SAUDADE: A CASE OF UNTRANSLATABLE CO-OWNERSHIP

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Abstract: The first section of this paper introduces an alternative epistemology to this Portuguese word - one inclusive of various forms of displacement in Portugal, Brazil, and in-between. This is followed by a second section, exploring Emily Apter on *saudade*'s untranslatability and Lawrence Venuti's response. This leads to a series of alternative, tentative suggestions for a more locally rooted orientation. The third and final section of this paper reveals how this word's exalted status straddles two nations with competing claims to its ownership. Recovering the marginalised issue of literary ownership, tracing its reception from Emily Apter to Rebecca Walkowitz, this produces what I refer to as a case of 'Untranslatable Co-Ownership', whereby both nations have competing stakes in an ownership over the same word. Brazil and Portugal thereby come to invest that word with the conviction of cultural singularity (despite each nation's necessarily exclusionary account).

Keywords: Lusophone studies; Translation studies; Comparative Literature; Untranslatability; Literary ownership.

Resumo: A primeira parte deste estudo introduz uma epistemologia alternativa para essa palavra portuguesa –incluindo várias formas de deslocamento em Portugal, no Brasil e entre os dois países. Segue-se uma segunda parte, que explora a intraduzibilidade de *saudade* por Emily Apter e a resposta de Lawrence Venuti. Isso leva a uma série de sugestões alternativas e aproximativas buscando uma orientação mais localmente enraizada. A terceira e última parte revela como o status elevado dessa palavra atravessa duas nações que concorrem por sua propriedade. Recuperando a questão marginalizada da propriedade literária, indo da sua recepção por Emily Apter a Rebecca Walkowitzthis, isso produz o que refiro como um caso de "co-propriedade intraduzível", onde ambas as nações têm participações concorrentes quanto à propriedade de uma mesma palavra. Brazil e Portugal, desse modo,vêm a investir na palavra a convicção de uma singularidade cultural (apesar do relato necessariamente excludente de cada nação).

In 2019, I remember landing at Boston's airport for the first time. The sun was blinding. An elderly driver, squinting through silver-rimmed glasses, with a gold chain around his neck, came over. Once the car started moving, we began to talk, and he told me he was Brazilian. He showed me a photograph of his family in Fortaleza. Later, he asked me why I was there. I explained as best as I could in Portuguese; he smiled, and asked what I specialised in. After taking a deep breath, I told him: "*intraduzibilidade.*" One of the words I was working on, in fact, was *saudade.*

"*Aaah, esta é a nossa palavra!*" he erupted, beating his chest. 'This is *our* word!' I smiled back at him, but this encounter left me with questions I could not get my head round. Namely, how can two separate groups of people have an equally exalted attitude to the same word, to the point that it becomes "a declaration of cultural integrity?" (Giorgi, 2014, p.8). How can they *equally* think that they *own* the same thing? More specifically, how can a single word be considered untranslatable in two places at once? The questions raised over the course of that taxi journey are the same ones on which the present paper hinges.

Saudade is a word borne amidst displacement, often intended to evoke a sense of personal loss. Approaching this key term in Lusophone epistemology from the perspective of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies - with a particular emphasis on the growing attention toward untranslatability - the present article explains how a word can be considered equally idiomatic and equally culturally significant in Portugal *as well as* Brazil. In culmination, this finally leads me to diagnose it as an obscure case of (what I refer to as) Untranslatable Co-Ownership. This particular case occurs between the European nation of Portugal from which it originates, and the Brazilian nation, where some 205 million more people use it.

One has to acknowledge the enormity of material devoted to this single word (Paiva, 2022). More sophisticated corpus surveys exist elsewhere if that is what is what the reader seeks (Neto; Mullet, 2022, Sterzi, 2022), nor is the author in a position to authentically 'de-mythologise' its meaning as others have done so admirably (Viegas, 2022:269) Bringing the context of untranslatability into the foreground of this account

means that words like *saudade* are cut loose from the sphere of Lusophone studies and out into the vague but dynamic wilderness of World Literature. This article is concerned with advocating for untranslatability's promise as a critical device, but also makes space for its critical responses.

