

Constructed Symbols and Adaptive Identities: The Evolution of Saudade and Portugueseness in 20th Century Portugal

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Abstract

Saudade is a Portuguese word that attempts to represent a vast compression of nationalistic ideas and sentiments into a single expression. It is often considered to be a feeling unique to the Portuguese given its relation to their complex history. The age of discoveries and the circumnavigation of Africa, a failed constitutional monarchy followed by a failed First Republic, a fascist dictatorship that lasted 48 years, a military revolution in 1974, these are all major components of Portuguese history that affect *Saudade*. The word plays a major role in what is referred to as *Portuguesidade* or *Portugueseness*. Constructed into an ontological movement by Portuguese writers and poets, specifically the writer Teixeira de Pascoaes, the nationalistic themes within *Saudade* were used by the fascist-leaning, authoritarian regime of António de Oliveira Salazar's "New State" (1932-1974) as a means to perpetuate public complicity. The word, with its numerous meanings and definitions, evolved through the 20th century and remains relevant for the Portuguese identity of today. This study explores the complexities of national identity by focusing on the evolving parallel between *Saudade* and *Portugueseness* through the 20th Century. A collection of testimonials from both Portuguese emigrants and nationals provides a contemporary context with which to address the evolution of these two ideas.

1. Introduction

A general definition for *saudade* is something along the lines of "longing," "nostalgia," or "a yearning for a time that has passed or a past state of wellbeing." And though it is used in everyday Portuguese as a way to express missing someone or something (*Tenho saudades de ti - I miss you*) it is often viewed as a feeling "fraught with more emotional weight and affective intensity than corresponding words from English and other languages convey."¹ The characteristics that allow for this word to be regarded as uniquely Portuguese reside in that it can be connected all at once to: longing for family or home, the idea of greatness for what Portugal once was regarding exploration and the discoveries, the sea, spiritual reverence, solemnity, proud nationalism, and so forth. Not all of the previously mentioned elements were attached to the word at the outset. Rather, it seems to have a polarity that has attracted similar notions of Portuguese national uniqueness for more than a century. Whether the word evolved most through the hands of writers, dictators, or the public who received its different forms, the word is something particularly mercurial.

Eduardo Lourenço, one of the premier analysts of Portuguese contemporary thought has said, "Portugal suffers not so much from crisis of identity, but from hyper-identity."² It would be safe to assume that the idea of *Saudade* played a major role in the formation of this *hyper-identity*. Where this word begins its life as a container for mystical, uniquely Portuguese national themes is within the ideology of the writer Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877-1952). Pascoaes would take this word and create an ontological movement known as *Saudosismo*, or *Saudadism*. Though there are

nationalistic currents running through Pascoaes' writings at times, it was more a social and spiritual ideology than a political one. The way in which Salazar's New State aggregated the nationalistic ideas within *Saudadism* for political purposes could be easily compared to the way in which Hitler's Nazi Party extracted specific themes of anti-Semitism within the writings of Frederick Nietzsche to support their political aims.

Pascoaes is quoted saying in regards to *Saudadism*, "Man does not belong only to society; he belongs, first and foremost, to the Cosmos. Society is not an end but a means for facilitating man's mission on earth, which is to be the consciousness of the Universe."³ If we compare this existentially themed mantra to a quote by Salazar stating, "Politicamente só existe o que o público sabe que existe" (Politically there only exists that which the public knows exists)⁴ or "Whoever is not patriotic cannot be considered Portuguese"⁵ or the slogan, "God, Fatherland, Family"⁶ (the ordering inherent in that slogan was a purposeful message in Salazar's Catholic oriented state) it is easy to understand how far removed *Salazarism* (an ideology attributed to Salazar's New State) is from Pascoaes' *Saudadism*. A selective reading of *Saudadism*, one particular to fascist aims, became an indispensable tool for propaganda and reconstituting the Portuguese into a mold of Salazar's design.

