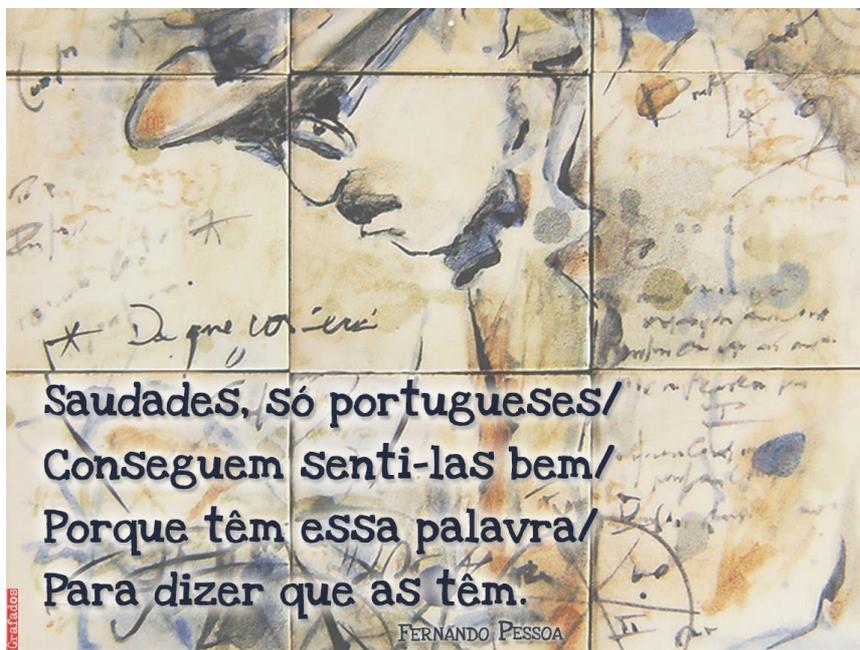


LONGING AND "SAUDADE"



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Saudade

*I feel beliefs that I do not hold.
I am ravished by passions I repudiate.*

Fernando Pessoa

As is implicit in my bilingual title, I have chosen as a topic for this essay the sad state of intense longing that I have been feeling since the death of my twenty-five-year-old son and of some very dear friends. Although this nostalgic yearning is very intense and somewhat difficult to analyze and scrutinize, we all know when we feel it. I am sure that most of my readers are also aware of this emotion for they must have perceived it when they lost someone from their past or even regarding a bygone place or time.

This intensity of feeling and persistent carving is due to the remembrance of absent people or of pleasant experiences you no longer have - and are missing - and, therefore, you feel grief, sorrow and heartache. As is common knowledge, yearning is an emotional state, widely experienced in situations involving loss, focused on a desire for a person, place, or thing that was treasured in the past. Sometimes that longing comes unexpectedly and it hurts and disturbs us.

Since – although writing in English - I have used the Portuguese word "Saudade" in my title¹, I think I should justify my choice. Some might say that it is due to the fact that many people think that there is no exact English translation. Others that it conveys a typically Portuguese emotion connected to the period of the Discoveries, when our sailors

¹ As Fernando Pessoa did in his poem entitled *Saudade*, that I quote as an epigraph.

were travelling all over the world and feeling an intense memory of something with a desire for it, as Duarte Nunes Leão has said already in the 17th century.²

More recently, and as many other scholars, Aubrey F. G. Bell (1882-1950) also attempted to clarify this complex concept in his book entitled *In Portugal* saying that "saudade" is a vague and constant desire for something that does not, and probably cannot, exist, for something other than the present.³

The word "saudade" - which, as I've said, has been considered untranslatable because its sense cannot be expressed in any other language - describes this sentiment of incompleteness, nostalgia and homesickness. It corresponds also to the emotion of feeling both happy and sad at the same time, which might be translated in English as bitter sweet. However, although it has been appraised as deeply connected with Portuguese culture, it is often expressed in literature, painting, sculpture and music, all over the world.

Considering that art is the best way to express our emotions, I will start by alluding to some of the artistic references made to my topic in painting. Among many other works of art, to illustrate my title, I have selected "Saudade" (1899), an oil picture by the Brazilian artist José Ferraz de Almeida Júnior (1850-99), which I assess as remarkable because the subject's face clearly reveals the commotion of yearning.