Somehow, in both of their respective books, Emily Apter's *Against World Literature* (2013) and Lawrence Venuti's *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019), the Portuguese word *saudade* seems to draw both of these leading critics toward it - and outward, further, to very different conclusions (Venuti, 2019; Apter, 2014). However, as I come to stress later, neither Apter nor Venuti conceive of *saudade* with notions of ownership in mind. The topic of ownership plays an underexplored role in *Against World Literature*; it is this quality I have correspondingly chosen to foreground in my later account of their engagement. I thereby begin with an exposition of the word itself, its etymology and its Lusophone epistemology. Secondly, I turn to Apter and Venuti's debate over untranslatability in general, and *saudade* in particular. This leads to the third and final section, where a framework I refer to as Untranslatable Co-ownership is introduced, on the basis of *this* Portuguese Untranslatable's dual status, as an impenetrable object of cultural prestige in both countries (despite their vastly different conditions and mythologies). Yet, before all of that, one must turn to the word itself, so as to better frame those later assertions and the contexts on which they come to depend.

1 *Saudade*

Experiencing *saudade* is to feel the absence of something, or someone, far away in space or time. Literary descriptions are numerous. Starting with definitions from bilingual authors working between English and Portuguese, the poet Roy Campbell calls *saudade* a sense "of brooding exile," or "a homesickness which can even be felt at home," (Campbell,1 957: 23-24), while American-Portuguese novelist Katherine Vaz claims that *saudade* stands for "an absence" that constitutes "the most profound presence in one's life' - a melancholy yearning for a time, place or person" (Vaz,1996:44). The word traces back to a host of cognates in the Latin vocabulary: *secessio* (withdrawal, separation), *separatio* (a setting apart), *seductio* (a leading or drawing aside), or *secretus* (that which has been set aside or put away) (Furlan, 2021; Apter, 2014:150).

Before embarking on its broader history, for the sake of an account more readily accessible to contemporary readers, one voice stands out in particular. It comes from the Portuguese surrealist poet Natália Correia (1923-1993). Little known outside of Portugal, her prolific and fiery work often inflamed the authorities of her time. Having already suffered tremendously under António de Oliveira Salazar's regime back home in Lisbon, (Dias, 2018: 199-205) in 1978 she devoted her lecture at Brown University to the temporal ambiguities of *saudade*. Later translated into English by George Montiero, Correia devotes her lecture to an emotion she considered of incalculable value to Portuguese culture and identity. Two years later, back in Lisbon, she would enter Parliament with the Partido Popular Democrático (Furlan, 2021). This information is useful insofar as it relates to the longings for past and future, real or imagined, that this enigmatic word can paradoxically enumerate.

Trying to describe to her American audience how this emotion feels, on a more personal way, Correia assigns *saudade* as a feeling of sadness, loss and emptiness. Yet, also, as a feeling premised on a sense of imprecise temporal disjunction. In her account, the sensation of *saudade* is inseparable from the sense that past and present become indistinguishable, marking her attempt to persuade her listeners as to its lack of equivalence in English.

In the lecture text, Correia writes:

> I miss something from the past because it was good […] because I miss it, my present is non-existent, since what makes me alive is in the past […] Consequently, I exist in no one single time, existing in all times simultaneously. (Monteiro, 2015:126)

Divisions cease, timeframes merge, and thus the definition of *saudade* put forth here is offered as an ahistorical affective state. *Saudade*, for Correia, is a word whose meaning and substance is immune from conditions of history or contingency.

> *Saudade* expresses a fundamental characteristic of the Portuguese temperament […] The fact is that *saudade* describes a psychological situation in which the divisions of time cease. There is no past, no present, no future, or, better still, these three divisions of time are melted into the absolute moment of a soul exasperated by *saudade*. (p. 126)

On first glance, readers may unknowingly subscribe to Correia's first proposition above. Namely, that *saudade* is "a fundamental characteristic of the Portuguese temperament" (id.)

If so, the case for the word's untranslatability is a discussion quietly closed. Yet more contemporary readers may struggle to explain: Why are certain emotions restricted to certain racial groups? In this careful sleight of hand, Correia reveals the implicit claim for linguistic essentialism that would not survive a more thorough or rigorous examination. Though lyrical and persuasive, Correia leaves unanswered how this word could split claims of linguistic and cultural essentialism across the Atlantic Ocean. Before pushing *that* inquiry further, it is best to turn to the word's storied history first.

