in the preliminary work of erecting a church on Prospect Street” (*Pringle’s History...*, pp. 305-6). This original church was dedicated on July 9, 1893 and it burned down on the morning of February 10, 1914. As David C. McAweeney has noted, the original building “was still sparkling new when Kipling noted it to write Manuel’s description of it in *Captains Courageous*” (McAweeney, 1996, p. 52). It was replaced by the “present Church of Our Lady of Good Voyage in Gloucester, partly a replica of a structure in Portugal” and it is “famous for its Portuguese-inspired carillon” (Pap, 1981, p. 181). This church was dedicated on May 23, 1915.

The Eliot family was familiar with the original church since it had been dedicated in 1893, the year they began spending their summers on Cape Ann. This was a white two-story building with a cross on the top of the façade and another on the single tower to the left. Unlike the church which replaced it, it did not have an outside statue of the Virgin. Over the main altar was a wooden statue of Our Lady of Good Voyage, carved in Oporto, holding the Infant Jesus in one arm and a fishing vessel in the other. This church was replaced by the current one of more solid build. It has two towers and an outside ten-foot-tall wooden figure of Our Lady of Good Voyage with a Gloucester fishing boat in her left arm and with her right arm raised in a gesture of blessing, installed above the façade between the two towers. Hargrove has shown that when Eliot returned to Gloucester for three weeks in July 1915 to confront his parents about his sudden marriage and the change in his career plans, the new church with its

impressive statue above the façade was there, and it is hard to imagine that he would not have seen this spectacular addition to the town of Gloucester, although,

since he was doubtless in an agitated state of mind, it may not have registered forcefully on him and may subsequently have been forgotten. His statement to Pound that he does not think the statue was there in his time, while not factually accurate since it was there during his last visit to Gloucester as a young person, indicates either that he really did not see it then or that he had no memory of it if he did see it (Hargrove, 2001, p. 5).

In addition to Eliot's reply to Pound *à propos* Olson's postcard, Eliot is reported to have identified another church as his source. On this issue, Gardner has pointed out that in 1961, when "the Rev. William T. Levy mentioned to Eliot his admiration for the church of Notre Dame de la Gard, high up overlooking the Mediterranean at Marseilles, Eliot told him that this was the 'shrine' he had in mind" (Gardner, 1978, p. 141). In my view, it is improbable that Eliot had this church in mind since "The Dry Salvages" is soaked with descriptions and memories of New England. Joseph Garland, the official Gloucester historian, has conveyed to me the following:

If, indeed, the poet was referring to the Marseille (sic) statue I don't know that I'd make too fine a point of it. He certainly was aware of the Azorean presence in Gloucester, for the fishermen from the islands enjoyed a high reputation as deep-sea fishermen here (Garland, E-mail 30 April 2001).

Hargrove resolves this problem in the following manner, noting that, to her, it seems

extremely odd that, in a poem based largely on Gloucester, indeed the most thoroughly American of his poems, Eliot would think, not of the church he had to have seen often over many years in his youth, but of a church in southern France that he may only have seen once as an adult. I also find it odd that, if in fact the Marseille (sic) church were Eliot's source rather than the Gloucester church, he did not just tell Ezra Pound so in 1947 when the question of his source was raised."

Furthermore,

There are too many correspondences between the location, purpose, and details of the actual church in Gloucester and the lines of section IV as well as the context of the poem as a whole, set as it is in Gloucester and drawing from it specific

local material, to make it easy to accept Eliot's comments as wholly accurate. If they are, the similarities constitute an amazing case of coincidence or perhaps of submerged or forgotten memories overtaking the conscious mind. This question, which is admittedly rather a small one, can perhaps never be definitively settled, but raises larger questions about sources, what authors may later say concerning them, and whether their statements are always entirely reliable. (Hargrove, 2001, pp. 6-7).

In addition to Eliot's familiarity with Gloucester's Portuguese fishermen – as his preface to James B. Connolly's *Fishermen of the Banks* shows – in April 1938, Eliot is reported to have “travelled to Lisbon in order to sit on the jury for the Camoens Prize” (Ackroyd, 1984, p. 241), a prestigious literary award honoring Portugal's epic poet, Luís Vaz de Camões (1525?-1580). His most renowned work, *The Lusiads*, narrates Vasco da Gama's voyage to India in 1498 while highlighting other major episodes in Portuguese history. Apart from these references, one looks in vain for other references to Portugal and the Portuguese in Eliot's work.

