

Introduction

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This special issue of *Gávea-Brown* constitutes a belated tribute to Professor Alberto Machado da Rosa, whom I met in the fall of 1969, who was responsible for my decision to specialize in Portuguese, and who became my professor at the University of California, Los Angeles from 1970 to 1974, the year of his premature death at age fifty. I will provide a brief account of our meeting while I was still a student at Los Angeles Valley College, which I began attending in February of 1967. I had already been at this junior college for about three years when Mr. Zentz, one of my instructors of Spanish, who knew I was an immigrant from Terceira, Azores, casually mentioned to me that he had recently attended a lecture at UCLA by Professor Alberto Machado da Rosa who, incidentally, was also an Azorean. “In fact,” added Mr. Zentz, “from Terceira, if memory serves.” Not knowing at the time that Portuguese was even taught at any school in America, let alone at a prestigious university like UCLA, located so close to the San Fernando Valley where I lived, instilled in me the desire to meet this singular man. Did Mr. Zentz have his phone number? He did not, but he could get it for me. So, I had to admit to myself, there were Portuguese people in California, including from Terceira, who did things other than milk cows. To my knowledge up to then, all the Portuguese in California lived either in the San Francisco Bay Area and worked in small farms or factories, the San Joaquin Valley where they owned ranches and small dairies where I had milked cows for three years, or in the San Diego and San Pedro areas where most were fishermen.

The very day I was given his number, I called Dr. Machado, as all his students, I would discover, referred to and addressed him. “I am from Terceira, Professor Machado. I am studying at Los Angeles Valley College. I was told by an instructor of mine who knows you that you are a professor of Portuguese at UCLA and that you, too, are from Terceira.” If it were possible to hold someone at the other end of a phone line, Dr. Machado would have held me in that phone booth for hours. Yes, he was from Terceira and so was his wife, Aldegice. And who was my family? Had I attended *licen* in Terceira, or high school here in America? “I never attended high school, Dr. Machado, here or there.” How had I ended up at Valley College? To what four-year college or university was I going to transfer? Had I already chosen a major? What about coming to dinner at his house this evening to meet his family, including two of his three children who were also attending (or would attend?) UCLA, George and Patrícia? Alberto, his oldest child, no longer lived at home. Never having known anyone so apparently eager to meet me, but not being able to visit Dr. Machado and his family that evening, I nevertheless promised that I would go see him at his office and gladly accepted his invitation for dinner.

My meeting with Dr. Machado and D. Aldegice (their children were not home that evening and, as it turned out, I would never get to meet them in person) was memorable. We went over some of the same topics we had already touched upon in our phone conversation. I tried to answer all of his questions, and he mine. My family are known as Melrinhos, the Little Birds, on account of our small stature. He and his wife’s family were from Angra. One of his grandfathers was a *cantador*, or song improviser. He was known as *o Pêssego*, the Peach. Had I ever heard of him? I vaguely recalled my

maternal grandfather referring to *o Pêssego* and being able to recite quatrains improvised by him. Dr. Machado had received his *licenciatura* at the University of Coimbra, migrated to the United States partly on account of the fascist regime, taught at the University of Wisconsin as a lecturer, went on to earn his PhD degree there, and afterward taught at that institution before transferring to UCLA. I shared with Dr. Machado and Dona Aldegice my immigrant story, now fairly well-known by those who have read my autobiography, *Hard Knocks: An Azorean American Odyssey* (Gávea-Brown, 2000). And no, I still had not chosen a major but was sure that I would concentrate on languages—Spanish and or/German, both of which I had been studying for two years and that, of course, I had never thought of Portuguese as a field of study because I didn't know that anyone wanted to study our language in America.

Dr. Machado and D. Aldegice then painted a broad picture of Portuguese studies in America: it was not yet what we would like it to be but was also far from being non-existent. And, by the way, would I now *really consider* studying Portuguese? And I was advised by my gracious and enthusiastic hosts about the advantages of concentrating in Portuguese and Spanish, instead of only Spanish or German, not only because Portuguese was my language and culture but because, as I prepared to teach languages and literatures at the college level, I also had somewhat of a moral obligation to consider our language and culture. If we Portuguese don't try to preserve and promote our culture, who will?

Before that delightful evening was over and I said my goodbyes to Dr. Machado and Dona Aldegice, who had served a delicious *bacalhan à Gomes de Sá* for dinner and Azorean pastries for dessert (*queijadas da Dona Amélia*, a Terceiran pastry), Dr. Machado had already concluded that I would attend UCLA, that I would do a double major in Spanish and Portuguese, and that I would then go on to do an M.A. degree in Luso-Brazilian Studies and a Ph. D. in Hispanic Languages and Literatures—degrees which I, indeed, completed exactly the way Dr. Machado predicted, the doctorate in 1976. The only thing we did not decide that fateful evening about my professional future was the topic of my dissertation and where I would initiate my career as an assistant professor of Portuguese.

