

## The concept of space in *Deflagrações* (2021) by José Luís Hopffer C. Almada

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**ABSTRACT:** This chapter is a contemplation of the topic of space in a book entitled *Deflagrações*, by José Luís Hopffer C. Almada (JLHCA). This author writes under various literary names, such as Nzé de Sant'y Ago, Amizé di Sant'y Águ, Ezeami di Sant'y Águ, Alma Dofer, Alma Dofer Catarino and Erasmo Cabral de Almada, Dionísio de Deus y Fonteana, and Tuna Furtado. He prefers the designation of “literary names” to differentiate himself from the heteronyms used by Fernando Pessoa. In this reflection, we will point out certain movements in different spaces (in Cape Verde and abroad), as well as important Cape Verdean figures and rebellions that occurred in Cape Verde between 1822 and 1910, i.e., the uprisings of Monte Agarro and Mindelo, and the revolts of the Engenhos, Achada Falcão and of Ribeirão Manuel. It will begin with a brief background of JLHCA, his work, and the topic under study. José Luís Hopffer C. Almada is an important reference in Cape Verdean literature and has written numerous studies, essays, and poems. He is associated with several cultural initiatives in Cape Verde and Portugal. Among other distinctions, JLHCA has figured in multiple compilations and anthologies of poetry. He has also participated in scientific events in various countries and has vast professional experience.

**Keywords:** Cape Verde, José Luís Hopffer C. Almada (JLHCA), *Deflagrações*, Literary names, Space

In this chapter, we will contemplate space in *Deflagrações*, by José Luís Hopffer C. Almada (JLHCA), a topic which, in our opinion, is rooted in this author's literary work. Born on 9 December of 1960 in Assomada, Santa Catarina, Santiago, Cape Verde, JLHCA earned a degree in Law from the Karl Marx University at Leipzig, Germany, and postgraduate degrees in Juridical Science, in Political and International Science, and Juridical-Urbanistic Science from the Universidade Clássica de Lisboa. He has participated in cultural events in Cape Verde and Portugal, and he figures in several compilations and poetry anthologies. Apart from having held different professional positions and regularly participating in scientific events in Cape Verde, Portugal, Cuba, Senegal, Holland, Mozambique, Switzerland, Belgium, and Italy, he has written numerous studies, essays, and books of poems. His published works include the book of poems and essays *Deflagrações* (2021); *Germinações e outras restituições de março: uma antologia pessoal* (2019); *Sonhos caminantes* (2017); *Rememoração do tempo e da humidade (Poema de Nzé de Sant'y Ago)* (2015/2016); *Praianas (Revisitações do tempo e da cidade)* (2009); *Assomada noturna (Poema de Nzé di Sant' y Águ)* (2005); *Assomada noturna* (1993); *A sombra do sol*, volumes I and II (1990). (Almada, 2021).

His most recent book, *Deflagrações*, was co-funded by the Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro (IBNL) and by the Ministry of Culture of Cabo Verde, through the Concurso Edição organized in 2013, and by *SEPI INNOVATION* (Almada 2021). It was published in Cabo Verde in October of 2021, and launched in Portugal in February of 2022, an event in which we participated as moderator. The book opens with the poem entitled “Autobiografia ortónima (Sétima variação)” (pp. 5-6), and was followed by his first book, *Sombras insepultas (Poemas de Nzé de Sant'yAgo)*, (pp. 9-50); his second book was *Os nós da solidão e outros irreprensíveis poemas e outros antigos textos colhidos e por vezes refundidos à sombra do sol acrescidos de novos propoemas de Erasmo Cabral de Almada* (pp. 51-135); his third book was entitled *Australidades (Poemas de Erasmo Cabral de Almada* (pp. 137-313), which is divided into two parts: “Madrugada dos sons” and “Nomeações da alvorada”, (pp. 299-313); his next work was “Reflexões finais (Cabo Verde: emancipação político cultural do povo das ilhas, discursos da crioullitude, síndromas de orfanidade identitária e alegada (im)pertinência de uma poesia caboverdiana da afro-crioullitude (e/ou da negritude crioula)”, by Tuna Furtado (pp. 315-503); and “Referências bibliográficas” (pp. 505-534).