For Portuguese American readers searching for “ethnic signs” in the vast corpus of American writings, it is gratifying to encounter an allusion such as the one embedded in one of the most widely anthologized poems of the twentieth-century, penned by a writer, T. S. Eliot, who was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1948. Such a passage as the one under review not only substantiates – even if indirectly – the contributions of the Portuguese to the American economy and culture at a regional level, it also attests to the presence – and not invisibility – of the Portuguese ethnics in the United States.

As Luis Marden has shown, the “Portuguese settled in Gloucester as early as 1842” and some “early Portuguese settlers came from the mainland, but most came from the Azores.” Writing in 1953, he claims that “even today there are many in Gloucester's Portuguese colony who hail directly from the Azorean island of Pico.” “Of Gloucester's present-day fleet of 202 vessels,” Marden further notes, “not more than 30 still are run by native Yankees. Thirty-two are Portuguese, 100 Italian, and the rest divided among Nova Scotians, Newfoundlanders, Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns” (Marden, 1953, p. 75). Krueger, however, claims that the “influx of Portuguese people to Gloucester began as early as 1829” (Krueger, 1989, p. 16). After the Nantucket and New Bedford, Massachusetts, whaling industry began to decline during the second half of the nineteenth-century (the activity which attracted skilled Azorean harpooners to the United States), these sailors looked to the Gloucester fishing

fleets for professional alternatives. As in other American writings, Eliot's poem exposes us to their hardships and fate. "The sea," Marden further notes, "exact a heavy toll" from these fishermen. That is why, in his view:

Few fishing families of Gloucester have not paid tribute to this hard mistress. From Gloucester's beginnings as a fishing port until the present time, more than 1,000 of her vessels and 8,000 men have been lost at sea. Men were washed overboard; schooners went down in Northeast gales. Thick white fog took many lives when men in the dories lost sight of the parent vessel and could not find their way back, despite mournful blasts of the schooner's horn. Some lucky few rowed to land, their fingers frozen round the oars (Marden, 1953, p. 76).

Because these fishermen were devout Catholics, they continued the traditions they were brought up with in the old country and revived them in Gloucester. Such was the case with Gloucester's first Blessing of the Fleet, which took place in 1945. In *Portagee Hill and a People: A Tribute to the Portuguese People*, Arthur K. Rose offers us a personal account of this yearly occurrence. According to Rose, life on Portagee Hill revolved around Our Lady of Good Voyage Church since just "about everyone on the Hill was Catholic and all went to the Our Lady of Good Voyage Church. That was the 'church of the fishermen.' It was also known as the 'Portugese (sic) Church,' and is still called that by some of us old-timers" (Rose, 1991, p. 9). Not only did the Blessing of the Fleet attract people from the towns around Gloucester, it was a pivotal date for the local Portuguese community and a tourist attraction for the summer vacationers on the Cape Ann shores. Since Rose's account of this is so vivid, I cannot resist but quote it in full:

Because the Portuguese people have a strong religious background, most of their traditions are religious in nature. Beside the crownings, there was the blessing of the fishing fleet. This event occurred in the early summer. A bandstand would be erected in front of the Portugese (sic) church for band concerts. The bandstand was decorated with banners and flags and a Portugese (sic) band would play both Friday and Saturday nights. On Sunday, a high mass was said for the fishermen, followed by a procession to the fish pier, where the Portugese (sic) fishing fleet would have their fishing boats tied to the wharf draped with flags and flowers. The fishermen would march in the procession to the pier and then go aboard their own boats and wait for the blessing.

The blessing was usually given by the Archbishop of Boston, which was Archbishop Cushing at that time. Once the blessing was given, the boat horns

would begin to sound and cheers from the crowd were heard with hopes that The Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Good Voyage, for which the church was named, would provide them with bountiful and safe trips for the coming year. The procession would then march back to the church, where a meal for the fishermen was given in their honor along with their families and friends. The festivities would close that night with a final band concert and speeches and prayers for those that would venture out on the high seas for their catch. The blessing of the Portugese (sic) fleet came to an end some years ago because the Portugese (sic) fishing fleet dwindled in size since many went to the bottom with their crews and others became old and beyond repair for the treacherous and unpredictable ocean that awaited them (Rose, 1991, pp. 70-71).

