
ABSENCE AND LONGING IN THE CONTEXT OF LOVE AND THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF *SAUDADE* AND *ČEŽNJA* IN PORTUGUESE AND SERBIAN CULTURE

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to contemplate and compare the concepts absence and longing (*saudade*) and its Serbian linguistic equivalent *čežnja* in the two respective cultures, focusing the meaning of these two concepts first in the folk oral love poetry. In a further analysis, this work focuses the deeper and a more philosophical interpretation of the specific idea of longing in the culture of these two European peoples and in their way of thinking, living and expression of emotions. The motifs for absence in a love song are different: geographical distance, going to a war (sea navigation), long and tiring work, away from the beloved one, the interference of parents or third parts in a relationship, disaffection, inconstant feelings. Therefore, the complex feeling of longing (*saudade*, *čežnja*) can be experienced and understood in different ways: as a test of love, a beginning of doubt, a detection of problems, a strong emotion of pain, missing, suffering, proof of love, loyalty and fidelity. It will also be seen how the feeling of longing, observed from social, psychological or religious perspectives modeled the character and spirituality of the Portuguese and the Serbs.

Keywords: absence, longing (*saudade*, *čežnja*), folk songs, love poetry, Portuguese and Serbian culture.

1.- Introduction.

*Absence has one daughter
Whose name is longing (Saudade)
Leite de Vasconcellos (1975:110)¹*

This article is a result of a modified chapter of my PhD thesis, entitled *Motifs of Beauty and Love in Portuguese and Serbian Folk Lyric Poetry*², defended at the University of Lisbon in 2014. I studied longing as a manifestation of the feeling of love. Then, it became evident that the idea of longing in Portuguese culture is so present and deeply impressed in their collective unconscious that it has been studied from the most diversified points of view: literary, philosophical, psychological, social, religious among others. Naturally, in Portugal there is a lot of bibliography on this topic. For this study I used works of the following authors: Botelho (1996, 1997), Lourenço (1999) *Noronha* (2007), Tavares Rodrigues (*in*: Cristóvão et.al., 2005). In Serbian culture, the concept of *čežnja* seems not to deserve so much scientific attention, therefore I used some studies on psychology or characterology such as Dvorniković (1925), Jerotić (2006) or Marić (1996). Regarding folk poetry, for my *corpus* I studied approximately one hundred poems in each language. For the Portuguese part I consulted the anthologies edited by Teófilo Braga (1911) and José Leite de Vasconcellos (1976), whereas for the Serbian part I used works by Nada Milošević-Đorđević (2006) and Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (2006). I also used a scholarly anthology, edited by Lasko Blašković (2007), because there can be found some representative examples of Serbian folk poetry.

The concept of *saudade* is one of the reasons of this of Portuguese national pride. Their linguists frequently highlight the impossibility of translation of this word into any other language as a particular characteristic of the Portuguese national being. Disagreeing with this affirmation, I propose the translation of the term *saudade* into Serbian as *čežnja*, its absolute linguistic equivalent, perfectly applicable to folk love poetry, although not so studied and researched and perhaps not so visibly impregnated in Serbian culture. Portuguese term *saudade* can be translated into Romanian as *dor*,³ into Galician as *morriña*, *señardade* or *soidade*⁴ and into Russian as *молка*⁵. The beliefs regarding the untranslatability of certain

¹ All the translations of poems and citations are mine.

² Marinović, Anamarija (2014) *Motivos de Beleza e Amor no Cancioneiro Popular Português e Sérvio*, in: repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/11641/1/ulsd068744_td_Anamarija_Marinovic.pdf

