

Saudades: sensibilities in letters from Portuguese e/immigrants (Portugal-Brazil 1890-1930)

Saudades: sensibilidades no epistolário de e/imigrantes portugueses (Portugal-Brasil 1890-1930)

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RESUMO

Baseado nas cartas trocadas entre imigrantes portugueses estabelecidos no Brasil e seus familiares em Portugal, este artigo tem como perspectiva analisar as sensibilidades presentes nesses escritos, em particular as expressões de saudade. As cartas e correspondências investigadas foram localizadas no Museu do Imigrante de São Paulo (depositadas no Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo – Apesp) e nos Arquivos Distritais das cidades do Porto e Braga, em Portugal. Essas missivas não só retratam processos de deslocamentos e afastamentos, como também são produtos de ambos, documentando os mundos de origem e de destino. Por meio delas percebe-se como se configuravam relações tornadas vulneráveis em razão da longa distância e do tempo de separação. Em igual medida, notam-se os esforços feitos para superar distâncias, perpetuar afetos, reforçar laços e combater a saudade. Palavras-chave: saudades; cartas; imigrantes portugueses.

ABSTRACT

Based on letters between Portuguese immigrants in Brazil and their families in Portugal, this article analyzes the sensibilities present in these writings, in particular expressions of *saudade*. The letters and correspondence investigated were located in the Museu dos Imigrantes de São Paulo (deposited in the *Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo – Apesp*) and District Archives in Porto and Braga, Portugal. These letters not only portray displacement and distancing processes but are also products of both, documenting the worlds of origin and destination. Through them it can be perceived how they configured relationships made vulnerable by the long distance and time of separation, in which it was sought to overcome distance, perpetuate affections, strengthen ties, and fight against *saudade*.

Keywords: *saudade*; letters; Portuguese immigrants.

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Based on letters between Portuguese immigrants in Brazil and their relatives in Portugal (1890-1930), this article has the perspective of analyzing the sensibilities present in these writings, in particular expression of *saudade*, which means longing, missing someone or something, and at times homesickness).

The letters and correspondence investigated were located in the Immigrant Museum of São Paulo (deposited in the Public Archive of the State of São Paulo – *Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo* – Apesp) and in District Archives in Porto and Braga, Portugal. Not only do these letters portray processes of movements and separations, but they are also the products of both, documenting the worlds of origin and destination. Through these it can be perceived how relations which are made vulnerable due to the long distance and the time of separation are configured. To an equal extent, what can also be noticed are the efforts made to overcome distances, perpetuate affections, reinforce ties, and to fight *saudade*.

CHAINS OF INK AND TIES OF PAPER: DISPLACEMENTS AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF WRITING

Notwithstanding its ancestry, letter writing spread with the expansion of communications and the intensification of displacements. Communication by letter became a mass phenomenon, facilitated by the development of train and ship transport, at the end of the nineteenth century. To face this process *e/* immigrants had to read/write. A wide textual spectrum, thereby, came to be part of this universe. Amongst various other writings, there circulated a set of manuals and guides, brochures, flyers, periodicals, magazines, travel indications, tips about conditions in the countries of destination, advice about bureaucratic procedures, such as obtaining passports and authorizations (Caffarena, 2012, p. 21).

The historical experiences of displacements expanded distances between people, dilating the sensation of absence, arousing feelings of *saudade* which generated the need for communication and efforts of approximation. In this context, the writing of letters expanded, incorporating the popular classes, which configured a challenge for a rather illiterate mass which, with great effort, sought to maintain ties. Epistolary practice thereby spread, democratizing writing and assuming a leading role as an element of stimulation for the diffusion and consolidation of reading/writing among *e/*immigrants, who were led to produce invocative documents in this process.

In this sense, letters can be considered to be a paradigm of dislocation; attempts to annul distance; testimonies and proof of multiple experiences of mobility. Familial distancing was the central motto which led the popular classes to pick up the pen, moved by the desire to preserve domestic and familial connections, given the need to maintain and/or construct chains of ink and ties of paper which became a practice, a need, and a moral obligation. With letters it was sought to overcome separation, control distance, combat silence, perpetuate affection, reinforce ties of family, kinship, and friendship, make oneself present in absence, and assuming responsibilities to overcome *saudade*.

A 'documentary treasure' of popular memory and writing, thanks to its volume and frequency (Chartier, 1991), the correspondence of the e/immigrants has acquired interest for scholars, allowing researchers to penetrate an invisible area which has made it possible to observe new projects, successes, financial problems, tactics of survival, social ascension, difficulties of daily life in the countryside and in the city, affective relations, subjectivities and sensitivities (suffering and anguish, joy and frustration). All these essential parts of individual experiences shed light on the histories of e/immigration by clarifying difficult aspects or ones almost impossible to perceive in other documentary *corpus*.