The fascist regime ended in 1974 and today Portugal exists as a parliamentary democracy. How is it that a specific idea of national identity like *Saudade* that was purposefully constructed by a fascist regime continues to exist and evolve in the collective psychology of a democratic nation? Though it is widely known that the New State exploited the national sensibilities tied to the word to construct a specific *Portugueseness*, (one which championed a single, supposedly unique, national way of being), the Portuguese of today continue to relate to a modified, hybrid sort of *Saudade* that retains certain elements of Pascoaes' *Saudadism*, a reverence for the past and homeland, while at the same time disregarding much of the code that Salazar and the New State imprinted upon the word.

2. Literature Review

João Leal has noted evidence of *Saudade* being a "successfully invented tradition."⁷ He also addresses the concept of Portugal as a "collective individual."⁸ These two concepts are especially relevant for the goal of this study in that Portuguese ethnic identity has often been attributed to a common psychology. The Portuguese "collective individual" cannot be assumed to have developed a common psychology through a socially organic dissemination of information. Rather, in place of a common development, this "collective individual" is something continually reinvented by the Portuguese cultural elite.⁹ Pascoaes' ontological movement, *Saudosismo*, established *Saudade* as the national spirit and cultural essence of the Portuguese. The word has since survived the chaos of the Republican revolution, thrived during half a century Salazar's authoritarian rule, became a faux pas in the immediate years following the 1974 military revolution, and reemerged as a widely accepted cultural trait in the last part of the 20th Century. The durability and evolutionary characteristics of *Saudade* within *Portugueseness* are certainly unique, even if the attributes the word claims are not.

Saudosismo can be portrayed as a literary and artistic movement of reaction against 'cosmopolitanism'. Its main objectives were to restore the Portuguese cultural and general life to its lost splendour, replacing foreign influences - held to be responsible for the decline of the country since the Age of Discoveries - with a cult of 'Portuguese things', reflecting the true 'Portuguese soul'. This cult of Portuguese things and Portuguese soul proposed by Pascoaes was, as its name suggests, structured around the key concept of *saudade*, which was viewed for the first time, not only as a specific Portuguese literary theme, but as the central topic of an 'objectified' (Handler 1988) Portuguese ethnic psychology: something non-replaceable that 'the Portuguese' possessed and 'others' did not, something truly 'ours' that defined 'the Portuguese' as different from the 'rest.'¹⁰

As Pascoaes' *Saudadism* was "the most important cultural nationalist movement of that period"¹¹—referring to the then newly established First Republic—many of the key components of this ideology were reused in the construction of a new national psychology when the Republican era ended and the authoritarian New State took power. The New State had "close ideological links"¹² to a movement in the philosophical tradition in Portugal aimed at a "purely Portuguese philosophy"¹³ which used *Saudade* as a principle element. The new, fascist-leaning, authoritarian regime would exploit the philosophical moves and ideologies of the writers and philosophers (especially those of Pascoaes) made during the Republican revolution, by taking the nationalistic sentiments that

proposed a unique, Portuguese cult of being and reconstituting this into a mechanism with which Salazar intended to “make Portugal live by habit.”¹⁴

To be *com saudades* roughly translates to being *homesick* in common Portuguese, and this factors highly into how the emigration of Portuguese has helped perpetuate *Saudade* as a relevant national symbol. According to João Leal, *Saudade* is the “feeling that kept alive the links between the emigrants and their homeland.”¹⁵ He continues to explain that for emigrants, *Portugueseness* was manifested through the use of *Saudade* as the metaphor, given that one of the principal sentiments within the word is a longing for the past or a previous state of being. The significance of the relationship between emigrants and *Saudade* is considerable given that between 1950 and 1988 there were 1,375,000 legal departures from Portugal¹⁶ (given that the current population of the country is around 10.6 million).

In order to reconstruct Portugal into an obedient mass, forever concerned with the past and a “golden era,” Salazar took cues from other fascist states on how to go about constructing a propaganda machine. David Corkhill and José Almeida have noted that, “...the regime was quite prepared to borrow selectively from the showcase events staged by the ‘classic’ fascisms and blend them with an exhibition formula...”¹⁷ What Salazar did so brilliantly in contrast to the German and Italian mass meetings and public rallies was to make it appear as though these events were simply cultural revivals, or educational expositions of a sense of national pride and right to empire. The Portuguese were not corralled into mass rallies. Rather, they were allowed to attend state-sponsored expositions and commemorations, in order to “forge a new, selective cultural identity.”¹⁸ This move provided the public with select visions of *Portugueseness*, while concealing the intentions behind their construction: the eclipsing of contemporary Portuguese identities at that time, casting a shadow of the “grand past” upon each, while repressing political ambition and superimposing a sense of complacency.