Figure 1 *Saudade* (1899), José F. de Almeida Jr.

² Duarte Nunes Leão, *Origem da Língua Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Pedro Crasbeeck, 1606). Vide Biblioteca Digital de Portugal <http://purl.pt/50/1/index.html#/3/html>

³ See the recent edition of *In Portugal* (1912) by Aubrey F. G. Bell (Trieste Publishing Pty Limited, 2017).

I might also mention the American painter Shelby McQuilkin (1966--) whose work entitled "Longing" is on two separate panels, in which each figure of the diptych is reaching out for the other.



Figure 2 - *Longing*, Shelby McQuilkin

But I think that, if I had to select only one image to illustrate my text, I might choose "The Longing" by Abeer Malik, a contemporary Free Lance Concept and Portrait artist from Delhi, India.



Figure 3 *The Longing*, Abeer Malik

To my surprise, during my research, I realized that even the most famous painters, like Paul Klee and Marc Chagall, had certainly also felt the abovementioned emotion of longing, which they expressed in different ways in their well-known paintings.



Figure 4 Paul Klee, "Mural from the Temple of Longing", 1922

Paul Klee (1879 – 1940), the celebrated German painter, who was influenced by Expressionism, Cubism, and Surrealism, was also inspired by the theme as is evident in his painting "Mural from the Temple of Longing \curvearrowright Thither \curvearrowleft " (1922), which we can see at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It has been said that Klee saw the upturned arrows are symbols of spiritual energy that transformed the 19th-century juxtaposition of man and nature to a 20th-century idiom.

I must also mention Winslow Homer (1836–1910), the preeminent figure in American art who, as a landscape painter and printmaker, is best known for his marine subjects. He is considered one of the foremost painters in 19th century and he illustrates the topic of yearning in several of his works. Among them I would select "Waiting for Dad - Longing" (1873) a watercolour, which is at Mills College Art Museum, in the United States.



Figure 5 Winslow Homer, "Waiting for Dad-Longing", 1873

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Another painter that I must allude to is, obviously, Marc Chagall (1887-1985), whose every painting seems to capture his feelings of deep yearning for his family and for the rich Jewish life of the village from his childhood. His paintings also clearly convey, in his dreamlike and whimsical style, his longing, as is evident in *Hommage au passé ou La Ville* (1944) that we can contemplate at Pierre Matisse Gallery, in New York.

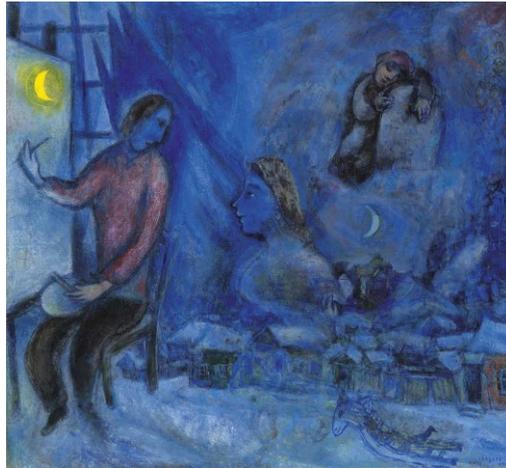


Figure 6 Marc Chagall, "Hommage au passé ou La Ville", 1944

Confirming my idea that the feeling of "saudade" is expressed all over the world, I include a painting by Wafaa Jamil, which is also entitled *Longing*. It is an original oil portrait of a beautiful woman yearning for her beloved ones. The author is a Jordanian artist residing in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates, who has been painting since 2004, and who says she likes making art because it is the only way she can express her emotions.

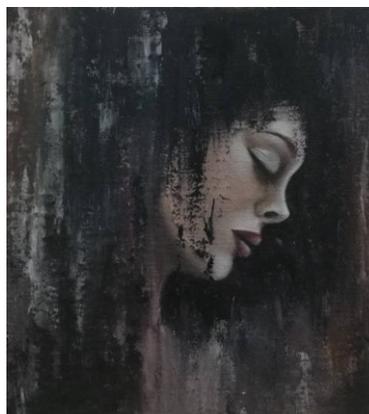


Figure 7 Wafaa Jamil, "Longing"

In the area of sculpture, there are also manifestations of the same feeling as is evident in *Saudade* by Andrea Bucci (1966--), that we can see at the Bucci Art Gallery, which is located in the historic centre of the town of Lucca and holds a selection of exquisite artworks by this contemporary Italian artist, which are distinguished by the quality and originality of his craftsmanship.