The first versions of these reflections were published in the online magazine *Buala* and in the work *Afro-rizomas na diáspora negra: as literaturas africanas na encruzilhada brasileira*, organized by José Henrique de Freitas Santos e Ricardo Riso (2013), with the titles “Discurso da crioultitude, síndromas da orfandade e (im) pertinência de uma poesia caboverdiana da afrocrioultitude e/ou da negritude crioula” and “Orfandade identitária e alegada (im) pertinência histórica de uma poesia de negritude crioula: discursos da crioultitude e síndromas de orfandade identitária” (Almada, 2021). This text was revised, rewritten and enlarged. Regarding the last revision, which was done in May 2020, during the COVID 19 lockdown JLHCA stated:

Lisbon, September of 2005, August of 2013, and July of 2015 (revised and enlarged in August of 2017 and March, April, and May of 2018, rewritten for the current version of the second part in the second half of July 2018 and revised for the last time in the first half of October of 2018, in January of 2019 and in April/May of 2020, amid the general lockdown due to the new coronavirus and Covid-19 and a state of emergency declared officially (Almada, 2021, p. 502).<sup>1</sup>

JLHCA is a Cape Verdean author who is must-read. He goes by the following literary names: Zé di Sant’y Águ, Nzé di Sant’y Águ (now Nzé de Sant’y Ago), Amizé di Sant’y Águ, Ezeami di Sant’y Águ, Alma Dofer, Alma Dofer Catarino and Erasmo Cabral de Almada for his poetry; Dionísio de Deus y Fonteana for his works of fiction and literary prose in Portuguese and Cape Verdean; and Tuna Furtado for his articles and essays (Almada, 2021). In his book “*A sombra do sol*,” he explains why he chose some of these names:

Tuna Furtado is me when I am overcome by the desire to theorize and by the freedom of creating [...]. Erasmo and Alma Dofer represent my Germanic ancestry; Tuna is the name of the only grandmother I knew personally (my mother’s mother); Dionísio was the name of my mother’s father; Cabral, Furtado, and de Deus are surnames in my country. Sometimes places of my ancestry and childhood are evoked;

Fonteana is where my mother was born and raised [...]. (Almada, 1990, p. 14).<sup>2</sup>

The author believes that he is both a result of and a transformer of the space he lives in. This space is revealed in the uniqueness of his poetry, whereby we find a physical space (essential for the circulation of the subjects and figures of national and international importance that he proclaims and for showing his perception of settings and geographical allusions), a social space (inseparable for the corporal, involving certain collective environments, usually explained by players of a specific proportion), and psychological space (from the inner essence of the subject and characters mentioned in his writing, revealing his vision of Cape Verde and the world) (Gordo, 1995). Thus, we perceive space in the author in three ways:

[The] topographic (static space comprising a “map” organized in accordance with real ontological principles), the chronotopic (structure imposed on space by temporal categories, such as movement and change), and textual (the structuring that derives from the linguistic nature of the text, especially for the selectivity, linearity, and the point of view (Gordo, 1995, p. 28).<sup>3</sup>

We thereby encounter a space in which the author/subject of the poem emerges as one of the protagonists of certain places, attaining a status of categorized space or place for writing. That (space) is occupied by an attentive subject who records what he sees, whose perspective exposes and sheds light on himself as an observer engaged with a redeeming Universe. See the following passage from the *A sombra do sol*:

The Green of the first Rock, which leans over our historical and telluric reality, our mythical memory, and our daily lives, including marginal aspects. [...]. It entails a look at Cape Verde from afar and self-reflection of the man-poet as a citizen of the world, and thus, distressed by the human condition, with social upheaval that

1. “Lisboa, setembro de 2005, agosto de 2013 e julho de 2015 (revisado e aumentado em agosto de 2017 e março, abril e maio de 2018, refundido para a versão atual da segunda parte na segunda quinzena de julho de 2018 e revisado pela última vez na primeira quinzena de outubro de 2018, em janeiro de 2019 e em abril/maio de 2020, em pleno confinamento geral ditado pela situação de calamidade pública adveniente das ameaças do novo coronavírus e da covid-19 e correlativas Declaração do Estado de Emergência e do Estado de Calamidade Sanitária”. (Almada, 2021, p. 502).

2. “Tuna Furtado sou eu, quando assaltado pela paixão de teorizar a cultura e a liberdade de criação. [...] Erasmo e Alma Dofer simbolizam a minha ascendência germânica; Tuna é o nome da única avó que conheci pessoalmente (a mãe da minha mãe); Dionísio é como se chamou o pai da minha mãe; Cabral, Furtado e de Deus são apelidos dos meus pais. Por vezes são os lugares da minha ascendência e infância que são evocados; Fonteana é o sítio onde nasceu e cresceu minha mãe [...]”. (Almada, 1990, p. 14).