All these daily writings, in their multiple manifestations and typologies, came to fulfill determined functions, amongst which was the need to maintain the union and the identity of the family group and the culture of origin in the distance; and the will to register and transmit essential information, not only of a personal type (such as health, impressions or feelings), but also about the conditions of life and work (such as wages, prices, the possibility of economic ascension, or the sending of money). The study of migrant writings allows us understand the variety of the uses and the functions of what is written in this historic moment ... Looking back on the protagonists of this phenomenon and using as sources what they have produced leads the historian to contemplate emigration from a new and fundamental perspective. (Blass, 2004)

E/immigration established itself as a pendulous movement between the society left behind and the one entered, marked by complex variables which involved contextual situations and family strategies. Particular histories which, when superimposed, allow the construction of a differentiated panorama of the processes of dislocation, deconstructing interpretations exclusively centered on *pull and push* mechanisms and elements of wretchedness.

Often the histories of *e/immigrants* were connected to themes of rupture with the land of origin and recommencing in the land of arrival. However, without eclipsing the knowledge of the contexts which influenced the decision to emigrate, what should be emphasized is the maintenance of profound ties between origin and destination in the memories of migrants (Sayad, 1998). No history about *e/immigrants* can be told as if it had started at the moment when they stepped off the steam boat which brought them. This is why it is strategically appropriate to think of *e/immigrants* as individuals with the need to look backwards, even if they had been impelled to look forwards in life (Truzzi, 2008). This look towards the origin, which is intertwined in the preservation of identities, traditions and ties, characterizes the crucial role of the letter as a form of maintaining contact with the family and contemporaries in their land of origin.

Steamships crossed the sea carrying people, goods, and ideas, as well as the post, laden with messages. Multiple written histories crossed the ocean looking for news of children and parents, brothers, husbands and wives, fiancés and fiancées. The letters brought good and bad news, happily told of births and death, as well as illness and death; sent declarations of love and fidelity, family photos; sent advice from the elderly, requests for help and money; issued bank cards, and the so-called *chamadas* (letters calling for people to emigrate).

These letters were read and re-read by the family, friends, neighbors, and contemporaries, functioning as an informative bulletin which contributed to feed *e/immigration* networks.² Constituting tenuous frontiers between the private and the public, some letters, originally written for a determined interlocutor, could become semipublic (divulged under the auspices of the extended family or of neighbors) or public (some were even published and re-edited in newspapers or even read in public squares) and thus provided useful information for the structuring of migration networks. Although various means of communication spread information about the conditions of the host country, letters also functioned as a propaganda instrument, reinforcing the representations of Brazil as a country of possibilities, feeding dreams, stimulating departures, influencing the decision to emigrate and the choice of destination, and establishing mechanisms of solidarity (Gibelli, 1997).

Different types of correspondence between *e/immigrants* can be distinguished: ritual letters (which notify births, deaths, marriages, etc.), informative ones (transmits non-ritual news), sentimental (love, break-ups, more intimate aspects), literary (public reading, with aesthetic interests), business and work, as well as the *chamada* letters.

The *chamada* or ‘call’ letters were specific to the process of displacement. They consisted of letters sent to family members, relatives, and friends, with the aim of inviting them to emigrate and to facilitate the bureaucratic processes of entering and leaving at frontiers – such as, for example, proving the existence of someone to welcome them, allowing the possibility of help, accommodation and employment. Although they were considered private documents and personal, with reference to family, conjugal, and intimate relations, they were used with a public purpose: achieving authorization to board³ and/or meeting the requirements at the port of arrival.⁴ These letters differed from the common ones because their authors also wrote what they imagined could serve the interest of their correspondents in relation to state officials. Something which, for this researcher, indicates a certain effort to dominate a more appropriate language and even some knowledge and familiarity with the migration policy then in force.

Different levels of education are revealed in the correspondence.⁵ In a few cases, stylistic, well contoured, and strong handwriting can be observed. However, in most of them, it is rustic and irregular. In relation to style, some letters have knowledge of the norms and respect grammatical rules; however, the majority are marked by spelling mistakes, difficulties with or the non-existence of punctuation, and a random use of upper and lowercase, which denotes a sparse knowledge of lettered culture and a mental and physical effort in writing.⁶ Other aspects in the form also denote low education levels, such as: disordered use of the paper, difficulties in maintaining letters aligned, text that is at times compressed and other times wide, lack of sequencing of pages.

In these letters, most of the time the discourse was spontaneous and improvised, with an absence or difficulty in the organization of texts according to a logical structure. These are the traits which reveal the historic subjects located on the fringes of literary. Orality can be perceived in the writings based on the presence of Portuguese phonetics, the absence of the separation and/or undue connection of words, the exchanging of consonants, (especially v for b, denoting the influence of Spanish, especially in parts of Portugal close to Galicia), colloquial and archaic expressions, clichés, and at times vulgar expressions.