³ <https://ro.glosbe.com/pt/ro/saudade>

⁴ <https://pt.glosbe.com/pt/gl/saudade>

⁵ <https://pt.glosbe.com/pt/ru/saudade>

words are not typically Portuguese. As an example, I will quote an apparent "impossibility of translation" of the word *inat* (defiance), referred by some people as one of the most important Serbian national characteristics. Nevertheless, in intellectual circles, this hypothesis has no scientific value, not only because of being a Turkish word. Milan Vujaklija (1980:335) highlights the Turkish *inat* or Arabic *inad*, translating it as "defiance, stubbornness, persistence in opposition". Besides, the Serbian language has its own word *prkos*, synonym of *inat*, perfectly translatable into Spanish as *despecho*, into Portuguese as *despeito* into English as *defiance*. Linguistically, this word is unacceptable as typically Serbian, and in psychology it can be even less acceptable. Bojan Jovanović in his article about *prkos* e *inat*, (the two words are equivalents of "defiance"), points out the first feeling as an (op.cit. 116) "opposition in order to achieve a goal", whereas *inat* would be "and opposition because of the opposition itself". Therefore, *prkos* would be a positive, rational and constructive reaction, whilst *inat* is merely negative, destructive and self-destructive. An authoritarian imposition of one's will, without thinking of consequences. In this author's opinion, *inat* cannot be a typically Serbian characteristic. Milorad Ekmečić (2000:288) defends a similar position emphasising that "if defects are considered a part of the national character, then *inat* is also a national characteristics". Both authors agree with the idea that *inat* is a defect and that it cannot be found solely among the Serbs. In my opinion, there are no "untranslatable" or "inexplicable" words, regardless their peculiarities within one culture. "Untranslatables", perhaps, can be only the cultural interpretations of a concept or the subjective appropriations that one people can give to a term in their language.

Further on, we will deepen the analysis of these two very similar concepts that can represent a bridge between the Portuguese and Serbian cultures, with few historical and geographical contacts. However, the two peoples have many elements in common: they share the Indo-European and Christian cultural heritage (with the regards to its Catholic variant in Portugal and Orthodox in Serbia), and the patriarchate as social model, they both witnessed and felt a long Islamic occupation (Arabic in Portugal and Turkish in Serbia), and all these components certainly influenced and modeled the character and the national being of these two nations, including the conceptualisation and interpretation of the feeling of longing (*saudade*, *čežnja*).

2.- A poetic analysis of absence as a source of longing (*saudade*, *čežnja*).

Absence is a very frequent motif in oral and artistic poetry and not only in Portuguese and Serbian culture. As reasons of absence the folk songbooks cite: the geographical distance, the impossibility of a regular communication, going to war, sea navigations, work in the case of men, or a bigger control or stricter conduct control in case of girls. The reference to the geographic distance can be explicit, in the name of the other city, or, it can be subjective ("far away" or "far away from me".) The beloved one can be "behind three green forests", or "behind three cold waters", pointing out the possible inaccessibility of love or the coldness of feelings of the absent person. Absence can be faced as a difficult task for love, metaphorically visualised as wind and fire. If love is weak, untruthful, unfaithful or inconstant, the "wind" of absence will extinguish it. On the other hand, if love is sincere and strong, that love will be reinforced in spite of the distance and longing.

In Portuguese poetry, absence is seen as strictly connected to the feeling of longing, and it will be shown in the following lines (Leite de Vasconcellos, 1975:110): "Absence has one daughter/Whose name is Longing (*Saudade*)/I sustain the mother and the daughter/Very much against my will". The feelings in the poem are personified and the lyric subject is obliged to live with them against their own will, without being able to control or diminish them. In another variant of the same poem, instead of the verb "to sustain" is cited "to endure" or "to bear". These verbs can be good indicators of the gender of the lyric subject. While in the first situation, a reader can imagine a man, who is traditionally seen as the one who sustains the family (in this case the "mother" and the "daughter", absence and longing (*Saudade*), in the second variant, the reader is more likely to believe that the lyric subject is a woman, who is educated and brought up to support, to be passive and patient, to suffer. In the words of the father Artemije Vladimirov (2005), a woman is more prepared to surrender to suffering, whereas a man is more ready to face it and to fight against it. The author does not explain on what argument he based this affirmation, quite stereotyped regarding the role of genders, but one can suppose that this idea comes from the Bible (Ephesians, 5:23), where is written "the husband is the head of the wife" or from other visions rooted in Christian patriarchal society.