3. “[O] topográfico (o espaço estático, constituindo um “mapa” organizado segundo os princípios ontológicos reais), o cronotópico (a estrutura imposta ao espaço pelas categorias temporais, como o movimento e a mudança) e o textual (a estruturação que decorre da natureza linguística do texto, em especial pela seletividade, pela linearidade e pelo ponto de vista”. (Gordo, 1995, p. 28).

arises with happiness and freedom (Almada, 1990, p. 14).<sup>4</sup>

Other Cape Verdean figures also inhabit this space, along with objects and historical moments that make up the “bones of time” (Butor, 1972, p. 68). JLHC works “the space of the context” (Cosson, 2010), focusing on a dialectic, and a centrifugal motion in the insular geography, suggesting the construction of a road to his concept of inspiration. His poetry, derived from his literary creativity from incessant research work, is also a socio-cultural reflection (Cabral, 1952) of the areas traveled, the reason why he “builds himself up as a multifarious being within Cape Verdeannes and universality” (Almada, 2004, p. 202), and strives to be “a poem that wants to excel for its thematic and formal diversity” (Almada, 2009, p. 5). That is why he is a:

A researcher *par excellence* [.]. [He is a] writer [who] questions, raises doubts and encourages the introduction of solutions using artistic means, creating and revealing the tension of critique as a natural and permanent state of freedom and its multifarious mainstay, which is civil society. (Almada, 1994, p. 95).<sup>5</sup>

Like his Cape Verdean literary predecessors, he is an author of historical circumstances. In *Deflagrações*, he documents several spaces, portraying the nuances of circulation from rural to urban environments to seek new centers of population, substantiated by an approach that transports the hourglass to a time that doesn't let him forget the village where he was born, nor Leipzig, the European city that marked him, in an autobiographical incursion. Born in a mountain village (Assomada, now a city on the island of Santiago), where he was in a half-light, between the light and the shade of the mountains, contrasting with the shade of the “sobrado” house. The recollections of his childhood and the weariness in that space make him turn his back to the sea and look for other spaces, i.e., Leipzig, where he metaphorically kissed “with love,” and perhaps with vehemence and vigor, the “snow” - a symbolic representation of experiences transformed

into a recollection of the city where the author studied. See the following passage from the poem “Auto-biografia ortónima (Sétima variação)”:

I was born in a village/in the shade of a *sobrado*/ and of the austere semi-darkness of the mountains//still a child/I was depleted in the exhausted banks of the streams/I crossed over the humid orography of Assomada/and became a tree of the plateau/[...]/With my back to the sea/I insinuated myself/- beyond the island -/in the slow and transparent/path of the clouds/to Leipzig/madly kissing/with love and with passion/the snow that smells of coal and melancholy/to be pacified from far away Europe [...]/. (Almada, 2021, pp.5-7).<sup>6</sup>

The poet refers to the place where he was born and grew up and his departure to the city of Praia and later to Leipzig. While in Europe, he never forgot his African space, the “Americas,” the “enslaved blacks,” according to him, his condition as son of Adam and Eve, and the Pico de Antónia (the highest point in Santiago, with an altitude of 1,394 meters), to the southwest of Assomada, as stated in the following passage:

[...] the snow-white cold/to caress from Africa/ with love and with ardor/with torment and with passion/with tenderness and emotion/the primary ebony of origins/the resilient laughter and contagious rhythm/joy exploding ultimately/before the many abysses/with the many rebirths/of the Americas/I get inoculated and saturated/with ardor and delight/of the rhythms [...] black enslaved voices/[...]/Today I know that I am a mere sign of Adam and Eve/and of their rocky Eden on Pico de António (Almada, 2021, p. 7).<sup>7</sup>

In *Deflagrações*, the author recreates a physical-social-psychological space, making his writing oscillate between poetic discourse and the expressive

4. “O Verde da primeira Rocha, o qual se debruça sobre a nossa realidade histórica e telúrica, a nossa memória mítica, o nosso quotidiano, incluindo aspetos marginais. [...] Ela pressupõe um olhar de longe sobre Cabo Verde bem como a autoconsideração do homem-poeta como cidadão do mundo, e, por isso, angustiado com a condição humana, com as convulsões sociais advenientes da felicidade e da liberdade”. (Almada, 1990, p. 14).

5. “Indagador por excelência [.]. [É um] escritor [que] questiona, suscita dúvidas, favorece o advento de soluções, utilizando os meios próprios da arte, isto é, criando e fazendo desabrochar a tensão da crítica, como estado natural e permanente da liberdade e do seu sustentáculo plural que é a sociedade civil”. (Almada, 1994, p. 95).

6. “Nasci numa aldeia/à sombra de um sobrado/e da suster penumbra das montanhas//ainda criança/exauri-me nas exaustas margens das ribeiras/galguei a húmida orografia da Assomada/e fiz-me árvore do planalto/[...]/De costas para o mar/insinuei-me/- para além da ilha -/na lenta e transparente/caminhada das nuvens/para Leipzig/loucamente beijar/com amor e com ardor/a neve com odor a carvão e melancolia/para da Europa longamente apaziguar [...]/. (Almada, 2021, pp.5-7).