The textual models (opening, invocation, greeting) and the graphical characteristic can be attributed to learning by imitation and copying, to the transmission of models by correspondence manuals, guides, magazines, and periodicals, also studied in school.

Divided between absence and the search for presence, those who wrote sought to maintain contact, affective ties, waited for news and/or gave reports of events. Writing letters attenuated loneliness and *saudade*, nevertheless it

demanded time, dedication, and reflection. A large part of the masses were little familiar with text, which for them was a challenge, the act of writing became a burden. To confront these obstacles they created strategies: when they did not know how to write or if they wrote badly, they appealed to another person to do this, a scribe/reader (thus the expression '*escrever a rogo*' or written at request), who could be a family member, friend, school master, acquaintance, a village priest, or the even writing professionals who charged for their services, feeding the currents of communication between those who left and those who remained. The difficulties were greater for women due to the elevated level of female illiteracy; more frequently they resorted to the aid of intermediaries for reading /writing.⁷

Feeding chains of ink and ties of paper, the correspondence between migrants appears to show ill-defined limits between the literate and illiterate, with a wide margin of semi-literates. Despite this scarce competence, the e/immigrants faced the need of resorting to ink and to paper to give news to their dear ones. Displacements became one of most potent producers of writing in history.

This epistolary literature functioned as an antidote to *saudade* and allowed the reconstitution of the lost ties of the past, cultural circularity between the society of departure and destination (solidarity, help with the new, unknown, and possibly hostile), facilities and difficulties of integration, changes, and permanence of *habitus* (flavors, tastes, religiosity), transmission and reconstruction of tradition, amongst various other questions. Nevertheless, the principal aim of these efforts was familial reconstitution.⁸ Linked to the desire for familial regrouping, the intention of maintaining control was expressed; in other words, even at distance, men (who generally migrated first)⁹ tried to exercise their authority, interfering directly or indirectly in daily life. Moreover, the departures of husbands affected the daily life of women, expanding the work and responsibility of women, who as well as domestic activities and care of children, came to be take charge of the maintenance of properties and the toils of the countryside, in family business and trade (Sarmiento, 1999).

With distance, family conflicts increased, situations perceptible in the letters, above all due to the complaints of wives, who felt helpless and alone with the children, often in need; some men stopped sending news, never returned and built new families in Brazil. The women, wrapped in *saudade*, became the 'widows of live husbands.'

MEANINGS OF SENSIBILITIES: SAUDADES AND ITS MULTIPLE PERCEPTIONS

Almeida Júnior¹⁰ was a painter who joined an original style and technical competence, skillfully transiting the historic and religious themes for scenes from urban and countryside – *caipira* – daily life, in a work with conjugated renewing force and originality. Among his paintings *Saudade* stands out, painted in 1899 (a little before his death), in which he represented, in a realistic style, a young women standing beside a window in a humble domestic and rustic environment. In the portrait, she is dressed in black – which denotes struggle – and is looking at a piece of paper she has in her hands; perhaps she is wistfully reading a letter or looking at an image. In the detail, on her face can be noted the expressions of pain caused by *saudade*, made explicit by tears (Philippov, 2007).



Figure 1 – Almeida Júnior, *Saudades*, 1899. 197 x 101 cm.
Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo.

This painting, like other artistic representations (painting, sculpture, cinema), allows the questioning of multiple meanings of emotions and sensibilities (Pesavento, 2005), the forms how individuals and groups expressed/perceived *saudade*, also present in literary, musical (Portuguese *fado* and *samba-canção*) and poetic registers. Similarly, the verses of Fernando Pessoa deserve mention, for whom probably the word *saudades* was typical of Lusitanian vocabulary.

Ter saudades é viver /To have saudades is to live
Não sei que vida é a minha /I do not know which life is mine
Que hoje só tenho saudades /Today all I have are saudades
De quando saudades tinha /Of when I had saudade

Passei longe pelo mundo /I wandered far through the world
Sou o que o mundo me fez, /I am what the world made me
Mas guardo na alma da alma /But I keep in the soul of the soul
Minha alma de português. / My Portuguese soul

E o português é saudades / And the Portuguese is saudades
Porque só as sente bem / Because only those feel it
Quem tem aquela palavra / Who have that word
Para dizer que as tem. /To say they feel it

Saudade also appears in daily communications, being equally observed in the correspondence of e/immigrants, in which were unveiled multiple feelings and expressions: confidences, intimacies, secrets, demands, commitments, outbursts, conflicts, projects, and opinions. Like dreams, illusions, and disillusion, marked by fear, hope, love, hate, rancor, jealousy, and, principally, by *saudade*.