As an illustration of feelings (of negative connotation) generated by absence can serve the beginning of the poem "Alphabet of Love" (Braga, 1911:85). "The A letter means the absence/that I feel because of your love /I undergo cruel torments/And I feel a great pain//". What can be seen here is a series of unpleasant

and strong emotions of destructive character caused by the absence of the beloved one. Very similar are the manifestations of longing (*saudade*) in Portuguese folk poetry (Braga, 1911:70). It is affirmed that: "If longing (*as saudades*) killed/Many people would die/". Neither of the feelings is pacific with the couple in love: they increase their suffering, they sharpen their pain, and they are comparable with death and can be listed as one of the symptoms of the "illness of love" as it was called in the Middle Ages. The only "medication" against the deepness of pain and the emotional instability in poetry seems to be the return of the beloved person, as a chance to renew and strengthen the relationship.

To diminish the distance, those who love write and send letters, full of hope, emotions, sometimes fear or worry, expecting to hear back and find out the beloved one's affection and daily life. The following poem (Braga, 1911:43): "Go, you happy letter, fly/On the wings of a little bird/Go and give to my love/ One embrace and one little kiss.//'" shows all the expectations and positive feelings that the lyric subject (probably a girl) sends to her dear one, wanting to make him feel her joy. The letter is "happy" because it can be close to the beloved one, offering him all the manifestations of tenderness and togetherness that the girl in love, being geographically distant, cannot give him.

In Serbian folk poems, absence is a frequent topic as well. It is equally difficult to endure, generating the same feelings of loneliness, pain, torment, suffer. While Portuguese folk poetry frequently offers a theoretical approach to absence as a "definition" introduced with the sentence "Absence is..." Serbian poems tend to describe a concrete case of absence and longing. In Serbian oral poetry, the couples, temporarily separated, suffer the effects of the distance on their own skin, being alone, generally during the night. Occasionally, a rose, a river, a bird, a fish or other natural elements are their listeners, counselors, and collocutors. In many other poems, plants, animals or even objects are the protagonists, experiencing the same feelings. In Serbian folk songs, it does not seem strange to see a deer in love, a sad falcon, courting a girl who burnt his forest down, two flowers who write letters to each other. All the images are so strong, giving the possibility to every creature with no exemption to love and be loved, to suffer and long because of somebody's absence. When absence becomes unbearable, the amorous couples pray to God, asking Him to help them or to solve their problems. In these situations, God shows a lot of understanding, hears the prayers, gives the solution. For that effect, all: dreams, imaginations, or concrete objects are helpful and useful.

Nevertheless, absence not always must be painful and sad. Blašković (2007:9) refers to a following situation: "Sometimes also happens the "unexpected joy"". Dreams and reality intertwine in such a beautiful way, when someone hears

his beloved woman singing his songs and dancing in a circle and calling him to reality or to dream with the force of her love and then she awakes with flowers in her hair and with a ring on her hand. The case retold by Blašković retells is the poem entitled "The unexpected joy", from his anthology, where the amorous young man decides to come unexpectedly and visit his beloved girl, to give her a surprise. In the beginning of the poem, the lyric subject is not able to fall asleep during the "so long night, this night". In order to entertain himself and to worry less, he listens to songs and watches her dancing, discovering that his beloved was faithful to him in his absence. The girl sings only the songs he likes and where his name is mentioned, generating an immense joy in him. His happiness is even bigger when he sees her sleeping alone, with a stone under her head (the image intensifies the hardness of not being together). Confirming the fidelity and love of his darling, he "kisses her once and once again". His kiss and presents wake her up, and she is admired, because she thought that her dear man was far away.

In one sad confession, a confidential conversation between a girl and a rose (Blašković, 2007:39) is evident her suffering, caused by multiple absences: of her deceased mother, of her married sister, of her brother who participates in a war and of her beloved man, to whom she dedicates most lines in the poem, regretting not being able to give him the flower: "Far away from me is my beloved/Behind three green forests/ behind three cold waters". The distance is emphasised three times, first with the word "far away". In the next lines, in the poems are mentioned three forests, inaccessible places and three cold waters, underlining only the coldness in the heart.

Absence can also generate "the biggest sadness", a homonymous poem (Karadžić, 2006:108). A temporary distance due to the difficulty to cross the bridge is mitigated in a reencounter and the togetherness is celebrated with a kiss as "the biggest sweetness".