7. “[...] o niveo e silente frio/para da África afagar/com amor e com fervor/com tormento e com paixão/com ternura e comoção/o ébano primacial das origens/o riso resiliente o ritmo contagiante/a alegria explodindo derradeira/ante os muitos abismos/com os muitos renascimentos/para das Américas/inocular-me e saturar-me/com ardor e com deleite/dos ritmos [...] /vozes negros escravizados/[...] /Hoje sei que sou/um simples signo de Adão e Eva/ e do seu éden pétreo no Pico de António”. (Almada, 2021, p. 7).

lyrical self. The reader listens to the word, reads, and travels through different physical, social, and psychological places. He uses the real universe and organizes a poetic discourse as a strategy to build a literary self/name that is also a self that travels across different places, allowing him to carry out his role of *griot* because according to Walter Benjamin: “Whoever makes a journey always brings back something to narrate [...]”. (Benjamin, 1992, p. 29).

JLHCA resorts to memories and becomes an “observer of chance”. He invokes several reminiscences, especially individual ones centered in collective spaces, such as the Cape Verdean; the European; the African; the Caribbean; the American; the religious, through the testimony of “given the senses [...] as something that have significance, that have a truth and can be explained (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 18), as evidenced in the poem “Parábola sobre o castanho sofrimento e a verde ressurgência das criaturas das ilhas”, (written under the literary name of Nzé de Sant’yago), an enlarged version of “Parábola sobre o castanho sofrimento e a verde redenção das criaturas das ilhas”, published in *Sonhos caminantes* (2017):

First part/I//God banished Adam from paradise/  
with a gesture of disappointment/anathematized  
Cain/with the eternity of His wrath/and/taught  
us the penitence of suffering//II//He was fascinat-  
ed by sin/and with the unpredictability of  
shame that God flooded/with the stigma of pain/  
the sparks of sweetness/that/lit/the primordial  
bodies/of love and passion/instanted guilt/in the  
inscrutable heart/of grief/and prostrated himself/  
in atonement/before the merciless sensuality/of  
women/[...]. (Almada, 2021, p. 12).<sup>8</sup>

According to JLHCA, his literary name *Nzé de Sant’yago* is:

[...] my “castiça” (prototypical) and “crioulófona”  
(Portuguese-Creole) personality, deeply rooted in  
the telluric [space] of Santiago and Cabo Verde  
[...]. Sant’y Agu symbolizes the sacralization of  
the essential elements of our mythology: the saints  
(in the first place, the Holy Lake, also a character  
of Shakespeare, and Water; the island, the root of  
the archipelago (Almada, 1990, pp. 11-16).<sup>9</sup>

8. “Primeira parte/I//Foi com um gesto de desânimo/que/Deus expulsou Adão do paraíso/anatemizou Caim/com a eternidade da sua cólera/e/nos ensinou a penitência do sofrimento//II//Foi fascinado com o pecado/e com a imprevisibilidade da vergonha que Deus inundou/com o estigma da dor/as faíscas de doçura/que/incandesceram/os corpos primordiais/do amor e da paixão/instituiu a culpa/no inescrutável coração/da mágoa/e se prostrou/em expiação/ante a impiedosa sensualidade/da mulher/[...]”. (Almada, 2021, p. 12).

9. “[...] a minha personalidade castiça e crioulofona, profundamente ancorada no [espaço] telúrico de Santiago e de

On the same subject, Maria Armandina Maia argues that:

[...] this literary name of Zé di Sant’y Águ, created in 1978 in Assomada [...] reiterated here as the basis for poetry written in Creole [...] [is changed to N’Zé di Sant’y Águ while] poetry written in Portuguese [both questioners of the] matrixes of the human condition [where we detect) an aesthetic inquiry of the universality founded on the desire for Cape Verde’s historical authenticity. (Maia in Almada, 2005, pp. 109-110).<sup>10</sup>

In the memorialist journey portrayed in the poem, “Parábola sobre o castanho sofrimento e a verde ressurgência das criaturas das ilhas”, the author, as *Nzé de Sant’yago*, mentions certain spaces travelled by Abel Djassi, the pseudonym of Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973), (an agricultural engineer, politician and Marxist theorist) such as Praia – island of Santiago, Cape Verde; Mindelo – island of S. Vicente, Cape Verde; Lisbon – Portugal; Luanda – Angola; Paris – France; Frankfurt – Germany; Bissau – Guinea-Bissau; Dakar – Senegal; Conakry – Guinea-Conakry, (where Cabral was killed on 20 January of 1973), and London – England. He also mentions Madina do Boe – where on 24 September 1973, the PAIGC (African Independence Party for Guinea and Cabo Verde) unilaterally declared independence of Guinea-Bissau. and the mythical city of Atlantis and the Hesperides:

[...] in Praia and in Mindelo/like Amílcar/  
[...]/[...] from Lisboa Luanda Paris and  
Frankfurt/[...]/in Bissau Dakar Accra/Conakry  
Paris and London/in the vast clandestine world  
in struggle/in Abel Djassi/transformed and  
acclaimed/in Madina do Boe/Hero of the  
People proclaimed/[...]/[We will reunite/and  
our obsession/with greenness/- Edenic name for  
peace -/and our *saudade* (longing)/for Atlantis/  
the Hesperides (Almada, 2021, p. 12).<sup>11</sup>

Cabo Verde [...]. Sant’y Águ simboliza a sacralização dos elementos essenciais da nossa mitologia: os santos (em primeiro lugar, o Santo Iago, também personagem de Shakespeare e a Água; a ilha, a raiz do arquipélago”. (Almada, 1990, pp. 11-16).

10. “[...] este nome literário Zé di Sant’y Águ, criado em 1978, em Assomada [...] aqui reiterado como responsável pela escrita poética em crioulo [...] [transforma-se em N’Zé di Sant’y Águ enquanto] poesia lusógrafa [ambas interrogantes das] matrizas da condição humana [onde se deteta] uma indagação estética da universalidade fundada na pretensão de uma autenticidade cabo-verdiana, historicamente situada”. (Maia in Almada, 2005, pp. 109-110).

11. “[...] na Praia e no Mindelo/como Amílcar/[...]/[...] de Lisboa Luanda Paris e Frankfurt/[...]/em Bissau Dakar Accra/Conakry Paris e Londres/no vasto mundo clandestino em luta/em Abel Djassi/transfigurado e proclamado/em Medina do Boé/Herói do Povo proclamado/[...]/

The reference to Atlantis suggests a mythical return to his origins in the archipelago of Cape Verde, as a consequence of a sort of Utopian expedition to his origins (Luz, 2013), similarly to what occurred with other Cape Verdean authors, such as Jorge Barbosa (1902 - 1971) and Pedro Cardoso (1890 -1941). See also Barbosa's poem "Panorama," in which he raises a series of questions to try to understand the geological origins of the country:

Wreckage from what continent,/from what cataclysms,/from what earthquakes,/from what mysteries? ...//Islands lost/in the middle of the ocean/forgotten/in a corner of the world/- which the waves cradle./mistreat, embrace ... (Barbosa, 2002, p. 35).<sup>12</sup>

The use of Atlantis fills a historical void through a reinvented reality of the archipelago. (Luz, 2013). Following this line of reasoning, Atlantis referred to by JLHCA in his poem "Parábola sobre o castanho sofrimento e a verde ressurgência das criaturas das ilhas," the archipelago resulted from the disintegration of a homonymous continent, trying to reclaim an imaginary space (Luz, 2013), as we inferred above. Likewise, the space also appears in the work *Deflagrações* as a sort of "exterior experience" and a reflection of the collective imaginary. Another example that corroborates this point of view is the poem "Insula Verdeana," written under the literary name *Nzé de Sant'yago'* and dedicated to the following Cape Verdean intellectuals: Corsino Fortes (1933 – 2015) – judge, writer, diplomat, Carlos Alberto Lopez Barbosa, better known by his pseudonym Kaká Barbosa (1947 – 2020) – poet musician, short story writer, and politician; José Gabriel Lopes da Silva, better known as Gabriel Mariano (1928 – 2002) – writer and judge, João Manuel Varela (1937 – 2007) – writer, neuroscientist, scientist and professor who wrote under the pseudonyms João Vário, Timóteo Tio Tiofe and Geuzim Té Didial, Francisco Varela, better known as Xico Xa, clandestine militant in the struggle for Cape Verde's independence. He was seriously injured in the military repression in the city of Praia on 19 May 1974 (just a few days after 25 April), which is the reason why that day is considered the Municipal day of Praia, and Fernando Monteiro (1951 – 2011) – writer, well-known chronicler, and journalist in Cape Verde. Although he was well known for his work in the newspaper *Horizonte*, his literary work is little known and studied, both in Cape

Verde and abroad (Marchini, 2017). His profession enabled him to learn about daily life all over the archipelago, as Luicana Marchini states in her article "A ilusão do gênero em *O travesti*, do escritor cabo-verdiano Fernando Monteiro":

Working as a journalist and chronicler enabled Monteiro to learn about life and events in the capital and those of his country and its citizens. This experience gave him an advantaged position as an observer of Cape Verdean society. [...] (Marchini, 2017, p. 83).<sup>13</sup>