Saudade, in its journey from oral phrase to textual concept, can be traced back to the "philosopher-king" D. Duarte I (1391-1438) (Dias; Jarek; Debona, 2016: 7-8). Largely responsible for Portugal's maritime expansion, D. Duarte also found time to compose a "taxonomy of feelings related to loss," including "the feelings of *saudade.*" (Id.) Published as *O Leal Conselheiro* (1438), *saudade* is therein rationalised by D. Duarte I as follows:

> It seems, because [*saudade*] itself is a feeling that the heart takes because it is far from the presence of someone or people that you love very much, or because you expect a next separation. And that gives me the times and places in which, as a delight, I enjoyed myself. I say affection and delight, because they are feelings that belong to the heart, where what matters is born longing [*saudade*], rather than reason or judgment. (2019:151-156)

This is *saudade*'s earliest known articulation.

One finds here the crucial link between emotion and time: two aspects that have survived the word's recurrence across various contexts. In this particular case, it was enunciated in a country of barely more than a million people, who were presently exploring half the world's surface over the course of a century (Prestage, 1966: ix). From that perspective, it reflects an uncannily modern and mature sense of time and distance, and how both time and space can flatten, expand and underpin our emotional states. Before becoming a national myth or being subject to retrospective metaphor, this Portuguese idiom expressed Early Modern and responses to global mobility. Reading these words in a more globalised era, this factor does not appear insignificant.

The phenomenon of a shared protectiveness over a single word implies that a common linguistic inheritance extends linguistic ownership over certain terms. The real question comes down to: How can the *claim for untranslatability* be sustained

across two discrete nations? This can only be answered with recourse to the Brazilian conditions of its enunciation.

The Portuguese first made contact with sub-Saharan West Africa in 1443. "After a few initial expeditions in which they raided coastal communities for slaves, they learned to establish relations with coastal chiefs whose permission and cooperation they traded." Newitt,1981:1). An estimated 4.9 million people were forcibly moved from Africa and taken to Brazil by the Portuguese from 1501 to 1866: the largest recorded number in history. (Lashley, 2020:59). It is in this displacement that *saudade* reappears, this time in a very different light.

Forced into slavery upon arrival, "great efforts were made" on the part of the Portuguese traders to avoid the "downcast aspect" on the slave's faces when they were auctioned in city squares. The African arrivals were plied with stimulants like ginger and tobacco in the hope of removing what their traffickers referred to as "*saudade* sickness." (Shwarcz; Starling, 2018:81). As I see it, this particular context attests to the complex and far-reaching impact of geographical displacement upon the word's meaning.

Brazilian novelist and physician Moacyr Scliar (1937-2011) described the colonial Portuguese sailors as 'carrying with them to the New World' a nostalgia for what they left behind: Portuguese ships, he writes, "had *saudade* at the steering wheel." (2003:99. Translation mine). Osvaldo Orico (1900-1981) came to observe Brazil's separation from Portugal and the development of its own modernity from the perspective of both a poet and diplomat over the course of his lifetime. He argues that *saudade* split into two separate definitions (or came to acquire two discrete meanings) when it journeyed from the shores of Portugal to the Brazilian coast:

> The Portuguese *saudade* is one beyond a sense of "dying for love," it is often a sad feeling and the cause of pain. Its Brazilian counterpart is more joyful, imaginative […] It is a *saudade* which does not cry, it sings; it does not sting, it praises; the *saudade* which does not weaken, it strengthens; a *saudade* that does not hurt, but heals. (Orico, 1948:44, translation mine)

These words challenge any hope of a final definition. One way out of this is to recognise what both meanings share. Both definitions denote emotions premised on (and stimulated by) memory. The object of desire to which it applies is one that is either anticipated, absent or lost. Yet Orico's passage confuses those negative associations and outworn attributions.

