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A Life Framed: Serafim Alves de Carvalho's *Emigrar... Emigrar: as contas do meu rosário*

(1986)

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Taking Paul Longley Arthur's concept of framing as an “act of enclosing by organising material into some kind of order”², this article will approach Carvalho's text *Emigrar... Emigrar: as contas do meu rosário* (1986) [*Emigrating... Emigrating: a Life Parceled Out in Pieces*] from four different perspectives and examine the different ways in which Carvalho's textual self is constructed in his account. To do so, the article will first frame its close reading of this text around how Carvalho's self is textually constructed; second, around how Carvalho's ghost-writer and editor, Rui de Castro, crafted Carvalho's self; third, around the effect of the interplay of the text and the photographs; and finally on how the aims of the publishing house have affected the production of Carvalho's textual self. As the article will conclude, Carvalho's text was shaped in a very specific way to illustrate the ideological qualities desired by the Portuguese government in the mid-1980s. In choosing to focus on the fourth analytical frame in particular, this article expands on current readings of how Carvalho's text contributed to the ethnic debate present in Portuguese American autobiographical texts.³

Before beginning a close reading of Carvalho's text along these four frames, it is useful to summarise the contents and composition of *Emigrar... Emigrar: as contas do meu rosário*. The

¹ I wish to thank Dr Eleanor Jones for her thorough proofreading and Debbie Madden for her keen eye for a good turn of phrase. All the translations provided are my own. I also wish to thank the blind reviewers for their very insightful comments, and Margarida Rendeiro for helping me find alternative sources to those suggested. Should there be any mistakes, they are entirely my fault.

² Paul Longley Arthur, “Out of Frame” *Auto/Biography Studies* 29.1 (2014), 1-9 (p. 2).

³ See, for instance, José I Suárez, “Four Luso-American Autobiographies: A Comparative View.” *MELUS* 17.3 (1992), pp. 17-32; Francisco Cota Fagundes, “Portuguese Immigrant Experience in America in Autobiography.” *Hispania* 88.4 (2005), pp. 701-712, and “La experiencia inmigrante de los portugueses en los Estados Unidos a través de sus autobiografías.” *Migraciones y exilios* 11 (2010), pp. 11-28; and Reinaldo Silva, “Her Story vs His Story: Narrating the Portuguese Diaspora in the United States of America.” in Francisco Cota Fagundes, Irene Maria Blayer, Teresa F. A. Alves, and Teresa Cid, eds. *Narrating the Portuguese Diaspora: Piecing Things Together* (New York: Peter Lang Inc. 2011), pp. 49-62 and “After Great Pain, a Formal Reappraisal of America Comes: Estrangement Upon Returning to the Ancestral Land in Four Portuguese-American Autobiographies.” *Gávea-Brown* vol. XXXIV-XXXV (2013), pp. 29-48.

second-eldest of an impoverished family of nine children, Carvalho was born in the Portuguese village of Arouca in 1898. At a very early age, he goes to work as a shepherd in a nearby village, and then continues to move from job to job. At age 17 or 18, in order to escape military conscription, he covertly crosses over the border to Spain, finding work in the Asturian mines. It is here that he attends school for the first time and learns to read, write and speak Spanish, also obtaining a false Spanish passport. In 1918, at the end of the First World War, he crosses over to France, and briefly to Belgium. In France, he works in a variety of jobs and obtains, via dubious means, first a French passport, and then a Portuguese passport. Having saved up the money needed to enter the United States, he secures a place working on board a ship. On the way, he goes to work at a Cardiff mine to see if life and conditions in Britain are better, but only stays for a day. He arrives in the United States in August 1920 and, after falling prey to a couple who steal all his possessions, he takes the train to his cousin's place of residence in Connecticut, where he works in a coin factory until the effects of the economic recession force him to leave the job a year later. He then finds work in coalmines: first, until 1926, in Kentucky, then in Pennsylvania, and finally in West Virginia. The declining economy of the late 1920s, and the concomitant collapse of the coal industry, force him to move to Newark to work as a road labourer. In 1926, he spends a brief period in Portugal in order to get married, but returns to the United States a few months later. On his return, he works first at the Ford factory, then moves to New York and becomes a salesman for a wine merchant; finally, in 1945, he opens up a shipping and wooden pallet manufacturing company, operating from the famous Wall Street in New York. From the 1950s onwards, he travels to Portugal regularly, particularly following his establishment of a fruit farming business. He returns to live in Portugal definitively in 1981, having sold the shipping business. In 1985, a few months before his death and the publication of his account, Carvalho receives the Medalha de Valor e Mérito [Medal of Worth and Merit] from the Portuguese government.