The ritualistic nature of Catholicism, alongside the political rituals of the fascist New State, provided the cohesion that fundamentally reprogrammed *Portugueseness*. As Roger Griffin wrote, “The Hallmark of the fascist mentality is the sense of living at the watershed between two ages and of being engaged in the frontline of the battle to overcome degeneration through the creation of a rejuvenated national community, an even presaged by the appearance of a new ‘man’ embodying the qualities of the redeemed nation.”¹⁹ Salazar’s fascist-catholic hybrid rhetoric worked well: throughout the history of these ideologies they have advocated a certain culture, a specific view of history, while mobilizing populations without giving much in the way of concessions of power to the masses. Relevant to this idea, Griffin asserts that in the fascist state, “...culture was appropriated in order to generate consensus and mobilize the population without conceding any access to power...”²⁰ During the four decades in which Salazar was in power he reshaped Portuguese identity by “the proliferation of public works to forge ‘sacred’ spaces and the introduction of ceremonies and rituals aimed at the regeneration of the nation.”²¹ The SPN (National Propaganda Secretariat) used a policy of spiritual sovereignty as a moral regeneration of the Portuguese nation.

António Ferro is a key figure in the ways in which *Saudade* came to be reconstituted for the New State’s purposes. Ferro was made head of the SPN in 1933, and as Ellen Sapega has noted, a primary goal for Salazar and Ferro resided in regenerating Portugal’s sense of “spiritual values.”²² It is possible that where spiritual values and cultural regeneration provided vital organs of Portuguese culture constructed by the New State, *Saudade* and *Portugueseness* became parts of the very DNA of that cultural organism. Before he was head of the SPN, Ferro set on a project to effectively merge “the modernist aesthetic with a discourse of national regeneration”²³ and would eventually realize his mission to see “government policy of subsidizing the arts and literature.”²⁴ Sapega continues that for Ferro, artists and writers were the “projection of the nation’s soul,”²⁵ championing the ways in which they reflected the Portuguese “spirit.”²⁶ The parallels between *Saudosismo*, the ontological move of the writer Teixeira de Pascoaes, and Ferro’s political agendas based around artists, writers, and the Portuguese “spirit,” are quite remarkable.

Costa Pinto writes, “...Ferro provided the regime with a ‘cultural project’ that skillfully combined elements of ‘modern’ aestheticism with a ‘reinvention of tradition,’ and he continues that the SPN, “coordinated the regime’s press, ran the censorship services, and organized sporadic mass demonstrations...”²⁷ And so this is where a new *Saudadism* that is much more in tune with *Salazarism* can be thought of dispersing en masse. “Antonio Ferro, the main ideologue of the new regime and the head of its propaganda department, used extensively the concept of *Saudade* in a collection of essays dedicated to the celebration of the renewed ‘ties of friendship’ between Portugal and Brazil.”²⁸

The SPN’s commemorations and exhibitions continued throughout the 1930’s and reached a pinnacle with the 1940 “Portuguese World Exhibition.”²⁹ This exhibition represented the historic ties between the Portuguese spirit and the “golden era” while exalting the “country’s spiritual rights to empire.”³⁰ Portugal would be the last of the European countries to retain its colonies in Africa. The idea was that the nation was not merely the mainland, but rather the sum of its parts (In Africa: Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau). The resentment of continual war in certain African colonies, in which Portugal attempted to retain control as much for

political positioning as for resources, eventually led to the Carnation Revolution in 1974 that saw the removal of the New State.³¹ It was during the years immediately following the revolution that *Saudade* came to be viewed as a negative cultural trait, too closely associated with the New State.

The 1974 Revolution somehow changed this situation. With the major exception of State discourses directed towards Portuguese emigrants, which entered a decisive stage in their process of affirmation and development (cf. Feldman-Bianco 1992 and Monteiro 1994), *saudade* was internally viewed by the new political and cultural ruling elites as closely associated with Estado Novo, and therefore considered 'politically incorrect'.