With *fado* and *saudade* as two of the most distinctive traits which characterize most Portuguese – and the Gloucester fishermen in particular – Eliot's passage is a substantiation of such a mood. In my view, the most elaborate and thought-provoking analysis of *saudade* is Eduardo Lourenço's study, *O Labirinto da Saudade: Psicanálise Mítica do Destino Português* (The Labyrinth of *Saudade*: Mythical Psychoanalysis of the Portuguese Fate), where this essayist diagnoses the soul of the Portuguese people and delves into the heart of their culture. In this study, Lourenço outlines a few historical occurrences which, in his view, shaped the soul of the Portuguese. After the Golden Age of the Portuguese Discoveries in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries; the gradual decline of the Portuguese economy; the ill-fated death of King Sebastian (1554-78) in North Africa and the subsequent annexation of Portugal in 1580 by the Spanish King, Philip II; the gold from Brazil which came to an end in the eighteenth-century; the forty-eight year Fascist régime in the twentieth-century; the overall mood in Portugal has been marked by hopelessness and despair. Portugal, Lourenço argues, had little more than poverty and misery to offer to its less privileged social classes during the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries (Lourenço, chapter "Psicanálise Mítica"). For most Portuguese, emigration was the only way to eschew such a fate (Lourenço, 1992, p. 125). Through time, the Portuguese developed a feeling of *saudosismo*, a longing for those past days of glory, bounty, and world renown. With the death of King Sebastian, the Portuguese developed the so-called myth of *Sebastianismo* associated with this ill-fated monarch, whom, most asserted, would return on a foggy morning to rescue the Portuguese and restore Portugal's glorious past.

The original fishermen Eliot refers to in "The Dry Salvages" had been affected by these historical realities in the old country, prior to emigrating to

New England during the nineteenth-century as harpooners to work on the whaling ships which Herman Melville has so eloquently described in *Moby-Dick* (1851) and in the lesser-known piece, “The ‘Gees,” a story in *The Piazza Tales* (1856). And the women in Eliot’s poem, who have also been shaped by such a fate, can only find inner peace and solace in Our Lady of Good Voyage. As with the eclipse of Portugal’s golden age and the mood of frustration which ensued, these Portuguese women in Gloucester, too, find themselves adrift in a world of uncertainty, chaos, despair, and powerlessness. And what, at first, looked as a mere reference to Our Lady of Good Voyage Church in Gloucester, “The Dry Salvages” taps into the very crux of the Portuguese soul.

As with other representations of the Portuguese in American literature, the Portuguese in Gloucester are a bona fide example of how they, too, had to earn their “whiteness.” And, as this essay has attempted to show, Hollywood and its marketing philosophy of reaching out to wider audiences along with Eliot’s interest in Portuguese culture – substantiated, as I have noted in “T. S. Eliot and the Prémio Camões: A Brief Anointment of Portuguese Fascist Politics,” by his trip to Portugal in 1938 to sit on the jury of the *Prémio Camões* – not only unveils his fascination with Salazar’s fascist politics but also with the Portuguese people and their contributions to Gloucester, Massachusetts, a place he treasured so much.

Works Cited

- ACKROYD, P. (1984). *T. S. Eliot: A Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- BASKETT, S. (1982). “T. S. Eliot as an American Poet.” *Centennial Review* 26.
- BHABHA, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- BOELHOWER, W. (1987). *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature*. New York: Oxford UP.
- CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS* (1937). Dir. Victor Fleming. Perf. Spencer Tracy, Mick Rooney, Melvin Douglas, Lionel Barrymore, and Freddie Bartholomew. DVD. Warner Home Video.
- DARBY, J. (1956). “Our Lady of Good Voyage,” *The Marianist* 47.7.
- ELIOT, T. S. (1980). *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950*. New York: Harcourt.
- FANON, F. (1990). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. London, Penguin.
- GARDNER, H. (1978). *The Composition of Four Quartets*. London and Boston: Faber And Faber.