As the prologue implies, *Emigrar... Emigrar: as contas do meu rosário* was commissioned by the Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas/Centro de estudos (Carvalho 1) under its

“Portugueses de longe escrevem” [The Portuguese Write from Afar] series.⁴ The introduction by Rui de Castro states that he heard Carvalho's account from his own lips.⁵ In fact, Carvalho dictated his account to Castro who, as a ghost writer, then edited the text prior to its publication in December 1986. The text is arranged into 203 pages, and into 29 short chapters of three pages of text at most. These short chapters are interspersed by photographs that either relate to an event within a particular episode in the chapter, or that act as general illustrations for the account in that chapter. Toward the end of the text, the number of photographs increases significantly, from one or two within a chapter to a maximum of eight in Chapter XXVI.

Carvalho, the self in the frame

Carvalho's account is narrated in a simple, matter-of-fact tone, which reflects both his period of childhood and the hardships suffered due to his family's financial circumstances. This understated mood serves to emphasise a humble, self-sacrificing, and resourceful personality. These character traits are made clear from the outset of the story, when he describes his first job as a shepherd:

Se na minha casa havia miséria, para onde fui ela não era menor e se alguma coisa ganhava e se tinha sido menos uma boca a sobrecarregar a pobre vida dos meus Pais, o que é um facto é que ali não via futuro e, por isso, só estive lá um ano.⁶

[If we were poor in my house, we were no worse off than anyone else and at least I was earning and it was one less mouth to feed at home, but there was no future for me there and, because of that, I only stayed there for a year.]

This quote also offers a very restrained summary of the reasons behind leaving his first job, further

⁴ It is unusual for autobiographies of this kind to be published in this way. Usually, the author either financed the publication of autobiographies, or they were published by an independent publishing house. The prologue suggests that the book was a commission following Carvalho's receipt of the Medalha de Valor e Mérito. The series in which Carvalho's text was published, “Portugueses de longe escrevem”, was a short-lived initiative by the Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas in 1986.

⁵ Although there has been every effort to ascertain who Rui de Castro was, I have not been able to trace any information about his life, who he was, or why he was chosen as a ghostwriter and editor for Carvalho's life. Similarly, I have also been unable to trace Orlando Miranda, the person credited with obtaining the photographs that illustrate Carvalho's account. Any information relating to these, and to why the “Portugueses de longe escrevem” series emerged, and was discontinued after two publications, would be very gratefully received.

⁶ Serafim Alves de Carvalho, *Emigrar... Emigrar: as contas do meu rosário* (Lisboa: Rocha/Artes Gráficas, 1986), p.

emphasising his humble character. Within a few paragraphs, the reader concludes that Carvalho's father had come to rescue him from malnourishment and neglect at the hands of his boss. In what becomes a running theme in Carvalho's account, he moves from job to job, conscious of the need to ease the extreme privation of his family as well as to ensure his own survival. For Carvalho, the concept of providing help to his family stretches beyond immediate family to include not only his wife's family, but also ultimately Portugal as a whole, within the wider concept of the nation as family. For instance, he regularly sends money to his parents and helps them buy land (21 and 79), he supports his in-laws financially (157)⁷, and his idea for a fruit growing business aims to reduce the price of that commodity in Portugal (197). The aim, as Carvalho presents it in his account, is to provide practical solutions to ease the financial burden experienced by this broadly defined 'family,' emphasising once again his self-sacrificing and generous nature, as well as his adaptability.