For instance, one of the most influential books published in Portugal after 1974 on the topic of national identity was Lourenço's *O Labirinto da Saudade* [The Labyrinth of Saudade] (Lourenço 1978). But *Saudade* stood there not as a positive symbol of Portuguese identity, but as a negative symbol of discourses on national identity which Lourenço viewed critically. *Saudade* was indeed seen by Lourenço as a product of what he considered to be the 'prodigious unrealism' which had characterized the relationship between the cultural elites and the country inscribed in the discourses on national identity produced by the former. *Saudade*, mainly viewed as a value attached to the nostalgia of Portugal's lost *grandeur*, was seen as an obstacle to the new relationship that should be built between Portuguese cultural elites and the new democratic and post-colonial reality of the country.³²

Isabel Moutinho writes, "Following the loss of this imperial dimension, which had constructed the country's imagination for centuries, and its relatively recent acceptance into the European forum, from which it had been isolated for the greater part of the twentieth century, Portuguese society began attempting to redefine its self-image."³³ This redefining of self-image would lead to a negative view *Saudade* and the national songs of *Fado* because, for many, they were too closely associated to the New State and Salazar. Moutinho asserts in her article that there is a detectable element of regenerated Portuguese identity in the works of contemporary Portuguese writers, especially regarding the downward shift in the predominance of *otherness* within Portuguese fiction: "The most recent Portuguese fiction seems to be at last including both groups: we—Portuguese, white and reasonably affluent, and they—whether Portuguese returnees (partly resented, partly outright rejected), or African, or part-African, black or mixed-blood."³⁴

Looking at this shift in Portuguese writers as a reflection of the psychology of its people, often times a very accurate association, it could be said that the ideas of *saudade* have undergone the same regeneration, one less concerned with uniqueness (which by its very nature requires an otherness). The book "The Rediscoverers" by Ronald W. Sousa is an analysis of *regenerationist literature* by five authors, "classics" of the Portuguese literary tradition. In several of these writers we find the themes of *saudade* surfacing time and again. One of the primary goals of *The Rediscoverers* is to show "...the complexity that regenerationism can attain in the literary sphere and the nature of the impingement of social reality upon literature (and of literature upon social reality)."³⁵ *Saudade* as a national mechanism had been primarily shaped by writers and philosophers before it was systematically applied by a fascist regime. The evolution of *Saudade* in *Portugueseness* is most readily apparent, in terms of regenerationsim, within the conversation between the literature of a specific era and the concurrent social reality.

Thus, in Portuguese regenerationism...it becomes very clear that in the coming together of the individual and social forces of the present and the symbols of the past there is no necessary subservience of the former to the latter. Indeed, the symbols seem virtually to be the variable element, contemporary reality the constant; the symbols are reworked by the individual, they do not dictate to him. And while they undeniably provide culturally validated patterns of intellection and expression, they are not indicative of the static or nearly static "language" in which national identity is molded.³⁶

Though it was constructed and reconstructed through poets, philosophers, and a fascist dictatorship, perhaps the relevance of *Saudade* cannot now be, nor has it ever been wholly predisposed to any of its origins. By its very existence within the Portuguese psychology of today, *Saudade* would appear to be a national symbol more symbolic of a changing nation than of any single ideology. As Sousa suggests, "...the symbols seem virtually to be the variable element, contemporary reality the constant; the symbols are reworked by the individual, they do not dictate to him." To my mind it follows that his logic is especially applicable to this study. The symbol of *Saudade* is a variable element in much of what is considered *Portugueseness*. The individuals who relate to *Saudade* are constantly *reworking* it to their *contemporary reality*.

3. Case Studies

It may be the case that the complexity of multiple, distinctly different inventions of *Portugueseness* have provided the ethnic or national psychology—assuming those phenomena exist—diverse modes upon which *Saudade* retains its relevancy on an individual basis. A theme that is concurrent within many of the following case studies agrees with Costa Pinto in the vindication of autonomy “when selecting, as well as combining and managing, symbols.” Within the case studies it is evident that, as Costa Pinto asserts, “the Portuguese will transform the ideological systems themselves through the practice of seeking that which is useful in any given system.” The following case studies, which are testimonials from Portuguese nationals, emigrants, academics, and laypersons, prove to be powerful indicators for the individual usefulness of *Saudade*.