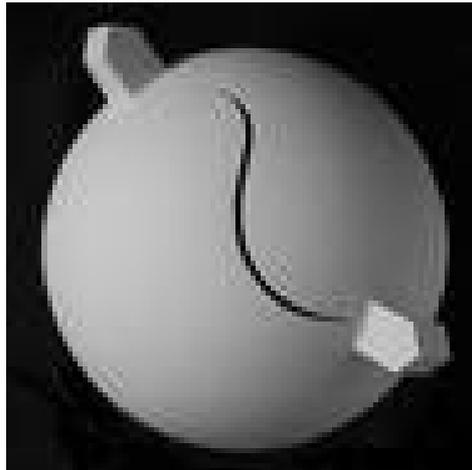


Figure 8 Andrea Bucci, "Saudade"

From the beginning of the 20th century, I have selected the French sculptor Camille Claudel (1864–1943), who studied sculpture with Auguste Rodin and was the sister of the poet Paul Claudel, and is known for her figurative artwork in bronze and white marble. Among her impressive sculptures, I think that it is the one entitled *Rêve Au Coin du Feu* (1902) that better conveys the feeling of loneliness and craving for a lost happiness.



Figure 9 Camille Claudel, "Rêve au Coin du Feu" (1902)

Still in the sphere of sculpture, I must also mention funerary art for it is a domain, which is closely connected to longing. It is constituted by works of art that are placed in a repository for the remains of the dead (such as their tombs) in an attempt to preserve the memory of those who are gone and to incite the living to remember them and to celebrate their lives and accomplishments.



Figure 10 - Images of Longing

Funerary art is a space full of memories and the way in which the statues are conceived and their visual codes are composed of sets of compelling symbols. They are made with several materials, such as marble, iron or bronze and some of them are now seen as works of art that transmit affection. Although they represent heartache they are beautiful because they depict the last tribute to someone who was loved. It has a wide variety of forms, including cenotaphs, tomb-like monuments, which do not contain human remains, and communal memorials to the dead, such as war memorials, which may or may not contain remains, and a range of prehistoric megalithic constructs. The sculptors, through their sensibility, try to transmit affection through the works made of stone. Each sculpture is an homage made by the living to incite and urge the sweet and terrible task of remembering those that are gone forever.

Funerary art is found in almost all cultures and there are many artistic creations of the past, like the Egyptian pyramids and the famous tomb of the 18th dynasty Pharaoh Tutankhamen. It was produced for the powerful and wealthy, although the burials of ordinary people might include simple monuments. Nearly all the art connected with the burial, except for limited grave goods, was intended for later viewing

by the public but the treasure of Tutankhamen, for example, though exceptionally lavish, was never intended to be seen again after it was deposited. On the other hand, the exterior of the pyramids was a permanent and highly effective demonstration of the power of their creators.

This cultural tradition, which is evident in the sculpted sarcophagus and tomb monuments of the Greek and Roman empires, and later of the Christian world, has flourished all over the world. It reached its climax in the 18th and 19th centuries but nowadays it is less used due to the preference for the so-called garden-cemetery that became popular in the United States and Europe, due to the overcrowding and health concerns of urban cemeteries.



Figure 11 Forever Sad

Besides painting and sculpture, we also find the most impressive artworks related to the topic of longing and "saudade" in music. There are many great very early baroque and classical pieces that contain that emotion, as well as many operatic works and later also more popular genres that are much appreciated and understood by the general public. As we all know, music can evoke memories, transporting us to another time and place.



Figure 12 Lament of the immigrant

Migration and music are intrinsically linked, mirroring the movement of people from place to place and country to country. Musical styles have been influenced by migration, as communities tell their migration stories through music.