When the beloved man does not appear at a determined hour, the amorous woman thinks of possible justifications (a headache, an illness of his horse or his mother's disapproval of their encounter), being the first two more acceptable and less serious. If the young man's mother is the main responsible for his absence, the girl in love feels indignation and utters a very strong curse (Milošević-Đorđević, 2006:162-3): "If his horse went ill/I wish his horse to stay well/If he had a headache/I wish his head stops aching/If his mother did not allow him to come/I wish his mother to not see the Paradise//".

Letters can also be testimonies of absence and longing, and the most flagrant examples of it are recorded in the love correspondence between Ali-pasha and the beautiful Mara (Milošević-Đorđević, 2006:174), the letters exchanged

between a blue hyacinth and his bellowed yellow narcissus, (in the poem "Love break") or between the amorous couple, separated by the Turkish pasha, who closed the roads. These letters are usually sad and full of worry and concern, and when they are not responded, it may happen that the part who suffers more and is more affected addresses their question to God, as in the poem "Concern of the heart": "Oh, my God, full of compassion,/where is my beloved one?/". In situations like this, if there is no answer from the skies, it just accentuates the loneliness of who loves, and the sharpness of the absence and longing. Occasionally, the young men and girls pray to God to give them the possibility to see what the other part of the couple does, feels or thinks. Seeing their good intentions, God is merciful and friendly, listens and grants their prayers and makes possible for girls to climb trees or mountains or build roads (which are typically male tasks). For men, it does not seem to be shameful to sing like a swallow, to cry like a widow or to transform themselves in "a pearl beside the sea" (typically female activities or objects) in order to mitigate the absence and longing and to see and hear their beloved girls.

In Portuguese and Serbian folk poetry, absence is certainly a very strong source of longing, and it can have an ambivalent meaning: a denial or a confirmation of love: It is accompanied by negative feelings of pain, suffer, torment, worry, loneliness, jealousy, or it can have a positive connotation, expressed in the feelings of hope, togetherness, wish of reencounter, concern, tenderness. In both cases, that longing (be it the Portuguese *saudade* or the Serbian *čežnja*) is a strong and deep feeling, complex to explain, describe or understand.

3.- Discussion of *saudade* in Portuguese culture: etymology, definitions, translatability.

After an overview of absence and longing in Portuguese and Serbian folk poetry, I will now focus the problematic of *saudade* in Portuguese collective unconscious and I will analyse how more reputable authors, such as Teixeira de Pascoaes (1988) or more recent ones, like Eduardo Lourenço (1999) and Maria Teresa de Noronha (2007). I will verify the possibility of parallelisms between this concept and the idea of *čežnja* in Serbian culture. The first aspect frequently referred in Portuguese sources is the impossibility of translation of this term into any other language. Portuguese philosopher and essayist Eduardo Lourenço uses every opportunity he has to emphasise this and even when he writes in French, he leaves the word *saudade* in the original form and in italics. Pointing out the singularity of this word, different Portuguese dictionaries are not completely consentaneous regarding its

etymology. Either is underlined its Latin origin, or it is mentioned its obscure origin. Many Portuguese dictionaries not even cite the origin of this word.

João Malaca Casteleiro, the coordinator of one of the most referent dictionaries of the Portuguese language (2001:3349) defines this word in the following way: "*Saudade* (from Latin *solitas-atis*) 1. Remembrance of something that was pleasant, but that is distant in time and space". As other close meanings, the author quotes "melancholy" and "nostalgia". The second meaning distinguished by the author is referred the "feeling of sadness because of somebody's death or because of the loss of an object to which one was affectively connected". As an approximate synonym is cited "sorrow", and the third meaning quoted in this dictionary, a reader can find "greetings". In Portuguese everyday communication there is an expression *mandar saudades* to somebody meaning "to send greetings". If one concentrates on the semantics of the expression, it could literally mean "to send our longing" to somebody, or to express that one person really and deeply longs for somebody. It is curious that Malaca Casteleiro cites the Latin word *solitas* (solitude) as the root of the word *saudade*. Apart from the similarities in the sound of these two terms, it is probable that this linguist chose exactly the Latin word, because the feeling of longing is the strongest and the most visible when a person is alone or lonely. In poetry, *saudade* is "purple", "black", "a cruel evil", emphasizing even more solitude and loneliness. It is also interesting that José Pedro Machado (1956) not even mentions this word in his etymological dictionary, which can only be one more indicator of its obscure origin.