This serves as a reminder that *saudade* is a term long characterised by paradox. The Brazilian-Portuguese Dictionary defines *saudade* as a "somewhat melancholy feeling of incompleteness connected by memory," "of departure from a place or thing, of absence of certain experiences and pleasure." (Houaiss, 1986, apud Apter, 2014:140). Brazilian sociologist Bittencourt's analysis captures this dimension better when claiming that the term is "characterised by its contradictions", coming to describe *saudade* as "a friendly evil, a wellness that makes us sick." (2016: 117, translation mine) This sickness stems from "a bittersweet remembrance of extraordinary proportions of what left a mark in our lives - whether it is what we have lived, a loved one who is no longer near us" or someone "who we long for." (Id.) In this case, the lost object of desire to which the subject feels a sense of *saudade* grows obscure. It may be real, it may be imaginary, or it may no longer (or yet) exist.

In his exemplary account of the word in *The Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014), Fernando Santoro follows the word's significance in Portuguese history and national myth. In the battle of Alcácer Quibir, Morocco in 1578, the disappearance of King Sebastian (1554-1578) "produced a collective feeling of mourning and hope that has characterized the Portuguese soul ever since." (2014:930. See Kottman, 2018) These abbreviated origins illuminate the word's importance in its original context. Santoro goes on to clarify the word's function in myth as well as history: "Ulysses is represented as the mythical founder of Lisbon," Santoro continues, "he is also supposed to be the mythical ancestor of the *saudade* felt by the navigators wandering the globe and their wives who waited for them." (Id.) In an attempt to extend the reader's context on this point, Slavic scholar Svetlana Boym's findings help situate the broader maritime context around which *saudade* can be more clearly understood.

In Boym's account, various emergent nationalisms in the Romantic era claimed to have untranslatable words that alluded to the homesickness their respective nations inspired from a distance. (See Telletin, and Manole, 2015:155-171). Except that, paradoxically, "one is struck by the fact that all these untranslatable words are in fact synonyms; and all share the desire for untranslatability, the longing for uniqueness." (Boym, 2001:13) This leads *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) to the fascinating conclusion that idiomatic words like *saudade* denote the integral conditions of progress more generally still: going so far as to claim that "the very sentiment itself, the mourning

of displacement and temporal irreversibility, is at the very core of the modern condition." (Id. p. 10, p. xvi). Seen from this perspective, *saudade* may come to nominate a broader category than it has until now. Importantly, it should be noted that one need not subscribe to Romantic notions of statehood to recognise the ongoing relevance of those sentiments. It is at this point that the Brazilian context comes into view, reluctantly and chaotically, opening the history of *saudade* up to the scene of the King of Portugal's exile from his own Empire in 1807.

Torn between his long-standing allegiance to the British Empire and the Continental System established by Napoleon Bonaparte (1873-1808) to demand its blockade, King Dom João VI (1768-1826) fled Lisbon in 1807 as French troops poured into the Portuguese capital. (Rego, and Irigaray, 2022: 1149-1164) Dom João sailed across the Atlantic with his entourage of a few hundred servants, landed in Rio de Janeiro, and swiftly announced the city the new seat of his Empire. His subjects were bewildered at this spectacle (Schultz, 2000: 7-31), and after years of mounting Brazilian public dissatisfaction, in his final decree on April 6th, 1821 the King wrote: "I leave with such strong feelings of *saudade*, that I return to Portugal." (Schwarcs, and Starling, 2018:224). From this it is understood that while *saudade* refers to absence, this does not necessitate the absence of *home*. As I will go on to explore, it may more accurately apply to the absence of *ownership*, rather than any fixed geographical space.

My only critique of Santoro's eloquent entry in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* is the absence of *Saudosismo,* a short-lived literary and spiritual movement almost a century later, in 1900s Portugal (Fiuza, 2022: 203-214). Vibrant but short-lived, it included Leonardo Coimbra (1883-1936), António Sérgio (1883-1969) and most famously Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935). The energy with which this word was re-invested to structure a new aesthetics could certainly have been included in Santoro's narrative as a blueprint toward its possibilities. As can be read from the following passage, Teixeira de Pascoaes's (1887-1952) absence in *The Dictionary* should not be confused with a lack of enthusiasm for the word itself. He describes *saudade* in the following effusions:

> It is our divine word – I never tire of repeating it – containing the dream of our Race, its intimate and transcendent, messianic and redemptive design, and that is why it is untranslatable. Portuguese, it explains our great historical events and the soul of our great men, and creates our dream for the future, a national Aspiration which will unite the Portuguese here and across the sea. (Pascoaes, 1988:108. Translation mine).