Music and migration both influence and inspire each other, and the rhythms and movement of people and their feelings of longing and "saudade" are reflected in the lyrics and notes of folk music across Europe and, therefore, I will allude to some examples mainly from Ireland, Greece and Portugal.

As regards Ireland, emigration for economic, political and social reasons has been a part of Irish life throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. People left Ireland largely for other English-speaking countries.

Hundreds of folk songs express the sentiments of those who left Ireland through lyrics put to the air of traditional songs, taken by emigrants as they crossed the seas. Some refer to events in the country's turbulent history, such as The Great Famine and British rule; others are very personal, speaking of loved ones, childhood memories and the glorious Irish landscape.



Figure 13- Poor Pat must Migrate

In a penny ballad" handbill entitled *The Irish Refugee, or Poor Pat Must Migrate*, the singer J. S. Berry laments the misfortunes at home, the high rents and taxes, the ninety-eight uprising, the famine of forty-eight, and other difficulties that have driven Pat to leave home. The song refers to the English injustice and Pat's desire to return home with a Fenian⁴ band.

As many Greeks migrated to seek their fortune in other countries, migration - and therefore longing and "saudade" - is also a common theme in Greek folk music. Songs dating to the period of the Ottoman rule contain lyrics full of melancholy, reflecting the deep sorrow and the great pain of the person who is leaving, and also of those who stay behind.

The protagonist of these songs is always a man, unfolding an often-tragic tale: as most migrants were not expected to return, moving away was considered an equivalent to death. In many of these songs they are compared with migratory birds and vulnerable travelers. The songs also express the feelings of the people who remained behind as the figure of the mother who appears in many songs. Thus, it has been said that the songs have a strong patriarchal connotation.

As regards the theme of longing and "saudade" in Portugal, it is the musical genre "Fado" that has become so famous that it is often considered as a symbol of the country.

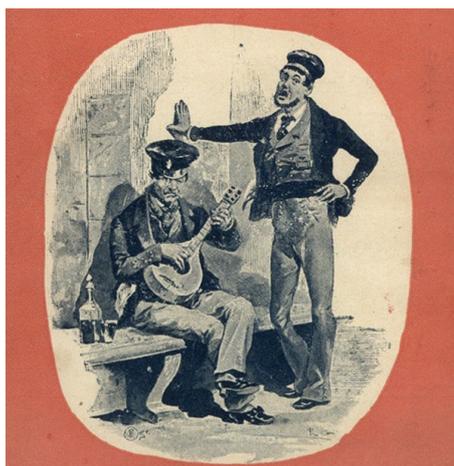


Figure 14 Pinto de Carvalho, *História do Fado*

⁴ Fenian was a member of an Irish revolutionary organization founded in New York in 1858 that worked for the establishment of an independent Irish republic.

From its origins in the early 1800s, "fado" music and lyrics have been associated with longing, sadness and remembering. The mournful tune is often about the sea or the life of the poor, it expresses feelings of nostalgia and yearning and emotions dealing with emigration, which are related to these themes. There are two distinct models of *Fado*, the one from Lisbon and the other from Coimbra, which is connected to the academic traditions of the University of Coimbra and is only sung by men.

Among others, the song entitled "Fado do Emigrante", which was sung by António Menano⁵, who was one of the best-known and most famous singers from Coimbra, clearly exemplifies this. The lyrics below describe the feelings of leaving the land where the singer was born and his emotional reaction to distance and homesickness.

<i>Adeus terra onde eu nasci</i>	Good-bye land where I was born
<i>E onde vivi tão feliz</i>	And where I lived so happy
<i>Adeus olhos que dizeis</i>	Goodbye eyes that you say
<i>Coisas que a boca não diz .</i>	Things the mouth doesn't say (My translation)

The scholar Rui Vieira Nery, in his book *Para Uma História do Fado*⁶ - that is a fundamental reference for the study of that popular musical genre – tells us that it is considered as the most famous Portuguese music style and describes how, along the centuries, *Fado* has evolved. It is generally sung by a single person (the *fadista*) who is accompanied by a Portuguese guitar, which is different from the Spanish model⁷, as we can see in the famous painting by José Malhoa (1855-1933) entitled "Fado".