Saudade is at times a poetic feeling of a religious or amorous nature, which can take a pantheistic form of disillusion in nature, or in taking delight in the obstinate repetition of the same images or feelings. Other times it is the permanent anxiety of distance, of other worlds, or other lives. *Saudade* is thus an active force, the obstinacy which leads to the achievement of large enterprises; it is a Faustian *saudade*. However, in times of dejection and misery, took a special form, in which the spirit morbidly feeds on past glories and falls into an oriental type fatalism, which has as a magnificent expression *fado*, a city song, whose name

comes from a Latin etymon *fatu* (destiny, unchangeable fate, fatality). From the combination of different factors there resulted in us a *sui generis* state of the soul which we call *saudade*. (Dias, 1995)

Considering the feeling of *saudade* is a complex question which involves debates (Lamas, 2003), beginning with the origin of the actual word *saudade*. Some have linked it to an Arabic origin (*saudah*), while others have connected it to Latin (*solidad*). Another controversial aspect involves the multiple meanings and dimensions of this feeling. On the one hand, it can be seen as a universal experience (shared by all cultures) which involves duration, demarcation, and conscience of time and distance, made concrete in feeling a lack or sadness due to the absence of someone or something, which can acquire meanings which become varied by being nominated other words/categories. On the other hand, *saudade*, although it is not something exclusively from the Portuguese language, synthesizes a feeling which can only be fully experienced by those who speak/dominate Portuguese, as it is marked by the singularity of a cultural experience of belonging to the community of the Portuguese language. Therefore, this feeling involved experiences historically and culturally learned, which were subjectivated and acknowledged (as loss, nostalgia, melancholia, and pain), presupposing shared conscience, expressions, and values, evoked and felt in the word/category/feeling which gives them form, a process which results in a complete linking of meanings (Silveira, 2010).

Saudade, like all feelings, implies the preparation of a language to express it, implies choice, the selection of gestures, statements, mime, *performances*, images, actions and reactions which give it materiality, reality, and social and historical density. *Saudade* did not need to be felt to exist, it had to be, above all, conceptualized as such, it had to be named, called *saudade* and materialized in gestures, actions, reactions, performances. Moreover, the meanings added to the word *saudade* – its semantic universe, its signifying cluster, the constellation of meanings brought by this concept when pronounced – varied from epoch to epoch. Moreover, feeling *saudade* implied adopting a particular grammar of gestures, practices, reactions, behavior, but also a given set of statements and images which are socially and culturally linked to it in a given context. (Albuquerque Jr., 2013)

Of relevance here is the challenge of denaturalizing emotions, questioning the universal and instinctive nature attributed to *saudade*, observing how it was culturally and historically constructed through transmission processes and the subjectivation of sensibility.¹¹ It is necessary to observe its exteriorizations

on the body (mannerisms, palpitations, corporal and physiognomical expressions, tears) and, particularly, how it is focalized in writing, with it being importance to emphasize how, when, and from whom it was learned, how it was manifested, situating its elements of identification, interaction, as well as the mode of acquiring a central role in its transmission (Elias, 1994).

Cultural and historical analyses of *saudade* reinforced the relationship of the feeling with Portuguese displacements, located its origins in the great discoveries, colonization, the gold rush in Brazil (eighteenth century) and the intense and continuous processes of Portuguese emigration in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century. In this way, the feeling of *saudade* is linked to the historical experiences of the Portuguese, which generate distance between loved ones; *saudade* was/is felt by those who leave and those who stay... *saudade* is also a subject which talks, has life and autonomy, in a clear demonstration of something which is a category coming from society to within each of us. A category which desires to be, to exist, and to stop time. (DaMatta, 1993)

In this sense the situation of those leaving, most of whom came from the Portuguese countryside, the intensification of displacements, and the striking experience of the transoceanic voyage expanded distances and the separation from their origins, generating a paradigmatic context for the formation of subjectivity marked by *saudade*, stimulating the writing and the circulation of letters which nowadays allow us observe the experiences of those leaving and those who stayed. Situations which were consecrated by the Portuguese saying: "Those who leave bring *saudades* with them, those who stay have *saudades*."

At the end of the nineteenth century, a moment of intense displacements, new forms of sociability were spreading, in such a way that to make contacts more dynamic, exchanges of letters became more present in daily life. In these the interlocutors expressed themselves, seeking, when possible, to follow

Rules of good manners and present an image of themselves, controlling spontaneity and the revelation of intimacy. In these [letters] a subtle game is established between the public and private, the intimate and the ostensive. Far from being spontaneous, the letters hide and reveal their authors according to rules of good manners and the presentation of one's self, in a codified personal image. The act of writing letters to friends and relatives... brought anxious individuals together to hear repeatable news... And only to assume the unrepeatable... A desire for reciprocity was created and sustained, since the sending of a letter implicitly or explicitly involved a request for a responses in a long distance conversation... it is possible

analyze the letters by searching in them for the *habitus* which governed content and practice. Analyzing them as part of a given culture also signifies understanding the networks of relations and identification strategies used by members of a family to, for example, keep it united. (Malatian, 2009, pp. 197-198)

The reading of letters from e/immigrants in the archives researched allows the questioning of the multiple meanings contained in them, numerous motives which led them to try to connect with family members, friends, and relatives, sharing experiences and looking for news.