I end this brief but far-ranging etymology with this passage to follow the course of its history and conceptualisations chronologically, while also ending on a note that confirms my overriding criteria here and throughout. For a single word to contain a people's dreams, while also nursing its future, betrays precisely the discursive paralysis in which so-called Untranslatable term appear to be subject (that is, at least, from the linguistic position of being on the outside looking in).

By extending the historical scope of Santoro's entry in the *Dictionary*, I attempted here to deviate from it only to be more inclusive of its Brazilian inheritance. It presents, like any other, a subjective and in no way absolute interpretation. In the following section, I will turn to a debate between two contemporary scholars. Their confrontation, between comparative literary critic Apter and translation scholar Venuti, is followed by an intervention to follow in the third section; there, I outline a way to cultivate an understanding of Untranslatable Co-Ownership, as an attempt to articulate this unusual phenomenon of a shared idiom.

2 *Emily Apter and Lawrence Venuti on saudade*

The two figures brought into discussion in this section are not the most obvious points of reference. To my knowledge, neither has extensively worked within or contributed to Lusophone studies, making their respective thoughts on *saudade* here all the more notable. Apter and Venuti both discuss this Portuguese idiom in their recent publications. Apter casts the Portuguese word as one overdue further conceptualisation, while Venuti's critique in *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019) aims at what he considers to be its untenability to translators.

Emily Apter is a critic of French and Comparative Literature, whose far-ranging works on translation zones, untranslatability, world literature and reparative translation have brought her voice to the foreground of her field(s). (Apter, 2006; Cassin, 2014; Apter, 2014; Apter, 2021). Her collaborative translation of Barbara Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014), a "field-defining" (Jansson, and LaRocca, 2022), volume of over 400 words from the European Continental lexicon of "Big Ideas" has propelled this theme into a wide variety of contexts with growing energy and enduring relevance.

Lawrence Venuti was, until recently, a Professor of English at Temple University. His largest impact by far, though, has been felt most strongly in the field of Translation

Studies, where his own work as well as meticulously updated anthologies (Venuti, 2021) have contributed to a fledgeling field still in development across universities since the turn of the millennium. Having translated Italian literature into English since the late 1970s, Venuti's work on translation studies since the 1990s have pioneered reinterpreting translation itself as a valid object of study. All leading to a more politicised and substantial critique of translation: most famously as the invisible labour of marginalised figures, but equally as the subject of scandalous oversight and uncorrected mistranslation, instrumentalism and hermeneutic translation. (See: Venuti, 2002; Venuti, 2017; Venuti, 2019; Venuti, 2021; Venuti, 2021: 163-173.)

Firstly, in *Against World Literature* (2013), Apter claims that the central difficulty of translating *saudade* arises from "the double function of mythmaking and critical distancing that distinguishes the Untranslatable's abilities." (p.138). Apter then positions both *saudade* and *Fado* as "semantic national monuments; heritage markers of Portuguese's belatedness as a national language, baroque periodicity, intellectual mannerism and splenetic affect." (p 140). Unlike Santoro's entry definition of *saudade* in *The Dictionary*, Apter does not spend much time unpacking this assessment of the word's origin or its presence in Portuguese or Brazilian culture (nor its alleged but refutable accusation of "belatedness"), choosing instead to reconceptualise the term via a series of authors, translators and theorists.

The word thus travels from António Lobo Antunes to Fernando de Pessoa, legitimating its analysis through a circularity of corresponding Portuguese texts. In between, *saudade* is applied to Samuel Beckett's translations of Arthur Rimbaud; Lydia Davis's translation of Gustav Flaubert; and is finally related to philosopher Quentin Meillassoux's notion of "trans-finitude." (Meillassoux, 2010). In respect to Beckett's translations, Apter insists what others have deemed "aberrant translation" is instead the fact that "Beckett was alive to the *saudade*-effect and wanted to communicate its Rimbauldian deregulation of the senses" through "a kind of over-translation that embraces wild infidelity to the original and pushes the envelope of untranslatability." (2014:147).