JLHCA's poem "Insula Verdeana" (under *Nzé de Sant'yago'*) makes reference to other things: the lava flows of the volcano Chã das Caldeiras; corn - a staple of the Cape Verdean diet; the sea that surrounds the islands; to Eugénio Tavares (1867- 1930), a Cape Verdean journalist and poet; to Homer, the epic poet of Greek Antiquity and author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; and to the Harmattan – a dry and dusty wind that blows from the northeast in the Sahara and affects the Cape Verdean islands from time to time:

A Corsino Fortes e Kaká Barboza/[...]/To the memories of Gabriel Mariano, João Manuel Varela, Francisco Varela (Xico Xan) and Fernando Monteiro//Of the eruptive fire/and of its trails of lava/quivering ashes in sap are born// [...] /from Eugénio to Homer/[...]//Scorching/are the hands of the harmattan/[...] /in the fearless steps of Gervásio e Ambrósio//[...] /from the conch búzio of corn to the black star/in the resurrected martyrdom of Amílcar/[...]. (Almada, 2021, pp. 33-35).<sup>14</sup>

The Harmattan wind is also known in Cape Verde as *Lestada* (wind from the East) or *Bruma Seca* (dry mist) and causes many problems in the daily lives of the locals. Cape Verde is part of the Sahel belt and has a hot, unstable climate. The amount of precipitation in a given year determines whether there will be good agricultural yields and abundant food. As a result of the irregular rainfall, Cape Verdeans suffer

[Reencontrar-nos-emos/e à nossa obsessão/do verde/- nome edénico da paz -/e à nossa saudade/da Atlântida/das Hespérides" (Almada, 2021, p. 12).

12. "Destroços de que continente,/de que cataclismos,/de que sismos,/de que mistérios?...//Ilhas perdidas/no meio do mar./esquecidas/num canto do mundo/- que as ondas embalam./maltratam, abraçam..." (Barbosa, 2002, p. 35).

13. "O exercício da profissão de jornalista e cronista possibilitou a Monteiro conhecer e se inteirar da vida e dos acontecimentos não somente da capital, mas também d[os] seu país e d[os] seus cidadãos. Tal vivência permitiu que ele ocupasse o lugar privilegiado de observador da sociedade cabo-verdiana. [...]" (Marchini, 2017, p. 83).

14. "A Corsino Fortes e Kaká Barboza/[...]/As memórias de Gabriel Mariano, João Manuel Varela, Francisco Varela (Xico Xan) e Fernando Monteiro//Do eruptivo fogo/ e dos seus rastros de lavas/nasceram cinzas frementes em seiva/[...] /de Eugénio a Homero/[...]//São ardentes/as mãos do harmattan/[...] /nos passos destemidos de Gervásio e Ambrósio/[...] /do búzio do milho e da estrela negra/no ressurto martírio de Amílcar/[...]" (Almada, 2021, pp. 33-35).

periods of drought, with dramatic consequences (Luz, 2013). Germano Almeida considers that:

Two important natural agents of erosion are: torrential rains (though rare); winds from the East, probably influenced by the Harmattan. Both natural agents have equally disastrous effects, with the only difference being that rainfall is less frequent, and the winds are more recurrent due to their annual cyclical nature (Almeida, 2003, p. 27).<sup>15</sup>

From the names mentioned previously, we single out that of Eugénio Tavares - a self-taught and well-learned individual, as can be seen by his literary work. He earned a reputation for his commitment to social justice, in reaction to the central government's indifference, and for his militancy in the Republican cause (Rodrigues Sobrinho, 2017). Through journalism, he condemned the profound political and social problems experienced in Cape Verde. Isabel Lobo argues that:

Eugénio Tavares is a reference in Cape Verdean literature. His texts cover a vast range of genres (and are written in) a language very characteristic of that period, in which several sources of influence cannot be excluded, such as Romanticism and the Classicism of the Renaissance. His work allows us to understand better certain social, civic, and literary phenomena that were characteristic of Cape Verde in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Lobo *apud* Rodrigues Sobrinho, 2017, p. 25).<sup>16</sup>

Also noteworthy in “Insula Verdeana” is the author’s reference to Gervásio and Ambrósio: “[...] and sculpting the oblique side of the revolt/in the fearless steps of Gervásio and Ambrósio/[...]” (Almada, 2021, p. 34). This alludes to the slave insurrection in Monte Agarro (1835) led by Gervásio, Narciso, and Domingo, hoping to instill a Cape Verdean version of Haiti on the island of Santiago. Ambrósio, “a tall, dark mulatto individual

with green eyes” (Mariano in Laban, 1992, p. 354), a carpenter (by profession) well-spoken and respected among his peers, is a reference to the poem “Capitão Ambrósio” by Gabriel Mariano. This poem was inspired by a popular uprising in the city of Mindelo, São Vicente, on 7 June 1934 under the leadership of Ambrósio Lopes (1878 – 1938), also known in the local language as *Nhô Ambrose*. It consisted of a large group of men, women, and children who went through several streets of Mindelo hoisting a black cloth as a flag symbolizing poverty and hunger to compel the local authorities to call upon the government of that Portuguese colony to take the necessary measures to assist the unemployed population of Mindelo.