5 António Menano (1895-1969) was famous all over Portugal. He was an immigrant himself for he worked as a doctor in Mozambique from 1933 till he returned to Portugal in 1961.

6 Rui Vieira Nery, *Para Uma História do Fado*, (Público; Corda Seca, 2004). This 1st edition won the "Prémio Amália de Ensaio e Divulgação" in 2006.

7 The modern Portuguese guitar derives from the medieval "citole" and has been used in Portugal since the 13th century amongst troubadour and minstrel circles. Later it became popular and was played in theaters, taverns and barbershops. It is used for solo music (*guitarradas*) as well as the accompaniment.



Figure 15 *Fado* by José Malhoa (1910)

"Saudade", the topic I have chosen for this essay, is one of the most popular themes of *fado*, alongside with nostalgia, jealousy, and the themes of short stories about the typical city quarters. The word *fado* comes from the Latin word *fatum* meaning fate or destiny and the songs are the musical cultural expression of the abovementioned bittersweet yearning.



Figure 16 - Amália Rodrigues singing Fado

Among all the Portuguese fado singers, we must distinguish Amália Rodrigues (1920-1990), who was a *fadista* and an actress that acted in several films, such as "Capas Negras" (1946) and "Fado" (1947). She was known as "Rainha do Fado" (Queen of Fado), sung a "Fado da Saudade" that became famous and, because she travelled internationally throughout her career, was instrumental in popularizing that music genre, which is so connected with longing⁸.

Her great talent was recognized not only in Portugal – where she remains the best-selling Portuguese artist in history - but wherever she sang. In the United

⁸ To know more about her biography, see Rui Vieira Nery, *Pensar Amália*, Lisboa: Tugaland, 2010.

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States, one of her albums achieved the first position among the best sellers, she was the cover of the American magazine *Billboard*, performed at Radio City Hall in New York and sung at *Mocambo Club*, in Hollywood and on American TV on ABC (1953). She was also popular in Spain and Brazil, lived in Paris, recorded and acted in Germany and Mexico.

To her fame contributed the fact that, in the sixties, Alain Oulman (1929-1990), the French composer, became her main songwriter and musical producer. He created numerous melodies for her *fados*, adding orchestral accompaniments and invited leading poets, like David Mourão Ferreira and Pedro Homem de Mello, to write specifically for her.

In France, she acted in the film *Les Amants du Tage*, performed at the prestigious Parisian *Olympia* hall (1956-92) in a series of concerts and her performance was recorded in the album "Portugal's Great Amália Rodrigues Live at the Olympia Theatre in Paris", in 1957, and Charles Aznavour wrote the *fado* "Aie Mourir Pour Toi" for her.

Amália, as she was known all over the world, was awarded forty decorations and honors for her music, stage presence, and philanthropy, including the *Légion d'Honneur* by the French government. She was given a state funeral and is the only woman who had the honor of having her remains in the National Pantheon in Lisbon.

Before Amália, *saudade* has been a theme in Portuguese music that goes back to the 16th century, the age of the Discoveries. Therefore, we find it as an inspiration for many songs and compositions mainly in the countries where Portuguese is spoken, like Cabo Verde and Brazil.



Figure 17 Cesária Évora

Among them, I have selected "Sodade" (*saudade* in Cape Verdean Creole), which is the title of the most famous song of the Cape Verdean singer Cesária Évora, because, like Amália's, her voice was heard all over the world.

Another reason for my choice is the fact that, like the Portuguese and the Irish, Cape Verdeans have been seafarers and emigrants for centuries and therefore they know the emotion of longing. The title of Cesária's song corresponds to the Portuguese word "saudade"⁹, that derives from the Latin *solitudo*, which, as mentioned above, means solitude. The Cape Verdeans, due to their contacts with the Portuguese during colonization, must have heard them singing *Fado*, and realized it is connected to the feeling of yearning that they also express in their musical genre, which is the Cape Verdean "sodade"¹⁰ that is a kind of *morna*¹¹.

In Brazil, that feeling is also conveyed in "samba de fossa" and "bossa nova" but the name that stands out in the history of Brazilian music and literature connected with my topic is Vinicius de Moraes (1913-1980), the well-known poet and composer who wrote a famous song entitled "Chega de Saudade".