3.1 Leonor

“When I went to school in Lisbon, especially in high school, and we were starting poetry from the middle ages that was especially all about saudade. The theme was all about the absence of the loved one and the missing of this loved person. And I remember at that time this solidified that idea that saudade was something very Portuguese. As life went on I realized that this wasn’t it. And the fact is that there was this particular word didn’t mean any special thing because there are other words in other languages that can express the same thing, same kind of feeling. So no I don’t think that saudade is a way of identifying portugueseness. I was in my early 30s when I came to live abroad (the U.S.) and I understood that there was a difference between my behavior and my feelings, my world vision was different from what I was seeing around me. So I also remember that I felt at that time that there is such a thing as national identity. What I think now, is that there are cultural differences, but that doesn’t mean that because you are Portuguese, or French, or American you have to be a certain way. There are different additions over the centuries that have been cultivated that determine the way you think. That doesn’t mean that it cannot be changed. And one of the reasons why I realized that it can be changed is by observing the way Portuguese emigrants behave here. There are things where they haven’t changed, but things that are really important for their survival like the way they work, they change because they need to change, so its related to culture more than any genetic or something determined beforehand in their lives. There are cultural traits that determine your behavior, but of course they can be changed.

I graduated back then in Portugal (during the New State) in Portuguese literature, and in those days we didn’t study anything about the 20th century, everything ended in the 19th century. In high school it was the same thing. We never learned anything that was happening around us at the time and we were totally focused on the past. In this focusing on the past of course there was the glorifying of the golden age of Portugal. And all of that has to do with the cultivation of saudade because it’s like Sebastianism, it’s always waiting for the past to return. This was so internalized by people since they were little children, we didn’t even notice of course. One of the really “well done” things done by the Estado Novo was the way of forming your mindset, your worldview from the very beginning of your life. So people believed that and I think that the reason why even today, even young people can still talk about saudade, is because of that. Of course there were other ways of making that felt by everybody, like fado, all kinds of ways to create that mindset.

What it is being Portuguese. Being born in a small country, well it’s a peripheral country in Europe, and kind of self-conscious of that marginal position in Europe right now, but at the same time with this memory of a historical past. That mixed together. It is hard to explain but I would say that I don’t believe in essentializing things like that, but I believe that there are specific cultural traits and only if you go there can you understand those cultural traits. Being away from there, like I have been for the past 20 years, it is easier for me to see those cultural traits from a distance. Things like the way people care about food, about free time and enjoying life, and at the same time a sense of entitlement, meaning that they expect things to be done for them by the government. There is this sense to not feel responsible for you own life for your own community and I believe that is something that is a product of a long time of being under and authoritarian government that acted like father, very paternalistic, so that people to this day are still unconsciously behaving and thinking that way. That’s not completely exhaustive but that’s what comes to mind.”

3.2 Alice

“I was kind of trained to imagine that saudade is a very special feature for the Portuguese, but the idea, my own personal idea of saudade also grew in me so I have not a traditional idea that we are taught to have about saudade

that has to do something about the sea and fado. For me saudade is kind of a sweet nostalgia that you feel. It's not as hard and harsh as sometimes it is portrayed, so for me saudade is longing. Sometimes it stays a lot with you, you miss someone or something, but it's kind of a sweet and sour thing. It's not that dark thing, but sometimes it even a pleasant thing. It's good in that way to miss someone or something. Before the revolution I think it was pretty important and I think immediately after the revolution there was no saudade. Maybe people were not looking back to imagine what was Portuguese. And the Portuguese at that time, '74, '75, '76, they were looking to the future. I imagine that it was a time that didn't look to the past and their golden age was coming, it was in the future.

Easygoing. Being Portuguese is that idea that we have with each other that we can get along, that we are a friendly people. But I have a different idea because I read and studied about the Portuguese at the beginning of the century. I think sometimes they can be very violent...but I have this idea that we are friendly and easy going and most of the time open...well, we may have the initial suspicion of those who are different, but we really get along. We have this very positive idea of ourselves but it's not really true, we can see that there are problems in the integration, but we really believe in this myth."