Added to the many explicit motives, others were hidden due to modesty or conventions, or were put between the lines and between texts, creating frontiers of silence. The ‘unspoken’ was also expressed in the pauses and absences of letters (Pollak, 1989), thus, multiple and various meanings of *saudade* can be explored in these letters.¹²

Saudade involved dimensions of time (of something gone by, someone who had gone, a feeling, phases of life) and of space (someone or something far away, inaccessible, who had left). It was a painful feeling which generated sadness, pain, melancholia, emptiness, a feeling of loss and absence, leading to the desire to ‘kill the *saudade*,’ an expression used to designate resistance and/or an effort to achieve their aspiration. However, it is difficult to specify what *saudade* actually was, a word which designates a mix of feelings which do not always signify the same thing or which have the same dimension for everyone. Amongst other reasons, because what was felt in a given time and culture could differ in other times and spaces (Rezende, 2006; Cabral, 2004).

Saudade implied an experience of memory. Feeling *saudade* for someone, something (native village, tastes, smell, and sounds), for old situations, feelings, (love, passion, friendship), of doing something, and of old times. Frequently observed in the correspondence are references to *saudade* as a feeling linked to the lack of someone (friends, neighbors, cronies, godparents, in-laws, nephews and nieces, and aunts and uncles; and particularly of closer relatives, such as wives, children, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters), but also of a pet (dog, cat, bird, horse, cow, little pig).

In the correspondence, mixtures of various types of *saudade* can be observed (for things, clothes, utensils, musical instruments, and work), in short the various elements to which they no longer had access, often asking relatives in transit to bring them. Also part of *saudade* were the flavors of products and prepared plates (ham, salted cod, sardines, octopus, olives, sausages and other cold meats and traditional Portuguese cheeses, stews and broths, in particular

the vegetable broth called *caldo verde* and *açorda*), sweets (rice puddings, pastries, *filhoses*, *cavacas*, cheese sweets, *migas*, *aletrias*, sponge cake, *rabanadas*, *ovos moles*), drinks (wine, spirits, *ginja* – a cherry drink), and other products from their villages (seasonal fruits, sweets, or festive foods). There are reports of *saudade* for the aromas of crops, vegetables (the smell of rosemary), and gardens, also for the house and food (cloves and cinnamon), which impregnated the corridors of reminiscences, becoming affective memories leading the search for lost time, moments of tenderness, and demonstrations of affection for those who prepared the food (Matos, 2014).

Observing the dating of the letters, it can be noted that the months of greatest incidence were April, December, and October; the first two due to the celebration of Easter and Christmas, when the *saudade* for the festivities in their native land and life there was awoken. The intensified exchange in the month of December was due to the flow of agricultural production, denoting interests in accompanying the toil of tillage, harvesting, and collecting grapes.

In relation to the dimension of space, the expression of *saudade* of the most intimate places can be noted: bedroom, kitchen, house, garden, vegetable plots, but also fields and villages, mentioning the landscape, moments such as sunrise or sunset; also of life, abandoned situations, customs, and practices, swimming in the river, conversations around the fire, Sunday meetings, pleasure, daily life with family and friends. *Saudade* generated sadness, a feeling of absence or missing someone, the need for heat, pleasure, and company.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note how, in the letters, a fixed structured was created, a type of formula for continual use, characterized by elements such as: date, opening, invocation, greeting, discussions, greetings, best wishes, blessings, and farewells. In this sense, it was frequent to send and receive *saudades*, a term which appears in letters in expression such as “receive one thousand *saudades* from your son,” “*saudades* from your husband,” “*saudades* to the whole family,” “give to our family lots of my *saudades*,” “receive a hug with *saudades* from your husband,” “receive from me my heart full of *saudades* from your husband,” “accept a hug with *saudades* from your man”, “accept *saudades* from our children and grandchildren and daughter-in-law, and mine for you will only end when we meet. From your wife,” “nothing but lots of remembering to everyone from the house and lots of kisses to our dear children and from me receive lots of *saudades*. From this your husband who loves you a lot and wants you, goodbye for now.”¹³

Agudos 6.8.96
Querida esposa.