German researcher Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos (1996) also stands for the opinion that the word *saudade* in Portuguese is derived from the Latin word *solitas*, referring the whole process of its formation, being one of phonetic alterations the fall of the "l" between vowels. This author mentions the possible etymology from *sólitus* to *saudade*. Nevertheless, I think it is wrong to affirm that the diphthong /oi/ was transformed /au/ to give the result *saudade*. I support my opinion on Ralph Penny (2004), according to whom, the diphthong /au/ from vulgar Latin was transformed into /o/ in Spanish or into /ou/ in Portuguese and not into /oi/. Michaëlis de Vasconcelos also found some etymological similarities between the noun *saudade* and the verb *saudar* (to greet), which can have some semantic logic. In spite of this researcher's findings that the old writing of the word *saudade* was actually *saúdade*, which can be narrowly connected to the noun *saúde* (health). From my point of view, the mere phonetic similarity is not a sufficient argument for establishing any relation between the etymologies of these two words. In Portuguese poems, this feeling is frequently related to sadness, grief, sorrow or a painful absence, and none of these associations has any "healthy"

connotation. Michaëlis de Vasconcelos (1996:45) explained that the feeling of *saudade* is characterised by isolation, absence, lack, sorrow, shortage, helplessness, sadness, melancholy, compassion of soul the pain of absence, nostalgia and even more the "will to possess what one will never possess". From this series of qualifications of negative connotation, it is not very likely to establish any relation between *saudade* and health.

In her opinion, Portuguese *saudade* is also a remembrance of having enjoyed, in the past times, the object of wanting, in remote times that do not return anymore.

In the present, *saudade* causes sorrow and suffering because of not being able to enjoy nowadays the same object. As a specific characteristic of this feeling, in literature and in the Portuguese collective unconscious, the author refers the hope in the future,, in which one will return to the "good old times" of happiness. In this sense, it could be spoken of an almost religious dimension of the feeling of longing and of its function to redeem the soul. Only after this reading a "healthy" side of the concept of *saudade* could be understood. To this complex feeling are also attributed (Vasconcelos, 1996:35) "tender, mild, submissive, resigned characteristics of Portuguese passion". Here, the researcher already seems to appropriate herself of the term, applying it to the Portuguese culture and highlighting its particular character among other cultures and literatures. From my point of view, *saudade* can be associated with a specific Portuguese *modus amandi*: passionate, passive, deep, however, slightly fatalist, resigned, with certain propensity for pain, with which it is quite similar to the Slavic, and particularly mode of loving⁶.

Despite highlighting several times the specificity of *saudade*, the German researcher, who considers herself a "Portuguese by adoption" seems to be very reserved regarding the untranslatability of this term into any other language. Therefore, she affirms: "The idea that the other nations ignore this feeling is inaccurate The affirmation that the (...) mere word *Saudade*, a rebel noun that sound so tender on Lusitanian lips is not known by the foreign Barbarians (foreigner and barbarian are synonyms) and that it does not have an equivalent in any language on the terrestrial globe and that it is distinguished solely in the Atlantic strip and that it does not exist even in Galicia and on the other riverside of the Minho is illusory".

She refers the existence of an equivalent of *saudade* in German culture, although not so studied and present in literature and philosophy

⁶ See the chapter about Portuguese and Slavic Soul in: Marinović (2014).