3.3 Fernando

"I think saudade is a word that everybody feels, the Portuguese, the Italians, the Chinese, the Americans, Somalians, everybody feels that, but I think that in Portugal we have that word for a lot of reasons. Saudade is a word that means we miss something. In our special case, in Portugal, we have that word because of our history. When we look at our lives, we miss a lot of moments that we lived when we were younger. We miss the past. That is a very general reason. Because of the discoveries, and because we had great poets who influenced Portuguese feelings and thoughts and maybe it is because of this that we have that word. I think that Portuguese poetry and writers are very important to our identity. When I went to school, we read a book called *Os Lusíadas*, a book that was written by Luís Camões, and it talks about the Discoveries and that part of our history with poetry. When we were younger we read a lot of books that talked about history with poetry. Fernando Pessoa is another example, a very important poet from Portugal. He wrote about Portuguese politicians, about Portuguese feelings. Nowadays we live in a big crisis and because of that our people miss some parts of our history because we were a great nation, for example, many years ago we had the discoveries and we discovered many other countries.

The Portuguese people like a lot to converse, to talk, to smile, to have big lunches, to have dinner with friends and family, and when these people are not together we miss this and we are a passionate country compared to other countries and I think that is the most important part of knowing saudade. We live our lives with passion. We are a very passionate people. I think this is why we are Portuguese."

3.4 Andreia

"It is difficult to explain saudade. It means so many different things. It is tied to so many different things, sentiments, the discoveries. What is saudade? It is difficult. For me, it is missing something. Saudade is for the Portuguese because I can't give a definition that isn't Portuguese, right? But I think any person can feel it. Is it actually a part of being Portuguese...it's in all our music, all our minds, our art, and if this is us, I don't know. It's a good question. When I hear anyone speaking about saudade, they are all Portuguese, and it's a natural thing for me. I don't know if it is actually a real part of our nationality."

3.5 Diogo

"Saudade, for me, is a very important word. It is a special word. I don't know if other countries have this word, but I think other countries and other cultures have expressions for this word. We have just one word. And this word signifies a lot for us, of course. It signifies a lot of history, a lot of sentiments. It's a very important part of being Portuguese for me. I think it is important now and a few years ago, but I think now it's not so strong, of course. We had the colonial war, in which this word was very strong. But I was born in the 80s and I don't feel this word as strongly as my parents do.

Being Portuguese, for me, I love my country, I love my culture, I love everything in my city, the weather, the sun, we have a lot of culture. We are Latin, and sometimes our people don't know what serious work is, and we have a lot of work in the years ahead. Now we have a complicated situation. We have a lot of errors to fix. We have a lot of work to do to clean the face of Portugal."

3.6 Ricardo

“Saudade is missing something you really love, like a person, a time of your life, mostly people and places or the past, things you experienced. That’s saudade for me. I miss my childhood. Things like that. As Portuguese we live saudade since we were a big superpower, so culturally and historically saudade is that, its missing our greatness that we had in the past, and we lost it, and we live as a country missing that, those times. Now people have interiorized that feeling into their own lives, like we miss the people that go out of Portugal for work, or we miss the people who disappear out of our lives, or our childhood as I was saying. I think it’s a thing we have had since the discoveries, since those times.

For me, being Portuguese is partly the weather, it defines our culture, which is very important, we have great weather, and soccer but that is a pretty recent thing. We are crazy soccer lovers. The friendship, we are very friendly, mostly to foreigners because inside we fight each other too much. We are friendly people. Peaceful people. Not very ambitious people. We like food, fado, soccer, going to the beach.”