Carvalho experiences his emigrant status in a positive manner, an outlook reflected by the tone with which he revises the traditional concept of what constitutes an emigrant. Carvalho describes himself as an emigrant from the moment he leaves his place of birth, even while within the same country's boundaries (35). Emigrating allows him the means by which to improve, help, and learn. Carvalho sees every hardship he suffers as character building, as can be seen in his nostalgic description of his first job:

um ano de trabalho feito por uma criança mal alimentada, à chuva e ao frio, sem comodidades as mínimas. Mas eu tenho saudades desses recuados tempos e não deploro o tempo por lá e por outros lados passado mais ou menos nas mesmas condições. Nessa miséria de vida afirmei o meu carácter. Ganhei forças e avivei a minha inteligência para que pudesse vir a realizar trabalhos mais compensadores. (29)

[a year of work, outside in the rain and cold, carried out by a malnourished child without the most basic of comforts. But I miss those far away times and I don't regret the time I spent in more or less the same conditions there or elsewhere. This miserable life shaped my character. I gained strength and sharpened my intellect so that I could later have more rewarding jobs.]

29. Hereafter, page numbers will be given in the text.

⁷ For further reading on the importance of the remittances sent by Portuguese emigrants to their families at key moments of Portuguese history see Maria Ioannis Baganha, "Social Marginalization, Government Policies and Emigrant's Remittances: Portugal 1870-1930." in *Estudos e Ensaio em Honra de Vitorino Magalhães Godinho* (Lisboa, Sá da

Here, Carvalho evokes the idea of learning lessons from the “school of life,” described as a series of ongoing journeys, trials and obstacles to overcome (85 and 201).⁸ Carvalho presents his story as an example to an imagined youth of the world, commenting that hard work and determination can bring success (15). This sentiment is reiterated in the last chapter, where Carvalho dispels the idea of being a hero. Instead, he is careful to point out that his success is borne out of not having failed at certain crucial points (201). By not presenting himself as a hero, but rather as someone who ultimately was able to succeed, Carvalho’s words reflect a disarming honesty while once again underscoring his humble personality.

Carvalho's account is punctuated by an ongoing preoccupation with modernisation and the resulting changes from it through comments such as this: “[q]ue saudades do sossêgo desses tempos, mas progresso é progresso e parar é morrer!” (163) [how I miss those tranquil times, but progress is what it is, and to stop is to die!]. These comments are perhaps coloured by Carvalho's experience of having to return to live permanently in Portugal in 1981 due to the modernisation of the shipping industry.⁹ When a comment regarding the pace of social change appears, he takes care to explain certain social customs that were affected by this change. To offer two examples, Carvalho explains the manufacture of bricks before the process was industrialised (47), and the practise of transporting liquid manure in barrels from pig farms, the so-called *água-choca*, to use as compost on cultivated land (59). Describing social customs that modernity may have superseded, or be about to supersede, enables Carvalho to carefully construct an image of authority, of being a cultural mediator to the past, and of highlighting how far things have come.

This image as a cultural mediator, carefully cultivated by Carvalho, promotes empathy and

Costa, 1988), pp. 431-448.

⁸ Cota Fagundes' translation of the second part of Carvalho's title, *Emigrating... Emigrating: a Life Parceled Out in Pieces* echoes the idea of emigration as a never-ending journey in Carvalho's text (see “Portuguese Immigrant Experience”, p. 701). Considering the reference to rosary beads in the Portuguese title, especially as the rosary is prayed keeping in mind certain important religious events or mysteries, Carvalho could be seen as praying his personal rosary by revisiting episodes that are important to the shaping of his character as he tells the story of his life.