- GARLAND, J. (2001). E-mail to the author, 30 April 2001.
- HARGROVE, N. (1978). *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot*. Jackson, Miss.: UP of Mississippi.
- (2001). “The Curious Case of T. S. Eliot’s Source(s) for Part IV of ‘The Dry Salvages,’” *Yeats Eliot Review*, 17.4.
- KIPLING, R. (1982). *Captains Courageous*. 1897. New York: Bantam.
- KRUEGER, A. (1989). *History of the Parish of Our Lady of Good Voyage: 100 Anniversary Celebration, 1889-1989*. Gloucester, Mass.: n. p.
- LOURDEAUX, L. (1990). *Italian and Irish Filmmakers in America: Ford, Capra, Coppola, and Scorsese*. Philadelphia: Temple UP.
- LOURENÇO, E. (1992). *O Labirinto da Saudade: Psicanálise Mítica do Destino Português*. Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote.
- MARDEN, L. (1953). “Gloucester Blesses Its Portuguese Fleet”, *The National Geographic Magazine* 104.1: 75.
- MCAVEENEY, D. (1996). *Kipling in Gloucester: The Writing of Captains Courageous*. Gloucester, MA: The Curious Traveler Press.
- MCGRATH, C. (2019). “Rudyard Kipling in America.” *The New Yorker*. July 1st. Web Accessed: Dec. 1st, 2021. URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/08/rudyard-kipling-in-america>.
- MILNE, T. (ed.; 1991). *The Time Out Film Guide*. 2nd ed. London: n. p.
- MONTEIRO, G. (1979). “‘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.
- MOODY, A. (1979). *Thomas Stearns Eliot: A Poet*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- MORRISON, T. (1993). *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. London: Picador.
- PAP, L. (1981). *The Portuguese-Americans*. Boston: Twayne.
- PRINGLE’S HISTORY OF GLOUCESTER: NEW INDEXED EDITION (n. y.) Gloucester, MA: The City of Gloucester Archives.
- ROSE, A. (1991). *Portagee Hill and a People: A Tribute to the Portuguese People*. Gloucester, MA: Sea Shore Literary.
- SILVA, R. (2003) “An Overlooked Legacy: Gloucester’s Portuguese Fishermen in the Background of T. S. Eliot’s ‘The Dry Salvages.’” *Yeats Eliot Review* 20.1: pp. 3-11.
- (2008). *Representations of the Portuguese in American Literature*. North Dartmouth, MA: Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture / U of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

- (2009). “T. S. Eliot and the *Prémio Camões*: A Brief Honeymoon and Anointment Of Portuguese Fascist Politics.” *Yeats Eliot Review* 26.2. pp. 16-23.
- SMITH, M. (1974). “Portuguese Enclaves: The Invisible Minority.” *Social and Cultural Identity*. Ed. Thomas K. Fitzgerald. Athens: U of Georgia P.). [Proceedings of the Southern Anthropological Society, 8: 81-91].
- VAZ, K. (1997). *Fado & Other Stories*. Pittsburgh, PA: U of Pittsburgh P.
- (1994). *Saudade*. New York: St. Martin's.
- VIEIRA, D. / GOMES, G. / CABRAL, A. (1989). *The Portuguese in the United States (First Supplement)*. Durham, NH: International Conference Group on Portugal/University of New Hampshire.
- WALKER, J. (ed.; 1993). *Halliwel's Film Guide*. 9th ed. London: Harper Collins.

TÍTULO: Rudyard Kipling e T.S. Eliot sobre os portugueses em Gloucester, Massachusetts

RESUMO: Este ensaio analisa as representações dos pescadores portugueses em Gloucester, Massachusetts, pelo aclamado escritor britânico, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), durante a sua denominada fase americana, em 1892, isto é, enquanto lá viveu durante uma temporada, assim como a adaptação cinematográfica do seu romance, *Captains Courageous*, e as recordações de T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) desta vila piscatória e da sua praia quando lá passou férias e, mais tarde, imortalizou no seu poema, *The Four Quartets*, em 1943.

TITLE: Rudyard Kipling and T. S. Eliot on the Portuguese in Gloucester, Massachusetts

ABSTRACT: This essay focuses on the representations of the Portuguese fishermen in Gloucester, Massachusetts, by the acclaimed British Writer, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), during his so-called American phase, in 1892, that is, while he lived there for a spell, as well as the movie adaptation of his novel, *Captains Courageous*, and T. S. Eliot's (1888-1965) recollections of this fishing town and beach resort while he vacationed there, and subsequently immortalized in *The Four Quartets* (1943).