As luck would have it, I ended up teaching at the University of Massachusetts Amherst from the fall of 1976 to the spring of 2017, the official year of my retirement. When my friend Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, founder and main-editor of *Gávea-Brown*, raised the idea of an issue in tribute to Alberto Machado da Rosa, I could not but adhere to the idea—not only as a former student of Dr. Machado, but as a person to whom I owed the very choice of the profession that has immensely enriched my life. Time is unforgiving, though. Fifty-two years have elapsed since I first met Dr. Machado, and forty-seven have passed since Dr. Machado's passing. A number of my colleagues and contemporaneous students of Dr. Machado have also died or chosen other professions, and today it is impossible to locate them. Fortunately, however, a few former students, and colleagues who knew Dr. Machado or who became acquainted with his work decades after his death, are still very much with us. They agreed to participate in this tribute. The most dramatic cases—which bespeak loudly the degree of admiration that almost half a century after his death Dr. Machado still commands—are those of Joel R. Gómez and Elias J. Torres Feijó, co-editors of Alberto Machado da Rosa's *Rosalía de Castro, a mulher e o poeta* (Santiago de Compostela: Laiovento, 2005), Dr. Machado's until then unpublished doctoral dissertation presented at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1953. Gómez and Feijó collaborate in this issue of *Gávea-Brown* with a delightful essay on Machado da Rosa's contribution to the profoundly human, if controversial, nature of Rosalía de Castro's poetry, one of Spain's greatest poets of the 19th century and, according to Dr. Machado, the very greatest of them all. This essay mentions five unpublished poems by Dr. Machado, making it a total of half a dozen "Rosalian" poems written by my professor, one of which, "Ir e Voltar," was published by *Mester*, the graduate-student review at UCLA. (These five new poems are included in this issue.)

Throughout my career, I have heard praise for Dr. Machado's contribution to the scholarship on Eça de Queirós's works, not only with his famous book *Eça, Discípulo de Machado?* (published both in

Brazil and Portugal, in 1963 and 1964, respectively), the editorship of five volumes of *Eça de Queirós, Prosas Esquecidas*, as well as many other scholarly contributions. He also contributed with notable service to the profession, such as the foundation of the Luso-Brazilian Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the foundation, at the same institution, of the venerable *Luso-Brazilian Review*, the first review dedicated to Portuguese studies in the United States now celebrating its 60th year.

I am grateful to the colleagues and institutions who made possible this tribute to Alberto Machado da Rosa. First and foremost, I thank Onésimo Teotónio Almeida for the initiative. A special thanks to the Academic Senate of the University of California for permission to publish the obituary “Alberto Machado da Rosa,” signed by three friends and colleagues: José Rubia Barcia, Donald F. Foguelquist, and Eduardo Mayone Dias. My thanks also to Professor Machado da Rosa’s son, George Machado Rosa, Professor Emeritus of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Lafayette College, for his remembrance of a century-long odyssey that began in Angra; to my friends and colleagues Rosa Maria Neves Simas and Manuel da Costa Fontes, respectively professors emeriti at the University of the Azores and Kent State University. Both were fellow-students in Dr. Machado’s classes; to Ellen W. Sapega, Professor of Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a post once occupied by our tributee; Fernando Martinho, one of the great friends of the Machado da Rosa family since the latter started living in the Alentejo. They all graciously agreed to collaborate in this issue of *Gávea-Brown* with which we pay tribute to a beloved departed friend, teacher, and mentor.

I also thought it appropriate to include in this volume a text to honor the memory of Dr. José Moreira Figueiredo, who was preparing a doctoral dissertation on Portuguese immigrant autobiography in America when he died. He left us a dissertation prospectus and a bibliography that I deem still valuable to students of Portuguese immigrant and ethnic literature in the U.S. Finally, I collaborate with a paper, formerly presented in different versions at the Nantucket Whaling Museum and at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth on my translation to English of Vitorino Nemésio’s *Mau Tempo no Canal*, a contribution promised to *Gávea-Brown* before I became its co-editor. José Francisco Costa, an Emeritus Professor of Portuguese, Bristol Community College, and a major writer of Azorean and Portuguese-American diaspora literature, collaborates with an unpublished short story to this issue. Professor António Cirurgião, Emeritus Professor of Portuguese, University of Connecticut-Storrs, also agreed to publish in this issue his unpublished volume of poems, *Versos outoniços*.