⁹ The explanation given by Carvalho is that the introduction of metal containers in the shipping business replaced wooden pallets, forcing him to sell up (pp. 179 and 197). Taking into account Silva's analysis of Carvalho's text, the preoccupation with modernisation voiced by Carvalho perhaps arises from his disappointment at seeing his business ventures in Portugal fail due to the economic landscape of Portugal in the 1970s. See Reynaldo Silva “Her Story vs His Story,” p. 57 and “After a great pain,” pp. 31-35.

trust in the narrative he relates. This sense of trust causes the reader to defer their scrutiny of Carvalho's actions and the dubious anecdotes in his account. For example, in the anecdote of the guerra da água-choca, Carvalho comments that he organised the other young água-choca carriers to beat up the older men in order to avenge the mistreatment they had been subjected to as they competed for the business of carrying that “commodity.” Milkmaids in the village also become involved in the beating when they run to the aid of the older men. In addition to the lack of milk supply on the day it occurred, this episode results in Carvalho's rapid departure from the village when the authorities begin searching for him. This episode becomes an important event in Carvalho's life; as he comments when he returns to the village to ask for his future wife's hand in marriage, the guerra de água-choca is an “ocorrência trágica que, no entanto, considero fundamental na minha existência.” (135) [tragic event that, nonetheless, I consider fundamental to my existence]¹⁰ The episode of the guerra de água-choca also becomes a point of reference whenever Carvalho wishes to highlight how he overcame unfair treatment. For instance, while working in a French mine, the narrator rallies the Portuguese miner group to beat up a Moroccan miner who has slapped him (105). Carvalho's reference to the guerra de água-choca episode here seemingly persuades the reader of the validity of his behaviour, perpetuating his image as an honourable man. Carvalho implicitly reinforces this moral and prudent self-image in certain statements, such as the explanation of his decision not to work in the Welsh mines:

Mas à noite, bem se vê que era costume, fui obrigado a pagar uma rodada de cerveja aos mineiros [de Cardiff] que se encontravam no bar. Não gostei do uso porque o que eu queria era ganhar dinheiro. Também não sou nem nunca fui homem de bares e de copos. Vender vinho, isso sim, desde que se ganhasse dinheiro; bebê-lo só às refeições e com cautela. (119)

[At night, as was the custom, I had to get a round of beer for the Cardiff mineworkers at the pub. I didn't like the custom because all I wanted to do was earn money. Also, I have never been someone that drinks or goes to pubs. Selling wine was fine as long as I earnt money, but I only drink it in moderation at mealtimes.]

The moral undertone of this comment is undermined by his desire to earn money, which is at odds

¹⁰ Here, Carvalho refers to the fact that his wife was the daughter of his boss at the time of the guerra da água-choca

with the idea that he is an honourable and generous man. Carvalho's ring-leading actions in the episode of the guerra da água-choca could be dismissed as a folly of youth, considering that he must have been barely a teenager. The attack on the Moroccan miner in France could also be explained by his immaturity and inexperience, reflecting an inability to think through his actions in what was a very tense atmosphere of different cultures coexisting in the same space. This tense atmosphere might be the reason that Silva remarks, when analysing the many situations involving Carvalho's violent behaviour in his account, that extreme violence was necessary "to stay on top to survive, no matter what."¹¹ On close inspection, however, Carvalho is revealed as a troublemaker, unaware that his actions were sometimes inappropriate. Carvalho's morality is also placed in question when the reader considers the highly dubious and underhanded way in which he illegally obtains his passports.¹² This mixing of questionable moral statements with episodes of problematic behaviour causes the reader to repeatedly evaluate the appropriateness of Carvalho's actions. The result is a contradiction between Carvalho's self-image as an honourable and moral man, and the reader's perception of Carvalho's self in the final text.

Rui de Castro in the frame

As José Suárez comments, Castro "not only transcribed, edited, and polished the texts, but may have determined [its] form."¹³ Suárez goes on to leave this fact to one side in his analysis, concentrating instead on the ethnic contribution made by Portuguese American autobiographers. This article will expand upon Suárez's analysis by examining the inconsistencies in Carvalho's self; namely, the division and formatting of chapters, and a narrative intrusion by Rui de Castro that frequently affects the style of the account. These inconsistencies could be the result of the means by which the final text was created. It is important to note at this point that Carvalho dictated his

episode.