Saudades é o que não se
 pode pôr em graças e não se passando em
 fim receber mandas te vir pois em aqui costo
 mais como empregado do Sr. Liba e mesmo
 que não fosse assim aqui ganhava mais a
 vida. Agora tenho a dizer te que vou dar todo
 que não tem; e eu mando e dinheiro que
 ter pedras ao Sr. Santos para te comprar
 a passagem e arrumar tudo que for necessário
 pois o Sr. Liba daqui escrevia também ao Sr. Santos
 sobre a viagem. Escreve-me antes de embarcar
 e manda dizer o nome do vapor e o dia em
 to em que partes dahi que é para eu me
 poder regular aqui a ir te esperar em Santos.
 Tem diga Sr. Santos que te comprou a passaga-
 gem para Santos e ~~me~~ saber tem todo o
 cuidado para não seres roubada no que tempo
 us. Nesta mesma occasia eu mando para o Sr. San-
 tos a quantia de 50000 feitos para a passagem
 e compra tambem alguma coisa para ti, assim
 como quero que me trazes uma corrente de
 ouro e uma medalha de 1000 conforme a que
 eu fiz tua pois não precisa se tu prossa.
 Sou hoje e te recebo saudades de teu marido
 Domingos

Figure 2 – Letter from 1912.

As has been indicated, the greater part of the correspondence was concerned with family regrouping. In many letters the husband sending the letter sent *saudades* to his wife, as in the example from Figure 2, in which Domingos ends the letter with “For today receive *saudades* from your husband.” It can be observed how the sensibility of *saudades* was a product of the process of formation and learning through living in family, community, and school, allowing an education of sensibility which allowed this historical subject to anchor themselves on *saudade*. In other cases, the declarations of *saudade* denoted charity and affection:

My dear wife of my heart with the greatest *saudades* which I have for you, I have picked up the pen just to know of your important health, because on this occasion mine is good, thanks be to God; here I received your letter.¹⁴

Here I am very happy. I only have *saudades* of you, my mother and the girls... and give João kisses, and Américo, and many for the girls and give a hug to my mother and receive from this friend of yours a heart full of *saudades* and a heart of sadness, with this nothing else. I am who you know.¹⁵

I cannot stay without you beside me, eight months ago I left there, it seems to me like eight years. I am always remembering you and our son. I am dying to see you near to me, Eminda, as soon as you receive this letter arrange your life.¹⁶

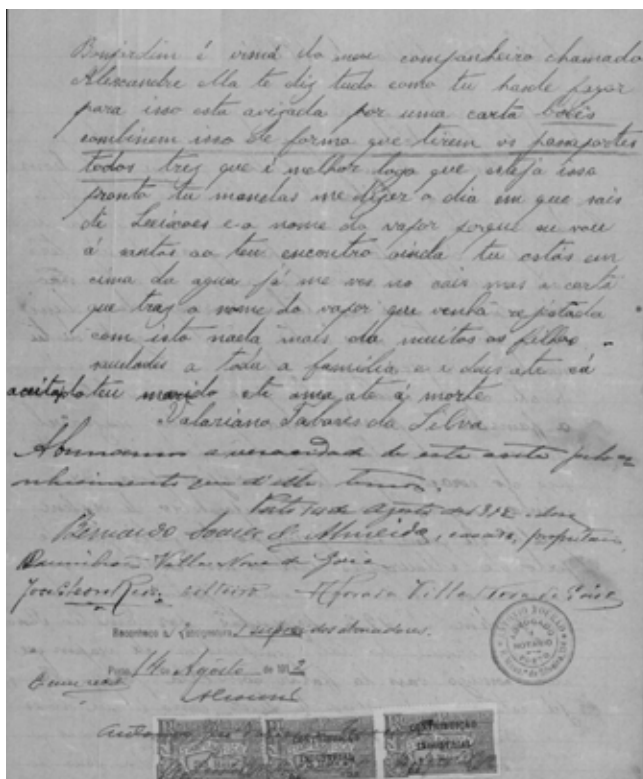


Figure 3 – Letter from 1912.

One writer said goodbye to this wife, saying “receive a hug with *saudades* from your husband who esteems and adores you.”¹⁷ Also found are letters in which husbands declare their *saudade* for their wives, their food, and even the

clothes washed and ironed by them. Expressions of *saudade* for children, paternal affection, can be noted: “*saudades* of our children and receive a hug from your husband who is dying to see you.”¹⁸

In the analysis of the correspondence what is thus proposed is the challenge of understanding how *saudade* was conceived in the writings. In other words, how the person with *saudades* expressed relations with different dimensions of time (Cabral, 2004), using ‘bells of memory’ by remembering/reviving the past, describing the present (sad and needy), planning/projecting the overcoming of pain aimed at a future re-encounter and familial regrouping, thereby seeking to delimit, classify, and attempt to control time.