Starting in the Ribeira Bote neighborhood, in the periphery of Mindelo, the crowd moved towards the Praça da República and the Pracinha da Igreja, where they demanded the municipal authorities send a telegraph to the governor informing him that the people could not suffer such privation any more and would remain united and solidary, would not disperse, and would wait for measures to be taken to end their predicament. Their plight resulted from recurring droughts and a decline in income from remittances sent by Cape Verdean emigrants living in the United States, Argentina, and Brazil (a reflection of the effects of the Great Depression overseas). Moreover, the deep-water port of Porto Grande in Mindelo, which until then had been the “economic heart” of the archipelago, suffered dramatic reductions in shipping and exports. For a long time, Mindelo had been the capital of economic activity of the country, i.e., shipping, commerce, telegraph and postal services, industry, education, and a submarine telegraph cable. (Luz, 2013).

Gabriel Mariano heard of the aforementioned uprising led by Ambrósio in an informal social gathering over coffee and conversation. (Mariano in Laban, 1992, p. 353). He wrote the poem months after hearing the incident, which he clearly found disturbing, as revealed in the following transcript of an interview with Michel Laban:

- At the time, I felt anger and pride. The story really affected me. So, well, from then on, knowing about Ambrósio’s story and with a critical understanding of the social, economic, and colonial conditions while writing the poem, I was able to see things clearly. Anyway, Ambrósio figures in the poem as a popular leader who, afflicted by hunger and from the difficult circumstances, leads the populace in a rebellion against the established order and leaves a message of freedom (Mariano in Laban, p. 353).<sup>17</sup>

15. “Dois importantes agentes naturais da erosão são: as grandes chuvadas, por vezes torrenciais (embora raras); e os ventos, as lestadas talvez influenciadas pelo Hermatan. A ação destes dois agentes produz, praticamente, efeitos desastrosos semelhantes, apenas com a diferença que num caso (o das chuvadas) a frequência é menor, e no outro (o dos ventos) mais acentuado devido ao seu período anual cíclico”. (Almeida, 2003, p. 27).

16. “Eugénio Tavares é um nome de referência na literatura cabo-verdeana. Os seus textos, ao percorrerem um leque vasto de géneros, uma linguagem muito característica da época, donde se não excluem influências várias como o romantismo e o classicismo renascentista, permitem hoje a compreensão mais consentânea de certos fenómenos sociais, cívicos e literários próprios dos finais do século XIX e início do XX cabo-verdeano” (Lobo *apud* Rodrigues Sobrinho, 2017, p. 25).

17. “- Na altura, o que senti foi raiva e orgulho. A história impressionou-me. E, bom, a partir daí, conhecendo a história do Ambrósio, e já com uma compreensão crítica

The character of Ambrósio, who was given “the rank of captain” by the author of the poem, became renowned for his courage and strong personality, as evidenced in the following extract from the interview:

[...] Ambrosio at the front, with a small back flag, and when the military appeared to suppress them, shots ... His courage when he was arrested and later imprisoned and interrogated by the military officer in charge of the investigation [...] His answer was: «A good Portuguese is like a good codfish (a highly appreciated fish by the Portuguese); he only goes overseas every one hundred years and when the occasion arises! ». That, according to what I was told, was said directly to his excellency, the Portuguese military officer who was interrogating him [...] This shows a very strong personality, very brave, very courageous (Mariano in Laban, 1992, p. 354).<sup>18</sup>

This is a poem with rhythm and vigor, and we find verses that return to the precedent and refer to a progressive movement (Laban, 1992). The people appear walking with zeal and determination through the streets of Mindelo in an “orderly march, of angry rebels.” (Mariano in Laban 1992, p. 356). As punishment, Ambrósio was sent to Angola. He eventually died, but he remained in the memory of the islanders for his heroic attitude. See the following passage from the poem “Capitão Ambrósio”:

Flag/Black flag/Black flag of hunger./In famished lifted hands/Guiding the steps guiding/  
Flying in the free eyes/Flying free and glowing/  
Restless and free glowing/Brandishing a black flag/Clear flag of hunger./2/Lifted hands/In strength, hard, lifted/Feet marking the revolt/  
The people march in the street./Ambrósio is at the front/Mulatto Ambrósio guiding/Holds in his hands the flag.//[...]3/For a minute./The

dos fenómenos sociais, económicos, coloniais, etc., já aí eu pude distinguir, ao fazer o poema, as coisas. Enfim, o Ambrósio aparece no poema como um líder popular que, massacrado pela fome e pelas circunstâncias, lidera, conduz o povo à rebelião contra a ordem estabelecida, e deixa uma mensagem de liberdade”. (Mariano in Laban, p. 353).