¹¹ Silva, "Her Story vs His Story," p. 57.

¹² Carvalho recognises obtaining the Portuguese passport as a point at which to turn a new leaf when he comments that "não precisava de andar com mentiras que, mais tarde ou mais cedo, poderiam dar mau resultado." (113) [I didn't need to tell lies which, sooner or later, might catch up with me.]

¹³ Suárez, op. cit., p. 17.

account to Rui de Castro in September 1985, and that Carvalho died prior to its publication in December 1986. From the layout of the final text, it is clear that Carvalho's account was significantly edited to fit within the short chapter format that was chosen for the final text. The format of the chapters is furthermore at odds with the text's original form as a taped conversation, in which the octogenarian Carvalho would be expected to talk freely, fluidly and uncritically. The division of chapters sometimes seems awkward; it appears that the account given in Chapter XXV, for example, which outlines how Carvalho met Henry Ford in person whilst working at his factory in the early 1930s, describing how he was rewarded for having suggested a way to increase productivity in the factory's assembly line, would sit more comfortably as part of the previous chapter. Chapter XXV begins instead with the following rather contrived sentence: “Para terminar esta pequena história relacionada com a minha passagem pela Ford, direi que, numa certa altura em que eu estava debruçado sobre o meu trabalho...” (135) [to finish this short tale about my time working at Ford, I'll just say that, at one point when I was concentrating on my job...]. This sentence seems more likely to be an editorial addition on Castro's part intended to divide and link the two chapters, as opposed to a verbatim utterance by Carvalho. Perhaps Carvalho's raw account to Castro might have been too fragmented, or certain episodes were revisited or clarified in different sessions, thereby presenting editing problems for Castro that resulted in inconsistencies in the final text.

Carvalho's account also seems stylistically awkward at certain points. For example, in the last sentence of Chapter VIII, where Carvalho described how he met and worked for his future father-in-law, he seemingly addresses the reader directly: “No capítulo seguinte, vai o caro leitor saber como o mafarrico as tece.” (59) [in the next chapter, my esteemed reader will see how the devil was at work]. This last sentence provides a cliffhanger to the next chapter, which describes the guerra da água-choca episode, and which is one of the longest, perhaps unsurprisingly given the importance Carvalho attaches to it. There are also certain instances where editing inconsistencies are apparent, such as “[n]ão sei se o leitor sabe” (109) [I'm not sure if the reader knows], or “[o]s

estimados leitores estão a ver” (157) [as my dear readers can see]. While these may represent a simple editing choice, designed to replace a polite form of address between Castro and Carvalho, they appear inconsistent when the reader considers that this is a transcribed oral account. There are other, more natural instances of orality that have not been edited out, such as “[c]omo disse” (119) [as I said]. While the decision behind these chapter divisions and word substitutions might be based on practical editing decisions taken by Castro, in order to group certain themes and events coherently in the final text, such inconsistencies highlight the need to take care over how Carvalho’s self is interpreted by the reader; it is clear that Castro has added to Carvalho’s account.

Text and photographs in the frame

The inconsistencies in Carvalho’s account, outlined above, appear also in the relationship between photographs and the text in the published version. There are photographs that accompany the text, but which the text does not reference. For instance, there is a photograph of the house in which Carvalho’s brother lived in New Jersey on page 185, but there is no mention anywhere in Carvalho’s account that his brother emigrated to the United States. Furthermore, in the introduction, there is a photograph of Carvalho in a wheelchair receiving the Medalha de Valor e Mérito from the Portuguese government in 1985. Here, it is unclear whether he still has both of his legs, but two later photographs, on pages 41 and 202 respectively, show that one of his legs has been amputated.¹⁴ Once again, there is no mention of this discrepancy anywhere in the text. The omissions might again be practical editing decisions made by Castro, grouping together certain themes and events coherently and leaving out sections that could threaten this coherency; it is difficult to determine whether this is the case. However, the effect of omitting in the text incidents or events that are tantalisingly present in the photographs recalls Barthes’ punctums, or details that