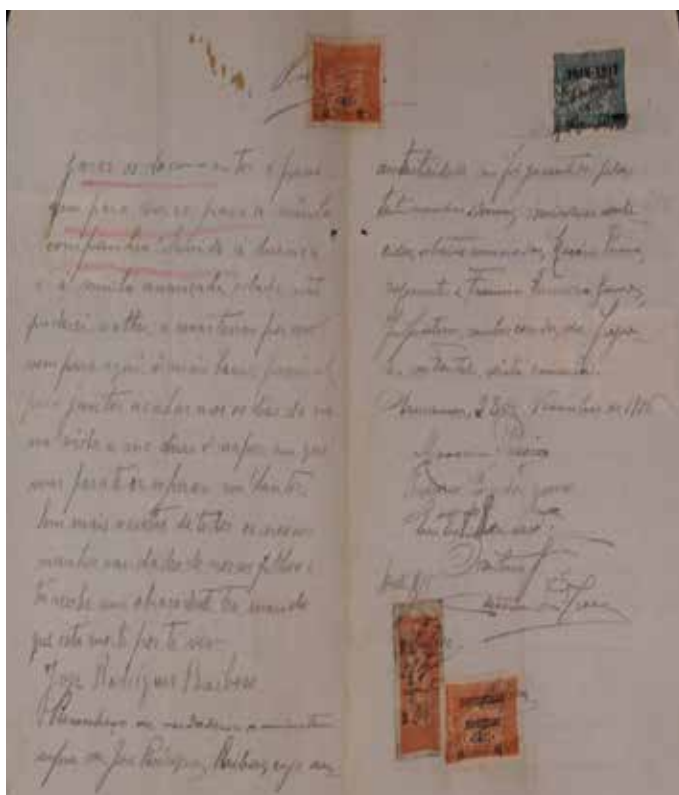


Figure 4 – Letter fragment.

Prepare to come to my company, because I am full of *saudades*.¹⁹

Give for me a thousand kisses to our beautiful little girls and you receive a thousand kisses and a thousand hugs and many thousand *saudades*, and a handshake from this man of yours, who shortly will embrace you.²⁰

Have pity on me due to the cold I have been through, on your part do what you can, but I here await, I have lots of *saudades* awaiting you.²¹

From the correspondence, which above all had the aim of communication, aiming at pragmatic actions, there emerges an emotional discourse full of meaning. In them there are communicative *performances* used for certain purposes, permeated by negotiations of power, in such a way that words assume functions and meanings that may or may not be convergent, depending on the situation of those writing and those reading (Rezende, 2010).

Saudade also appears as an adjective and as an adjectivation: “receive an open heart with *saudades* for you from him who is anxious to embrace you”, “I write with my heart full of *saudades*”, “sighing with *saudades*,” “I am dying to see it and you my love”. The word is also characterized with many, immense; quantified as ‘one thousand,’ ‘uncountable,’ ‘full of’ and ‘completely’ amongst others.

Whether or not named, quantified, or qualified, *saudade* runs through all these writings, denoting the experience of separation and the distance provoked by displacements, but always linked to the learning of feeling and expressing *saudades*, since it was assumed that the feelings did not bloom naturally, but are historically and culturally learned through codes, rules, and languages. Since childhood, it was perceived that people said and expressed *saudade*, they heard songs and saying reporting *saudade*, they read and heard texts, stories, poems which defined *saudade*, observed images which represented *saudade*, also involving experiencing *saudade* as a loss, absence, missing, distancing, mourning, and the departure of dear ones. *Saudade* was felt in relation to the uncertainties of return the possibility of the re-encounter. In this way, the displacements of the end of the nineteenth century and the subsequent decades and the correspondence which were their sub-products not only portrayed the process of distancing, but were the planting of *saudade*, synthesizing individual and familial affective-existential dramas which extended collectively and marked experiences both there and here.

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NOTES

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² The category e/immigration network covers both family and community actions and impersonal information, diffusion, and support structures, linked to the notion of chain proposed by MACDONALD; MACDONALD, 1964, and DEVOTO, 1988.

³ In Portugal, passport request processes consisted of the form affirming, official requests, and other documents from the petitioner – or when a collective/family passport was involved, documents from all its members. Exceptionally, it also covered travel tickets. Frequently included were letters addressed by family members whom the petitioners intended to meet. The process involved the following steps: the candidate for emigration waited for the letter in order to submit the processes to the Portuguese bureaucracy; when in possession of documents, they had to register them in a notary office, having their legitimacy acknowledged through the presence and signatures of two witnesses. According to Portuguese legislation, married women and underage children could not emigrate without the authorization of their respective husbands and parents. In general, the departure of spouses abroad was restricted since the permanence of conjugal ties and the maintenance of the family in Portugal functioned as a support, expanding the possibilities of return and facilitating the flows of remittances, which became essential for the family and the country's economy. Following Decree 7427, 30 March 1921, under new regulations the family letter was replaced by a type of printed material which became succinct, no longer listing in details and previous references and information.