4.- Theoretical and philosophical aspects of *saudade* in Portuguese culture

Having analysed the linguistic approach to the term *saudade*, I will now focus its cultural dimension. Urbano Tavares Rodrigues in the Thematic Dictionary of Lusophony (in: Cristóvão, 896-97) reflects upon the characteristics that distinguish *saudade* from similar feelings (sadness, absence, sorrow): "Definition of Portuguese sensibility, of the want that (still) does not exist. Absence, lack, nostalgia are components of this complex feeling, that in our literature wanders from the *cantigas de amigo*⁷- *saudade* of the beloved one who went to the military service with weapon or sorrow above the sea waves –because of the loss of the elected woman (...)". In this approach glimpse the main characteristics and the most obvious ones of this feeling: absence and lack (as well as the unrest generated by both). Its complexity was probably used for political purposes in the construction of the "Portuguese national character" or "the Lusitanian soul" as it was defined by Afonso Botelho, Teixeira de Pascoaes among others. Portuguese *saudade* is associated with love, sea, ideal woman and the basic goods (bread and wine). With all these characteristics, *saudade* is vindicated as the essential and substantial trace of the Portuguese national being. The feeling of *saudade* almost always subtends an overview of the past and the sadness because of the "good old times/people/places/feelings" that cannot be enjoyed in the same way as in the past. For Afonso Botelho (1997:27) the Portuguese *saudade* is a "longing for what I lived and had and for what I never lived and had". This author frequently understands *saudade* as a mixture of pain and remembrance or want and remembrance, two principles always in conflict. The want is a force that moves the being, and even without being fulfilled, whereas the remembrance is present in the pain because of what is lost. *Saudade* is always associated with love and death. These two motifs are interlaced in the pain of not being able to possess or to be close to what is wanted. This researcher (1996:34) considers that "when a wish burns out what remains is the candle of memory". Memories, the return to the past, to the origins, the remembrance seem to constitute an important pillar in the Portuguese literature and culture. After a brief overview of the philosophical and spiritual dimension of Portuguese *saudade*, it turns obvious that it is a deep and painful feeling of longing, perfectly adequate for lyric love poetry.

⁷Medieval troubadour love songs where is described the longing and sadness for the beloved man who is far away.

5.- Longing in Serbian culture: *čežnja*.

During its history, the Serbian people seems to always yearn for the return of the old "golden epochs". It is very similar to the Portuguese people due to the deep pain because of not accomplishing it and due to the sincere love with which they talk about what is already achievable. The Slavs also seem to have a specific mode of suffering, probably developed during the long and hard Islamic occupation of their territories. To this particular feeling of longing, The Serbs give the name of *čežnja*, whose etymology will be analysed later. It seemed curious to me that Serbian lexicographers Milan Vujaklija (op.cit) and Radomir Jovanović (2007) in their dictionaries at no moment mention the word *čežnja* or its etymological origin. I cannot suppose the reason: if it is because this concept currently is not so relevant in Serbian culture, or because this word is not considered a foreign word or even because there are very few data concerning its origin.

It was also highlighted as a characteristic of national being or character in the end of 19th, beginning of the 20th century. Vladimir Dvorniković (1925) defines the "Yugoslav character" as essentially melancholic or sedimentary, due to the Greek etymology of melancholy that means "sediment". This author speaks of "Yugoslav" character rather than "Serbian", because in his time, it was important to distinguish the common characteristics of Slavic and particularly Southern Slavs, as a part of political discourse of the creation of Yugoslavia.

Regarding the linguistic equivalent of *saudade* in the Serbian language, Joana Câmara and Mladen Ćirić (2008:234) determine this lexical entry as: "Feeling of spiritual pain generated by the absence of the beloved person, a place, an object, an event. In Portuguese-speaking countries it is considered that this word is typical only for Portuguese, depending on the context, we can translate it as *čežnja* (the exact equivalent, my note), gloominess, sadness, nostalgia, craving" (my translation). When defining the word *čežnja*, the authors (2006:311) translate it as "craving", "strong desire" and *saudade*. It is interesting to highlight that instead of a verbal construction *ter saudades*, the Serbian language has the verb *čežnuti* (to long for something) that enriches the vocabulary and perhaps reveals the importance of *čežnja* in Serbian culture. According to Branislava Božinović (2000:48), the noun *čežnja* (longing) and the verb *čežnuti* (to long) come from Sanskrit *chand* or *chandajati*, word that initially meant "to enjoy something or to be liked by someone, to please someone with something, to try to seduce somebody, to deceive somebody". As a noun, this word had the following meanings "desire", "longing", "intention", "purpose". Analysing this word in depth, one can see positive connotations of the Sanskrit term. Supposing that the etymology is