Besides being inspiring in painting, sculpture and music, as we have seen, longing and "saudade" are obviously also recurring themes in literature all over the world.

In Portugal, where – as in most countries - literature is an expression of the national temperament, there are many references to my theme for there is an overtone of melancholy that permeates Portuguese lyric poetry as it does in music.

In our cultural history, one of the first to theorize about "saudade" was King Edward (D. Duarte I, 1391-1498), who was called The Philosopher or The Eloquent, in his *Leal Conselheiro*¹², written in the 15th century and where he defined longing saying: "Saudade is the feeling that our heart is failing because it is separated from the presence of someone, or some persons, that he loves very much."¹³. The wise king wanted to leave a manual of prudent conduct for his subjects but, after his death, the Queen took the

⁹ According to Carolina Michaelis (*A Saudade Portuguesa*), 1914, the word "saudade", which has a complex meaning, is indissolubly linked to Portuguese culture.

¹⁰ "Sodade" is the translation of the Portuguese word "saudade" in Cape Verdean Creole. It is the title of a song, which was popularized by Cesária Évora on her 1992 album *Miss Perfumado*.

¹¹ "Morna" is the national music and dance genre from Cape Verde.

¹² D. Duarte, *Leal Conselheiro*. Lisboa: Instituto Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1998. This critical edition by M. Helena Lopes de Castro is the most recent.

¹³ "Saudade propriamente he sentido que o coração falha por se achar partido da presença dalguma pessoa ou pessoas que muyto por afeição ama" (Dom Duarte, *Leal Conselheiro*. Coimbra: Atlântida, 1973, Chapter XXV, p. 16.

manuscript to Spain and it was only published in the 19th century, when it had two editions and started being known and quoted as a reflection on Portuguese identity.

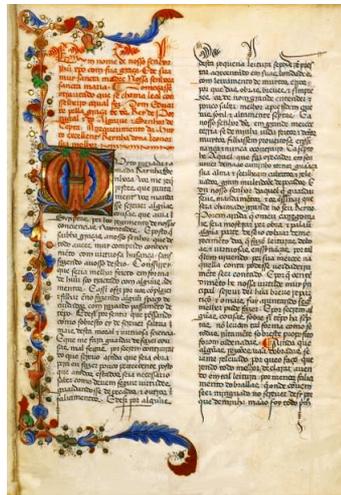


Figure 18 - D. Duarte, *Leal Conselheiro*

In the 16th century, Luís de Camões (1524-1580), the author of the national epic *Os Lusíadas*, also wrote about longing in his poems as did Bernardim Ribeiro (1482-1552) in his *Livro das Saudades* (1554)¹⁴. In the 19th century, António Nobre (1867-1900), especially in his poetry collected in the volume appropriately entitled *Só* (1892), and Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877-1952) were the foremost initiators of a growing cult of a movement called "saudosismo".

João de Barros (1881-1960) also adopted the same fad for they considered it as the key to the nation's greatness and therefore it came to dominate the aesthetics of the time. The mentor of this cultural movement, which was created during the Second World War and had a nationalist character, was Teixeira de Pascoaes. Their objective was to regenerate Portuguese culture, of which "saudade" was seen as a symbol, and wanted to give it a universal dimension.

Later on, other famous poets - besides Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), who wrote in a tone of "saudade" dealing with themes of nostalgia and alienation - like Mário Beirão (1890-1965) and Florbela Espanca (1894-1930), the author of *Livro de SÓror Saudade* (1923), also mentioned a constant feeling of absence and a wistful longing for integrality or wholeness that can still be considered a mark of Portuguese Literature nowadays.

¹⁴ This was the first Renaissance pastoral romance written in Portugal and it became known as *Menina e Moça*.

As regards other countries, I will only allude to Germany and, among all the many other possible references, I've decided to choose the poem "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt" ("Only he who knows yearning") by Goethe (1749-1832), that was published in his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*¹⁵, because of its obvious connections to the topic and also due to the fact that, besides being appreciated in the area of literature, it is acknowledged in the musical world in various countries.

The poem, which is one of the songs of Mignon, a character in the novel, has been set to music by many well-known composers, among them Beethoven¹⁶, Schubert¹⁷, Schumann, Wolf and Tchaikovsky¹⁸, thus being also appreciated in the musical world all over Europe.