3.7 João

“Saudade for me is a word that describes feelings, especially the ones you feel when you’re outside of your country, outside of Portugal. It’s something that’s been here all of the time, it has to do with Portuguese culture. For me, it has a more natural and connected to the earth approach than the rest, especially the poets and writers. You can only feel this when you’re outside your country. It’s about the food, it’s about the people, it’s about the ocean, it’s about the weather, it’s all about that. It’s the will that makes you go and come back and feel at home in your country. And I think from all the travels I’ve made, I think there are not so many people that can say they have a country that feels like home. I think saudade is not just one word or one feeling. It’s a mixture of all the feelings I have since I was born in this country and that’s why I’m here also. Before the revolution saudade was used as a means of getting somewhere and getting something back. They were using saudade to convince these people that this was the best place to live, Salazar was the best guy to be here, there were a lot of people convinced by that because it was easy. They were selling saudade like a package to everyone so they could attract everyone to the government. A lot of people were convinced by that. There was no internet, information was not spread like it is now. Newspapers were being controlled by them. I think after the revolution it’s a totally different story. After the revolution I think people started to look at the word saudade and the meaning of saudade from a different perspective. They didn’t have those issues, those guys telling us what it meant. We were born in a free country. We had so many different perspectives from that word and from that feeling. All the emigrants from Portugal. All the people of my age who are still living here, they feel it in a different kind of way. This is not something that they push you to do it. All the newspapers, all the T.V. channels, nobody is talking just about saudade like it was in that time. Now it’s just something that every one of us feel a different way, but they don’t need to feel it, they aren’t forced to feel it. Its not something they are trying to sell, its something you feel. Even though people in that time feel that way I feel now, they were forced to at times. It’s a good thing from one perspective because they were forcing people to know the history of the country, they were forcing them to know the writers of the country, but, they were forcing them to know the ones they liked the most. It’s an old word. I don’t think its something someone can sell to you. I think its something in our blood. Even a visitor that comes to Portugal for a small time can understand what saudade means for him. He can know why the people love to live in this country and why it is so beautiful. It’s not just about one guy or two guys, or the discoveries, or when we went abroad. Its something that you feel when you’re here and something that makes you come back.

To be Portuguese, for me, it’s the country where I want to live, it’s where I want to have family, it’s the country I want to show to everybody. It’s the country I’m proud of. It’s nothing to do about politicians, it’s the feeling you have to the earth, everything that surrounds you, your friends and your family, this sun, and this beach, and everything that’s what it means to me to be Portuguese. And how can I explain that? I can explain it like if you go somewhere else, you can feel most at home at any place but you always feel there is something missing. And that is the most Portuguese feeling I ever felt. For me that’s the definition of being Portuguese. It has nothing to do with the flag. Of course history is important. People talk a lot about fado and the sadness of the Portuguese people but I think that sadness means that everybody knows that this is the best place to live. And it’s not always possible to live here. I think that’s what the sadness is all about. So I think, for me, this definition of being Portuguese is not being sad at your own country, its being happy about being Portuguese and about having the possibility of being here and taking advantage of all of this.”

3.8 Onésimo

I like to live in the present, I like to think of the future, but I don't really dwell a lot on 'oh I'm missing this, I am longing for something I don't have' that's not really my style. So even though I understand the concept of saudade and the importance it has for Portuguese culture, I myself am not a saudosista. I think of the concept of identity as a term that is very complex, because it has two major meanings. One faces the past and sees commonalities of behavior among a particular culture group, so when you say the French identity or the Italian identity, you are basically talking about what used to be called national character, or to avoid essentialisms, you could call it cultural characteristics or cultural traits that are prevalent or predominant in a dominant group. You share a bunch of cultural traits from your group and this is one of the meanings of identity. There is another one that has to do with future. The fact that we have things in common with a group we belong to in the past does not mean that we have to continue having them, because life changes, we move to other places, we have different associations, etcetera and then we are not bound to go on repeating and replicating everything we had done in the past. We are not bound ethically to that. And even though one does not have total control of one's future, one is free to pick and choose. Some things we cannot avoid. When it comes the future I'm not bound to repeat the past. That's the big issue I have with people who talk about identity as some fixed concept that a cultural group lived, is living, and has to live. That cannot be because there is not obligation to replicate in the future what one has done in the past.

