Neo-fado: Identity Creation Among Portuguese-Americans

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Traditional Portuguese fado typically consists of two guitarists—often both a Portuguese and acoustic—along with a vocalist. However, a new instrumentation of the genre has yielded a modern style—neo-fado—popular throughout Portuguese communities. More than the music, this modernization of a traditional cultural artifact reveals the globalization and pluralism of diapsoric Portuguese communities. Scholars have already recognized this pluralism. Scholar Michael Arnold’s research highlights the hybridity neo-fado represents in mainland communities, especially Lisbon. Still others, including Estellie Smith and Don Warrin, examine the use of traditional fado in immigrant communities in the US. João Leal explores the pluralism of Azorean-Americans and expressions of transnationalism and identity through Holy Ghost festivals. This research explores neo-fado as a lens onto pluralism in Azorean- and Portuguese-American communities. Ultimately such an exploration will reveal how younger generations in immigrant communities reject the Portugal of their parents to construct one of their own.