correctly derived from its old root, *čeznuti* would have as the main purpose to call the attention of the beloved person, to be pleasant, to produce pleasure. Only the meaning of "to deceive" introduces illusion or inconstancy, being from them derived the beginning of sadness and love delusion, strictly connected with the verb "to long for". As a noun, *čežnja* as it was understood in Sanskrit implies an emotional component (desire, craving, longing, nostalgia) and one voluntary side, expressed in "intention" and "purpose". Now the question is if *čežnja* is a controlled feeling that depends on the force of will. And if the rational and the irrational elements interlace in this phenomenon. In the attempt to translate the Sanskrit term into Serbian, one finds one distinctive element between the Serbian *čežnja* and the Portuguese *saudade*: the voluntary character of the first feeling. This multifaceted concept that, according to its Indo-European etymology, can vary from pleasure to deceiving or from desire to longing, when applied to love, can obtain an even more complex dimension: of joy, effort, the wish to impress the beloved woman, becoming slightly close to the Portuguese *saudade*. Initially, *čežnja* was perhaps an active principle, so different from the lyric and melancholic Portuguese *saudade*. As languages change, the word *saudade* also may have suffered numerous alterations in time. Thus, Davor Petrović (2012) attributes sad and painful characteristics of *čežnja* to one specific type of song (accompanied by music and speaking about love, that appeared in Bosnia, during the Turkish occupation), due to the long and difficult Islamic presence in the Balkans. This kind of song is named *sevdalinka*, and this denomination is derived from the Arabic and Turkish word *sawda* (black gall) or Turkish *sevda* (longing, yearn). Milan Vujaklija (op.cit, 828), by defining the Word *sevdah*, from which the name of the song is derived, explains its meaning as "Arabic *sāwdā* (black gall, Turkish *sevda*) love, love longing, passion". The etymology that highlights the importance of the black gall in the appearance of this feeling seems to be clear. Radomir Jovanović (op.cit. 1511) defines *sevdah* with exactly the same words, what can indicate the vision of *sevdah* (*čežnja*) as inseparable from the universe of love. The poetic interpretations attribute to this feeling certain pain, bitterness, passion and "gall" of uncertainty.

The old Greek and oriental doctors and physicians considered it one of the four essential substances in human organism. If this fluid was predominant in the blood, a person was melancholic, sad, depressed, pessimistic and very passive. Even though this theory is nowadays considered out-dated, one cannot discard it completely. When the "black gall" is applied to love, it is about a confuse emotion, a complex of reactions, feelings, impulses, propensities and ideas that better structure the complexity of the feeling of love. If love is not corresponded, if it is countered or impossible, that produces pain, affliction, misunderstanding and

powerlessness of an individual before the force of their feelings. In a patriarchal environment, where the private sphere was constantly controlled, the constraint of the people to express their cravings, desires, fears, dreams, joys and expectations, the feeling of longing (*čežnja*) flourished in poetic forms. In Serbian culture, longing frequently subtends a feeling of an inner unrest and amorous anxiety. When expressed in a song, the pain, sadness and longing (*čežnja*) are simultaneously relieved and intensified. In Southern Serbia, in folk poem and songs, as well as in the works of erudite writers there is a peculiar kind of *čežnja*, known as *žal za mladost* (mourn for youth), characterised by sighs, deep pain and lamentation because of the transitory character of the earthly goods (life, beauty, youth, uncontrolled passions, voluptuousness). In these poems or writings it is spoken from the present about the past and the memories of that past are similar to ashes and the pain and nostalgia cover the beautiful times, rapidly substituted by the routine of a life imposed by an authority or a supreme uncontrollable force. An individual has the full conscience of his insignificance now. Although this concept probably is not rooted in the Middle Ages, it can be useful for a better understanding of *čežnja* in Serbian culture.