3.9 Pascoaes

Transformed a way of being, he made out of saudade an ontological category as if the Portuguese, and he said it, the Portuguese soul is "saudosa". That is illogical, that makes no sense, its poetic...very interesting, that's not good philosophy because it's not good thinking, it's a generalization. He made the word apply to everything. If you read, if you listen to Pascoaes it looks like everything the Portuguese do is saudade. Well that's over-extending the meaning of a word to the point that it becomes meaningless. That's not true that the Portuguese soul is "saudosa" meaning that it's nothing else but "saudosa." It's a generalization, that's what's called an essentialization and it makes no sense logically. This is just pushing too far an incidence of a certain kind of behavior...yes the Portuguese are more emotional in general, less controlled, than the Danish...I have no problem with that. But to say that doesn't mean that the Danish have no emotions, have no feelings about the past and the future, it doesn't mean that at all. It just means the Portuguese have a higher incidence of a cultural trait. The wrong thing with saudade is the generalization, the transforming of it into an essence, an ontology, as I've said and more so, the mistake is that not only that it has been like this, but that we are fatalist where therefore cannot change...not be anything but that...and for you to be a good Portuguese you have to go on doing that forever. That is the worst, deterministic attitude about life that I've ever seen. Pascoaes is a great poet. Pascoaes is not a good thinker.

4. Conclusion

Where change is most apparent is in the use the Portuguese make of the great ideological systems. Adherence to or rejection of these systems was previously undertaken wholesale en masse. Today, the tendency has been reverse; each citizen and group vindicates autonomy when selecting, as well as combining and managing, symbols. Clearly, in the long term, the Portuguese will transform the ideological systems themselves through the practice of seeking that which is useful in any given system. Their unhesitating combination of elements from various systems and their remixing of parts of programmatic and cognitive schemes previously considered incompatible will also have an impact on those systems.³⁷

Possibly the word *Saudade* retains its life within modern *Portugueseness* simply because it is a way to address and relate to the complexities in the many *ways of being* in Portugal: a nation still only 40 years removed from an authoritarian dictatorship. The word itself is part-embodiment of certain literary, philosophical, political, and historic traditions. It is also the means with which an everyday person communicates *missing* someone or something. *Saudade*, in its myriad of forms, is deeply embedded within Portuguese culture and psychology. José Miguel Sardica writes, "É, em todo o caso, um mérito nacional que a sociedade portuguesa se tenha revelado flexível e evolutiva

depois de meio século de inércia e paternalismo autoritários”³⁸ (It is, in any case, a national merit that Portuguese society has proven flexible and evolutionary after half a century of authoritarian paternalism and inertia).

Within the preceding testimonials, João related that *Saudade* is not so much about sadness and looking to the past, but rather the comprehension that Portugal is the best place to live. He asserts that knowing *Saudade*, for him and for anyone, is a choice. Fernando and Diogo use the current economic crisis in Portugal as a means to relate to the “past greatness” which exists within their connection to *Saudade*. The utility in this word for Ricardo is that it internalizes historic notions of longing for the past into contemporary situations. For Andrea, though she is unsure whether it is a real part of Portuguese nationality, *Saudade* is genuine in some sense simply because the word so frequently resides in the culture. Leonor addresses the ways in which so much of social, academic, and cultural exchange during the New State referred strictly to the past and a “golden age.” For her, the reason that *Saudade* and *Portugueseness* remain relevant in the national psychology of today is because the fascist coding within those two ideas was so well executed. Onésimo explains that Pascoaes was far from the mark when he constructed an ontological category using *Saudade* at its center. For him, it is simply that the Portuguese might possess the national trait of a higher incidence of emotionality, which was transformed through Pascoaes into a flawed ontological movement.

Alice brings up an especially interesting point when addressing the first years after the revolution in 1974. “And the Portuguese at that time, ‘74, ‘75, ‘76, they were looking to the future. I imagine that it was a time that didn’t look to the past and their golden age was coming, it was in the future.” If the negative view of *Saudade* at that time was the witnessing of a shift away from Portugal as a “collective individual” who dwelled in the specific Portuguese past constructed by Salazar and the New State, perhaps the word reemerged in the years that followed as an affirmation of a nation of individuals who were now concerned with the future in a new way. Perhaps the Portuguese were prepared to purge the word of any fascist codification in order to retain other historical values and metaphysical traditions within it, ones readily adaptable to each individual within the context of a democracy.

Saudade may have survived its fascist construction to be reconstructed into various contemporary ideologies because it is as contemporaneous to the national psychology of the individual Portuguese person as the ideology of *individualism* is to democracy.

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