⁴ Despite the precedence of the practice of the '*chamadas*,' after 1911 Brazilian legislation introduced the obligation of this document for those above 60 years of age and unable to work. Chapter II, Art. 5 of the same decree specified that the government would provide benefits (passage, transport, accommodation, and tax exemptions) to farmers suitable for work, giving preference to those "called by relatives already established in Brazil." Once aware of the benefits, various immigrants sought access to the document. At the arrivals port, the anxious recently arrived immigrant delivered the '*chamada*' to the Immigration Inspectorate. These letters could be official, serving as the actual form (from the Inspectorate, consular authority, or police officer, such as the State Department of Political and Social Order); but in other cases they were private letters and manuscripts, testifying the existence of a contact in Brazil, as if they were an informal '*chamada*.' The majority of the letters located in Portuguese archives are from husbands and fathers to their wives; while the letters collected in Immigrant Hostel (*Hospedaria dos Imigrantes*) in São Paulo accompanied the legal requirements for entrance. In these there exist a considerable number of '*chamadas*' for elderly people (parents, mothers, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, and grandparents), as well as those aimed at other relatives and contemporaries.

⁵ Since the middle of the nineteenth century, education in Portugal was a need felt and demanded by the masses, even being supported by sponsors who contributed to the construction of schools and houses of education, with the action of some 'Brazilians' being worth noting here.

⁶ In the letters there appear references to the lack of time for writing. To communicate, any free time was taken advantage of, such as lunchtime or nighttime; in a few rare cases tiredness was expressed during nocturnal reading; it could also be perceived that some letters

were written all at once, others at various moments over a number of days (RODRIGUES, 2013).

⁷ The use of intermediaries could cause embarrassment, inhibiting the sender from exposing secrets and intimacies, who began to choose what they would dare to write or not. Sometimes letters were reduced to formal or essential aspects. The illiterate were dependent on the availability and the time of lettered persons, as well as using professional clerks in the processes, some of whom held this function in the Public Office, Notary Offices, of Chambers, with references even appearing to sworn clerks.

⁸ In the letters analyzed different situations appear, but two types can be observed – one of letters sent by husbands, another by wives. The majority of letters were written by men; although there is only one example of each type of correspondence, the rate of sending varied, with there being noted in some cases a regular exchange and others a delay in replies, complaints about the lack of news, silence, and requests to write more frequently (RODRIGUES, 2013).

⁹ It was relatively common for men to emigrate first, reducing the impacts of change and, in a preventative action against any possible misfortunes, only calling the rest of the family at a more favorable moment, when they were already established and could count on better financial conditions.

¹⁰ José Ferraz de Almeida Júnior (1850, Itu, SP – 1899, Piracicaba, SP), painter, studied in *Academia de Belas Artes*, receiving recognition and awards; he later went to Superior School of Fine Arts in Paris (1876-1882). Returning to Brazil, he successfully exhibited and established himself in São Paulo (1883), continually traveling to Europe (1891-96). His style mixed romantic, realistic, and pre-impressionist influences. Among his paintings are: *Derrubador brasileiro* (1879), *Descanso do modelo* (1882), *Caipira picando fumo* (1893), *A Partida da Monção* (1897), *Leitura* (1892), *O Importuno* (1898), *O violeiro* (1899), and *Saudades* (1899).

¹¹ The process of subjectivation implied the notion of ‘subjection,’ thereby creating the idea that is it manufactured and modeled in the social register. The process of the construction of subjectivities lives with the imposition coercively tied to the homogenizations of determined culturally hegemonic models – strategies which are guided by the control of desires and wills –, in which it is intended to mold, to regulate. However, the subjectivation process is not seen as the inexorable destination of the serialization of individuals, because it simultaneously involves the possibility of re-appropriation, with it being understood that subjects are agents whom are permitted choices. Choices which, although not unlimited, open space for the construction of something, though in conflict with the norms of control, led to the reconquering of the potential of creative autonomy (MATOS, 2001).

¹² While at the beginning of the nineteenth century the time to send letters from Brazil to Europe was approximately 60 - 70 days, this was significantly reduced with the expansion of the steam-railway system and with the greater regularity of the post bag – letters could thereby reach their destination in up to 20 days –, and with the creation or expansion of the post office, became vehicles for the circulation of letters and acquired importance. The

arrival of the post was anxiously awaited and distribution in villages took place in a public place, which meant the letter of one was the letter of all.

¹³ Carta Processo 1004 maço 1754/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

¹⁴ Carta Processo 691 maço 1753/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

¹⁵ Carta Processo 780 maço1758, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

¹⁶ Carta Processo 859 maço 1759/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

¹⁷ Carta processo 464 maço 1761/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

¹⁸ Carta 01 maço 1751/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

¹⁹ Carta Processo 779 maço 1754/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

²⁰ Carta Processo 987 maço 1759/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

²¹ Carta Processo 370 maço 1761/1912, Arquivo Distrital do Porto.

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