When some Portuguese authors refer *saudade* also in the context of future, hope and expectations, it is necessary to highlight that Vladeta Jerotić (2006) also mentions that in the suffering of the Orthodox Christians is hidden the "joyful sadness of the Orthodox" (*radosna tuga pravoslavnih*). Hope, after proofs and temptations, pain and melancholy serve as a consolation with faith in a better future. When this idea is applied to *čežnja*, a more Christian sense and easier to bear is attributed to it. As an excessive fixation on the past can prevent a person from overcoming the pain, the nostalgia for the good old times with a look to the future can mitigate the anguish and give hope and returns the human being some of the primitive Sanskrit meanings of the word *čežnja*. If Jovan Marić (1998) affirms that melancholy and particularly fatalism are reflexes of Islam, it seems pertinent to mention, that in Serbian language (in the area of Bosnia, where the Muslim influence was even more visible) instead of *čežnja*, it is used the Turkish word *sevdah* present in songs. It is possible to make parallelisms between *sevdah* and *saudade*, having on mind the long and deep Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula. In my point of view, this is more probable to explain the etymology and the meaning of *saudade* than the Latin word *solitas*.

6.- *Saudade/čežnja* in Portuguese and Serbian love poetry.

Regarding the concepts of love and longing, Maria Teresa Noronha (2007) refers that, even when it was not a part of the current vocabulary, the word *saudade* always conferred to the feeling of love a particular lyric expression, characteristic for love songs written by the kings Alonso X and D, Dinis, the king-troubadour. Serbian scholars defend that *čežnja* as a typical expression of Slavic melancholy. It is interesting to say that, even when it is clear that the feeling expressed in the poetry is longing, almost never is used the word *čežnja*, but always is chosen a synonym *jad* (sorrow), *tuga* (sadness) and others, not because of the lack of vocabulary, but precisely because of the wide range of synonyms and images that represent this feeling. The verbs *kopniti* (to melt) and *venuti* (to wither) are also used to emphasise the feeling of sadness, being unfulfilled, longing and sorrow. Two flowers, separated by the geographical distance wish to have a paper as big as the sky, the quantity of ink that could fit in the sea to be able to describe their sorrow and longing, an amorous couple separated by the war equals their *čežnja* with the suffering of their country occupied by the Turkish enemy, and the most dramatic example is the *čežnja* that Ali-Pasha and the beautiful Mara (unable to be together due to their cultural and religious differences) feel and that is so tragic that she would like to poison herself than to see her beloved man to marry another woman.

In Portuguese poetry, longing (*saudade*) is associated with tears, and particularly in the expression *chorar saudades* (literally meaning “to cry longings”), with the death of the beloved one, with the waves of the sea, with night landscapes, drying flowers, but also with hope in the future and the new love, as the peculiar *saudade do futuro* (longing for the future).

7.- Conclusions.

Starting from the idea of the untranslatability of the concept of *saudade*, deeply rooted in Portuguese culture, I conducted a comparative study focusing on similarities and differences between it and the Serbian concept *čežnja*, its linguistic equivalent, at least in traditional love poetry, both of which to be translated by “longing” in English. Analysing the etymological, linguistic, philosophical and psychological aspects of the two terms, I came to the conclusion that both feelings are connected to absence, lack, pain, tears, love passion, only that the Portuguese *saudade* has a more melancholic and fatalistic trait, while Serbian *čežnja* also seems to have a voluntary and impulsive side, possibly more typical of the Serbian people.

In disagreement with the possible Latin etymology of the word *saudade*, I propose as more credible the Arabic etymology *Sawda* (black gall), which would explain well the painful and fatalistic character of this feeling. The same would be said of *sevdah*, a Turkish word, in Serbian synonymous with *čežnja*, which presupposes almost the same melancholy love, the same feeling of anguish and longing for the remoteness of love and the impossibility of achieving it. This affirmation of mine is due to the Islamic presence in the Balkan and Iberian peninsulas, which certainly influenced the mentality and culture of Portuguese and Serbs. Although the Portuguese acclaim *saudade* as a characteristic of the national being, many psychologists see in *čežnja* a feature of the temperament of the Slavs in general, as well as of the Serbs. I discussed the untranslatability of the word *saudade*, arriving at the conclusion that we could treat more of a national myth than of a linguistic truth. The concept of *saudade* is more studied and important in Portuguese culture than that of *čežnja* in the Serbian world, however, the two phenomena profoundly marked the way of being, thinking, expressing feelings, as seen well in folk poetry.

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