What Apter then refers to as "the *saudade*-syndrome" is assumed self-evident in the work of Italian author Antonio Tabucchi: because "when the Portuguese characters speak", they produce "a slightly seasick style reinforcing *saudade* as a trope of maritime

linguistic dislocation." (Id.p.149). She ends this chapter stating that she has "consciously shifted" the word "from its local usage as a term connoting human sentiment, idealism and religious transcendence to an ascription of materialist metaphysics." (p.155). For Francesco Giusti, this interpretation of *saudade* as amounting to "a transcultural gesture of lament for a painful separation from an unrelinquishable object of desire." (Giusti, 2021:102).

According to Venuti in his response, this chapter is "typical." (2019). He notes that Apter begins by translating *saudade* as "melancholia, moral ambiguity": "But since untranslatability for Apter means not the inability to translate but repeated, relentless translation, she gives the English parenthetically and without comment, as if it didn't matter." (Id. p.65). Venuti finds this as a moment of especial discredit. Through a sequence of texts which Venuti lists in order to emphasise their arbitrariness, he claims that

> An interpretation that initially seemed local, relating the words to Portuguese history and politics through Lobo Antunes's novels, then expansive by incorporating a wider range of reference turns out to be utterly reductive: Apter removes texts from their traditions, situations, and moments, quotes them in English translation without commenting on those translations, and ends up equating everything to a single concept. (Id. p.66).

Why exactly does Apter move away so rapidly from the origins of the word in question? Apter seemingly overlooks "the contingencies of translation" (id. p.67) for a word that can readily suit her theoretical purposes. Is there not a risk of supplanting national meanings with supranational contexts, or of turning the past "into a mirror of the analyst's own intellectual obsessions"? (Id. p.59). However, what deserves response in order to advance the present argument is that, for all of Venuti's complaints, he does not try to correct Apter's mistake. This is because neither critic's account is attentive to ramifications of ownership. Based on Apter and Venuti's differing accounts, I suggest that without this acknowledgement the word is irrevocably destined to become a container for other concepts and positions. It is at this point that intervention becomes necessary.

Elsewhere in *Against World Literature*, Apter puts forward a robust thesis, arguing that notions of literary ownership remain dangerously unthought. (See: Apter, 2009: 87-100.)

Translation offers "a particularly rich focus" for such explorations, she claims, one that "challenges legalistic norms of ownable intellectual property." (2024:303). This is an appealing proposition, but the point here is that Apter's subscription to Houaiss's

definition, in itself, side-steps what could have been a more specific inquiry as to how an Untranslatable compels the same sense of ownership in two discrete communities at once. That the word *saudade* exists in a state of Untranslatable Co-Ownership is an oversight of her account that contradicts its promising observations elsewhere. I consider this a neglected but sophisticated element of Apter's project.

Before moving on to the third section, which will try to make Untranslatable Co-Ownership salient in extension to these debates, it is worth pausing first. Principally, to try to consider where the middle ground between these two accounts of *saudade* could lead. What if one tried to turn *saudade* into a literary or philosophical concept, as Apter does? This time, in such a way that the generating of concepts is not a process set apart, or detached from, translation, Lusophone etymology and the word's more localised epistemologies? Departing from Apter's model, I here suggest an alternative understanding of *saudade* in the context of literary theory.

After reassembling the word's storied history in my first section, in response to Apter's advocation to think of *saudade* as a conceptual theme in literary interpretation in the second section, leads me to the following three conclusions. These are the elements established through the word's original contexts; but also remain applicable beyond them. If and when one goes back deeper and further into the word's origins, one is faced with a narrative of colonialism, departure, distance and exodus. Finding salient aspects of meaning out of those contexts, I here extend what should be considered a flexible and provisional understanding of the word as a concept with broader reach:

1) *Linguistic estrangement*

   The tension of linguistic ownership is never more intensely present in literature than in the literature of exile. I also consider this a theme buttressed by revived notions of 'possessive collectivism,' which strikes me as the most sophisticated explanatory model for this to be understood. (Walkowitz, 2015).

2) *A sense of synchronic and diachronic deferral*

   Santoro's entry in *The Dictionary* and Natalia Correia's lecture share commonalities. Santoro recalls how, with the disappearance of King Sebastian I "produced a collective feeling of mourning and hope that has characterized the Portuguese soul ever since." (p.930).