¹⁴ Reynaldo Silva comments that the amputated leg in the last photograph in Carvalho’s account “may have been the most violent blow he experienced in his entire life.” (see “Her Story vs His Story,” p. 57), but he does not note the lack of mention in the text. Silva also suggests that Carvalho requested a ghostwriter because he was conscious of his lack of a formal education (see “Her Story vs His Story,” p. 50). However, perhaps Carvalho requested a ghostwriter for more practical reasons: in recognition of his deteriorating health when he was approached with the project of publishing an account of his life.

hold the reader's attention.¹⁵ In this case, the omissions hint at something important being withheld, either by Castro or Carvalho, raising questions as to why.

There are many instances where the photograph and the narration of Carvalho's life are very closely linked, recalling Kuhn's observation that a "photograph is a prop, a pre-text: it sets the scene for recollection"¹⁶, enabling the construction of a narrative that makes sense of the past. This can be seen, for example, when Carvalho remembers joining the festivities in S. Bento da Porta Aberta, to avoid being spotted by the police before his clandestine crossing over to Spain (91). In the caption that accompanies a photograph of the S. Bento da Porta Aberta church, Carvalho notes the changes to the location as his memory recalls what happened:

A bela fachada da igreja onde se venera S. Bento da Porta Aberta, no Gerez. No tempo em que por ali passei, não existia. Só a imagem do Santo e algumas pedras e dar-Lhe guarida bem como às cabras montezas que ali passavam a noite (90)

[The beautiful church façade where St Benedict is worshipped is in Gerez. It was not there when I passed through. There was just an image of the Saint in some stone sheltering which also provided shelter for mountain goats who spent the night there.]

This suggests that Carvalho uses photographs as props to aid the construction of his life narrative. There are also photographs included in the text because they have triggered Carvalho to juxtapose the past with the present, much like the caption reproduced above. Carvalho's positioning as a cultural mediator is also aided by the use of photographs whose captions highlight particular social customs, such as in the chapter where Carvalho explains his job as an água-choca carrier. Here, the reader finds photographs of a typical água-choca carrier (66), and of a milkmaid (69) from Vilar do Andorinho, where Carvalho worked, which serve as illustrations for Carvalho's account. Thus, the use of photographs and captions in Carvalho's account provide a further layer to support Carvalho's construction of himself as an authoritative cultural and historical mediator, while at the same time as bringing the action closer to the reader's experience, and aiding the reader's sense of the narrative's authenticity.

¹⁵ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Vintage, 2000).

A photograph depicting Carvalho's reunion with the family of one of his mining co-workers (85) provides another punctum in the narrative. A closer look at the photograph reveals that Carvalho is using crutches. It seems a missed opportunity on the part of Castro to mention Carvalho's ailing health, or how the leg amputation came about. This raises a further set of questions regarding the decisions behind the construction of the final text, beyond Castro's editing. Did Carvalho return to places in his past as a way to prepare for his dictation of the account to Castro, or was it Castro's suggestion to do so? Did Castro suggest looking over photographs as preparation before, or even during, Carvalho's dictation? Whose choice was it to include which photographs when putting the final touches to the book prior to publication? It is impossible to determine how much Carvalho prepared before dictating his account to Castro, and whether this preparation was suggested by Carvalho or by Castro. It is also unclear whether it is Carvalho or Castro that is providing the photographs. However, as has been shown, what is clear is that some photographs are used to trigger the memory of certain episodes in Carvalho's life, even if some memories are not present in the final text.

The captions that accompany the photographs undermine the construction of Carvalho's self. The captions under the photographs imply that they were written (dictated even?) by Carvalho. Most of them read as if Carvalho were taking us through his photographic album and telling us snippets of information about them, which seems rather contrived. At the end of the book, the photographs are attributed to Orlando Miranda. There are certain photographs that one would not expect either Carvalho or Castro to possess. Could Castro have asked Orlando Miranda to obtain photographs of places mentioned by Carvalho in his account, after the initial editing of the text? The photographs of Afonso Costa (100)¹⁶ and Henry Ford (161) could provide evidence of this idea. In effect, the photographs included in Carvalho's text recall Watt's description of the use of photographs in biographies to provide a script through which the reader interprets and corroborates

¹⁶ Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 13.