*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt
Weiß, was ich leide!
Allein und abgetrennt
Von aller Freude,
Seh ich ans Firmament
Nach jener Seite.*

Only those who know longing
Know what sorrows me!
Alone and separated
From all joy
I look into the sky
To the yonder side.
(Translation)

Having made references to my topic in different cultural areas in several countries and epochs, I will now conclude as I have started by evoking the memory of my deceased son with a quotation of a sonnet by Camões (1524-1580), who, besides being one of the greatest Portuguese poets, is also known for writing about longing and "saudade".

Alma minha gentil, que te partiste
Tão cedo desta vida, descontente,
Repousa lá no Céu eternamente
E viva eu cá na terra sempre triste.¹⁹

Luiz de Camões

¹⁵ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Ein Roman. Zweiter Band, Berlin: Johann Friedrich Unger, 1795–96, pp. 265-266. The poem appears in Book 4, Chapter 11 of Goethe's novel.

¹⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827), "Sehnsucht. Gedicht von Goethe viermal in Musik gesetzt von L. van Beethoven", Wo O. 134 (1808).

¹⁷ Schubert (six settings, the last two included in *Gesänge aus "Wilhelm Meister"*, D 877).

¹⁸ Tchaikovsky's setting is often known in English as "None but the Lonely Heart". It has been set in many vocal, choral, and instrumental arrangements and recorded, among others, by Mario Lanza, Frank Sinatra, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Plácido Domingo.

¹⁹ Luís de Camões, *Rimas* (1595), Soneto XIII. "My gentle soul, who departed/So soon from this life, feeling unhappy, /May you rest in Heaven for all eternity/And I must live on earth always sad." (My Translation)

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BIO NOTE

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ABSTRACT

Due to the sad times we are living in, I have chosen as a topic for my article "Longing and Saudade", the English and Portuguese words for the nostalgic yearning we feel when we lose a loved one. It is often considered that it conveys a typically Portuguese emotion connected to the period of the Discoveries. However, it is also expressed in literature, painting, sculpture and music, all over the world. Therefore, I have chosen examples in painting from different countries, such as Brazil, United States, India, France, Germany and the United Arab Emirates. I have done the same in the areas of sculpture and funerary art and allude to the importance of the theme in relation between migration and music in Ireland and Greece but giving special relevance to "Fado", that has been considered as a symbol of Portugal. Amália Rodrigues sang it all over the world as Cesária Évora also did with "morna", the Cape Verdean music. In Portuguese Literature people write about "Saudade" since the 15th century (*Leal Conselheiro*) and there was even a cultural movement called "saudosismo" in the 19th century. From Germany, I mention Goethe and his poem "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt" ("Only he who knows yearning") that has been set music around the world.

RESUMO

Devido aos tempos atribulados em que vivemos, escolhi como tema do meu artigo "Longing and Saudade", a palavra inglesa e a portuguesa usadas para designar a ansiedade nostálgica que sentimos quando perdemos um ente querido. É muitas vezes afirmado que se trata de uma emoção tipicamente portuguesa relacionada com o período das Descobertas. Contudo, ela é também descrita na literatura, na pintura, na escultura e na música em todo o mundo. Escolhi, por isso, exemplos na pintura em vários países, tais como o Brasil, os Estados Unidos, a Índia, a França, a Alemanha e os Emiratos Árabes Unidos. Fiz o mesmo nas áreas da escultura e da arte funerária e aludi à importância do tema na relação entre migração e música na Irlanda e na Grécia dando, contudo, uma relevância especial ao "Fado", que tem sido considerado como um símbolo

Longing and Saudade, Maria Laura Bettencourt Pires

de Portugal. Amália Rodrigues cantou-o em todo o mundo tal como Cesária Évora fez com a "morna", a música cabo-verdeana. Na Literatura portuguesa, tem-se escrito sobre "Saudade" desde o século XV (*Leal Conselheiro*) e houve até um movimento cultural chamado "saudosismo" no século XIX. Da Alemanha, refiro Goethe e o seu poema "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt" ("Só quem conhece a saudade"), que foi musicado em múltiplos países.