18. “[...] – O Ambrósio à frente, com a bandeirinha preta, e quando a tropa saiu cá para fora os reprimir, tiros... A coragem dele... A coragem dele ao ser, depois, preso e interrogado lá pelo militar que encarregado de fazer o inquérito... A resposta que ele deu: «O bom português, é como o bom bacalhau; só vem para o ultramar de cem em cem anos e quando calha!». Isso, ao que me contaram, dito cara a cara, à sua excelência o oficial militar português que o interrogava... Isso revela uma personalidade muito forte, muito valente, muito corajosa...” (Mariano in Laban, 1992, p. 354).

wind came and went./Mulatto Ambrósio was arrested/Tried and imprisoned Ambrósio/Sent far away Ambrósio./Far from the people, Ambrósio./But the flag remained./He died and was buried/But the flag remained.//[...]. (Mariano in Ferreira, pp. 170-172).<sup>19</sup>

Despite the difficult conditions of life in Cape Verde, as portrayed by the character of Ambrósio in *JLHCA/Nzé de Sant'ago*'s “Insula Verdeana,” Cape Verde is also a place of renowned cultural figures, as evidenced in the poem “Saudade vária (O verde da primeira rocha),” also by *Nzé de Sant'ago*. This work is dedicated to the Cape Verdean musicians *Codê di Dona*, whose real names were Gregório Vaz (1940 – 2010) and Orlando Pantera – Orlando Monteiro Barreto (1967 – 2011). In the text, the island of Santiago is depicted as mountainous, inclement, a place of love, sugar cane, and orange trees. It is an island characterized culturally by the *batuque* (drums) and by the *tabanca* (a Cape Verdean musical genre), and the author refers to the famous uprisings of the Engenhos (1822), of Achada Falcão (1841), and Ribeirão Manuel (1910):

You are Santiago/lands of inclemency/and of blossoming loves/in the sugar cane and the orange tree/in the mourning/in betrothal and in death//[...] you are Santiago/*batuco* and adultery of feet/in the stairway of daily life/tree and *tabanca*//[...]//speckled with green suffused with remembrance/of the tenants of the Engenhos and Achada Falcão/and of the rebel women of Ribeira Manuel (Almada, 2021, p. 41-42).<sup>20</sup>

Citing the revolts mentioned above is also an evocation of uprisings that occurred in the interior of the island of Santiago against the high duties, the despotism of landowners, and the extreme hardship of

19. “Bandeira/Negra bandeira/Bandeira negra da fome./Em mãos famintas erguidas/Guiando os passos guiando/Nos olhos livres voando/Voando livre e luzindo/Inquieta e livre luzindo/Luzindo a negra bandeira/Clara bandeira da fome./2/Mãos erguidas/Em força, duras, erguidas/Pés marcando a revolta/O povo marcha na rua./Vai na frente o Ambrósio/Mulato Ambrósio guiando/Leva nas mãos a bandeira.//[...]3/Foi um minuto./Veio o vento e passou./Mulato Ambrósio foi preso/Julgado e preso o Ambrósio/Preso para longe o Ambrósio/Mandado para longe o Ambrósio./Longe do povo o Ambrósio./Mas a bandeira ficou./Morreu e foi enterrado/Mas a bandeira ficou.//[...]” (Mariano in Ferreira, pp. 170-172).

20. “Tu és Santiago/terras das intempéries/e dos amores floridos/na cana e na laranjeira/dos choros carpindo/na núpcia e na morte//[...]tu és Santiago/*batuco* e adultério de pés/na escadaria do quotidiano/árvore e *tabanca*//[...]//salpicada de verde inundada da rememoração/dos reideiros dos Engenhos e da Achada Falcão/e das mulheres rebeldes de Ribeira Manuel” (Almada, 2021, p. 41-42).

subsistence in the countryside. To conclude, we can state that in both revolts, the “rebel women,” as referred to by the author, played a major role, particularly in Ribeirão Manuel, since they were the center of attention and turmoil. In summary, the concept of space is depicted in JLHCA’s *Deflagrações* in a physical, social, and psychological way, as exposed in this contemplation.

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