Secondly, in Correia's poetic exposition of *saudade*'s meanings, her emphasis on its merging of timeframes is notable: "I exist in no one single time, existing in all times simultaneously." (p 126). In either case, *saudade*'s differentiation from terms like "melancholy" in English is premised on what runs consistently through its more local descriptions as *a sense of synchronic and diachronic deferral*. By this I mean to say that the word is unwaveringly referenced and orientated toward a time or place distant from the subject themselves or the literary text's composition.

3) *Uncertainty of target audience*

Saudade is often directly addressed to, in dialogue with, or orientated toward past or distant figures and places. From this, if the text is in dialogue with an absent figure, a figure of desire or loss, then the subject of address becomes more ambiguous (*saudade* is an ambiguity that may complicate its narrative voice).

This second section has narrowed down to a debate on *saudade* between two scholars, both of whom approach the word from outside the realm of Lusophone scholarship. My subsequent effort hoped to demonstrate that the need to theorise this word - and to translate it - need not be separate tasks.

These preliminary suggestions are put forth, not in the hope of supplanting Apter's designations, but to put forward a theorisation of *saudade* rooted more in its own context(s). The third and final section turns to the issue of shared relevance for *saudade* across two regions. That the sacred status of *saudade* could survive untouched in its journey across such large and regional distances is equally worthy of attention.

3 Untranslatable Co-Ownership

Having offered an account of *saudade* in section I and having expanded on Apter and Venuti's differing approaches to *saudade* in section II, this section aims lastly to articulate *saudade*'s sociolinguistic situation with reference to the theme of untranslatability. In what results, reconciling untranslatability with notions of linguistic ownership leads me to introduce the notion of Untranslatable Co-Ownership. This model is but a provisional attempt to synthesise these underexplored areas, largely because *saudade* offers a rare and substantial convergence of these issues.

A continued critical neglect on the topic of "ownership" in literary studies suggests that, long after its initial composition, it remains an area largely unthought across its field. (Apter, 2009:87-100). Consequently, a critical framework for untranslatability and ownership here comes into view. It demonstrates how earlier, predentary models have been developing in Apter's notions of ownership, and "possessive collectivism" as advanced by Rebecca Walkowitz. Predentary accounts are useful, insofar as they can attribute "ownership" across large bodies of speakers and linguistic collectives. Between these early models, they express a tension that has left them, in my reading, unthought. Rehearsing notions of ownership means starting from the ground up.

Most enduring, Benedict Anderson considered the nation no more than an idea collectively reinforced through shared reception. As such, nations occupy the imaginations of those who share a language, ensured by the collective authorship, distribution and circulation at its foundation.(Anderson, 2013). Meanwhile, George Steiner's phenomenal *After Babel* (1975) made an obverse claim. There, instead, Steiner insisted that human languages have separated over time - not out of a drive to communicate with each other - but rather to sustain our differences.

Kyra Giorgi's exceptional work revisits these themes. Focusing on untranslatable terms for emotions in the Czech, Portuguese and Turkish languages (including *saudade*), she brings to light the aforementioned tension by showing the social and discursive applicability of emotions in a linguistically restricted context. "In groups," she writes, "shared sadness and traumas – as well as shared joys – have the capacity to bind people together, especially if there is space for the public articulation of these emotions." (2014: 15). *Saudade*, she insists, is a word that is particularly complicated "by the irreconcilability of individual and collective emotions."(Id.ibid.). Thinking this significant point through, in terms of literary "ownership," one needs to turn to Apter and Walkowitz.

A leading scholar of literary modernism, Rebecca Walkowitz is seemingly the only literary critic attentive to this fascinating, specific dimension of ownership in Apter's project. Her reception is mutual: in *Against World Literature*, Apter refers to and discusses an early draft of Walkowitz's brilliant *Born Translated* (2015). (2014:320-321). Here, Walkowitz makes a compelling case for a series of contemporary authors

whose works are written "with an eye to easy and rapid translatability." (Chesney, 2022:126). Anticipating being circulated and received in spaces beyond one's own national or linguistic locus, authors like J. M. Coetzee and Kazuo Ishiguro's novels are, themselves, "born translated." Summarising Emily Apter's project in the introduction to *Born Translated* (2015), Walkowitz writes:

> [Apter] is interested in "when and where translation happens," [...] But she is against the organization of literature from the perspective of national languages and literary histories. And *she is against the expansion of ownership*, preferring instead "deowned literature," whose paradigmatic example is the translated book. Of course, as Apter acknowledges, *literary ownership is not a creature of world literature studies.* The rise of national languages in the early nineteenth century made it seem natural and necessary for literature to begin—even to be "born"—in one language. (2015:29-30. Emphasis mine)

Apter is against the "expansion" of ownership; but sees "ownership" as something miscellaneous to a group of disciplines divided along national lines. More relevant here and more provocative still is Walkowitz's recognition of the anomalous status of "ownership" when approaching literature in a global context: "literary ownership is not a creature of world literature studies." This should stand as a reminder that negotiating imperial legacies across great distances, illuminating different traditions or battling Euro-chronology are issues not exclusive to the Lusophone context. (Wilson, 2022:1-31). With the expansion of Translation Studies as an autonomous discipline, though, this still does not explain how, or why, the issue of ownership continues to be so marginalised in a field that is otherwise capacious by definition. World Literature has still yet to make space for the conception of a world *without* literary ownership.

In the face of these literary works that anticipate translation, Walkowitz resuscitates a term from the field of anthropology to designate the other end of the spectrum, more relevant to the task at hand, "possessive collectivism" (Roy, Ananya. 2017: A1-A1; Hubeladze, 2020: 14-20; Krippner,2013): a paradigm in which "the uniqueness and coherence of a text's inside leads to a nation-based model of literary history." (Walkowicz,2015: 61).

"Possessive collectivism" nominates how different linguistic communities do the opposite of this by make their language a form of exclusionary cultural property. This means establishing monolingualism, or sometimes a policy of "other-language abstinence" on speakers. (Apter,2014: 320). Language becomes contractual, collective and coextensive. If novels are "born translated," then in this schema, these activities

represent alternative. From this, one could suggest that a model of "possessive collectivism" carries the notion of ownership out of the realm of anthropology. It must be acknowledged that literary "ownership" remains conceptually uncertain at times (referring to translations, communities or authors), but this is not a failing of Walkowitz's work so much as it is a stark reflection of how unthought this notion remains. Extending this notion now, in the direction of *saudade,* and its curious elevation in Portuguese and Brazilian communities in particular, I come to the following conclusions.

Firstly, let me affirm that the key tension in earlier and aforementioned models of "ownership", was a tension between individual and collective consciousness. These are two paths predicting the inclusive - or exclusive - dimension of language.

In the direction of a collective extension, *saudade* has already come to designate longings for which it was not originally intended (in some cases not purely in the direction of colonial expansion but for articulating a singular and contemporary diasporic situation). (López-Calvo, 2019). Whatever singularity this offers is deceptive, because it is no sooner enunciated than it is *shared*. This, in extension, leads to the idea that something (or, in this case, some *word*) must be protected.

Untranslatable Co-Ownership is the term I assign *saudade* here, to express its collectively shared and historically simultaneous significance. It articulates the anomalous situation of a word stretched across two continents, yet whose meaning has outlived the journey with its status intact. Untranslatable Co-Ownership, as understood here, is evident and perceivable in the word's shared existence. It is also reflected in the word's reception across both cultures. Out of poetic language, it becomes attributed to a more symbolic reality, and in the process generates a shared communicative phenomenon. (Molina-Cerezo, and Trujillo, 2013). *Saudade* has become a rallying cry at various Brazilian festivals, whereby "individual longing is transformed" in Giorgi's analysis, "into a collective belonging that relies on past sufferings" to "transcend individual memories." (Boym, 2001: 15). Its centrality to Portugal's own national mythologies has not, for example, prevented an annual public holiday in its honour in Brazil every January. (Dekker et al., 2000: 267- 287; Dias, Jarek, and Debona: 2016: 7-18).

Untranslatable Co-Ownership is therefore premised not only on the idea of untranslatability, but conjoined with it, the idea of language as a property in need of ownership. Despite the colonial contexts through which it originally circulated, the word *saudade* has nonetheless come to assume a singular status of Untranslatable Co-Ownership. As conveyed over the course of this article, understanding *saudade* means taking stock of not only its untranslatable dimension but also the more neglected notion of linguistic ownership.

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