¹⁷ Afonso Costa was a Portuguese lawyer, minister and prime minister during the First Portuguese Republic. He led the Portuguese delegation that signed the Treaty of Versailles, although it is unclear from the text whether this is when

a particular version of reality presented by the biographer.¹⁸

There are inconsistencies between what the text states, and what the photograph supposedly depicts. Looking at the photograph of a letter written by Eisenhower (US President 1953-1961), for example, the caption tells us that the letter accompanied Carvalho's renewed US passport (191 and 192). In the text, Carvalho vainly posits that the letter is in honour of the services he provided for the US government with his shipping business during the Second World War, and that the letter was written by Eisenhower personally to show the high esteem in which Carvalho was held. However, this interpretation is contradicted by Carvalho's previous assertion that he had worked for a wine merchant in New York during the Second World War, and that he had only started his shipping business after 1945 (179). Moreover, on close inspection, Eisenhower's letter appears to be a generic letter sent to emigrants who acquired a US passport, in order to ensure that the recipient was fully cognisant of the privilege of having a US passport and to incite them to behave in an appropriate manner when travelling abroad. Could it be that the contradiction between text and photograph arises because Castro has added to Carvalho's account when editing? It seems strange that Carvalho's account, a transcription, states that the letter is included in the final text – an odd comment to make if he was dictating his account to Castro (191). Considering Carvalho's presentation as a humble man, reflected in both the content and tone of the text, it would also be inconsistent for Carvalho to have misinterpreted the content of the letter. It seems unlikely too for Carvalho to have misinterpreted the intention of the letter given that he lived in the United States from 1920 to 1981 (over 60 years in total). Although the photograph upholds the image of Carvalho as a self constructed through achievement, this perception relies on the reader not knowing English, or not understanding the contents and context of the letter. Thus, as this article will argue in due course, Castro might be deliberately misinterpreting the content of the photograph for a specific purpose.

Carvalho's path crossed with his.

¹⁸ Stephen Watt, "Photographs in Biographies: Joyce, Voyeurism, and the "Real" Nora Barnack." in Marsha Bryant, ed. *Photo-Textualities: Reading Photographs and Literature* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 57-72 (p. 58).

Considering all of these factors, the credibility of what is read and observed about Carvalho is unwittingly undermined by editing decisions that were supposed to be supported by photographic evidence. The use of photographs as documentary evidence by, presumably, Castro has ironically resulted in weakening the legitimacy of Carvalho's constructed self. The omissions present in the text may be the result of Castro choosing to disregard events for which there is no photographic evidence. This is unlikely, however, as the presence (or rather absence) of Carvalho's amputated leg would have warranted at least some explanation in the text. It might be that Castro was being steered towards presenting a particular version of Carvalho's life.

The aims of the publishing house in the frame

As the cover of *Emigrar... Emigrar: as contas do meu rosário* shows, the book was published under the "Portugueses de Longe Escrevem" series of the Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas/Centro de Estudos, suggesting it was a commissioned piece.¹⁹ The prologue, written by Maria Manuela Aguiar, the Secretária of the Comunidades Portuguesas [Minister for the Overseas Portuguese Communities] at that time, reproduces the speech she gave when Carvalho received the Medalha de Valor e Mérito in 1985. The prologue echoes the idea of Carvalho's life providing an example to an imagined collective youth, and closely echoes two of Carvalho's preoccupations: the presentation of his life as an example of determination and adaptability, and the effects of modernisation on society (1). Castro's introduction is also careful to outline the main traits of Carvalho's account. Castro heaps praise on Carvalho, noting that he fought to improve the life of his family, and learnt a resourcefulness in Portugal that enabled him to survive and adapt to many difficult situations. Castro furthermore comments that although Carvalho was able to find personal and financial success in the United States, he never forgot Portugal. Castro is at pains to emphasise Carvalho's humble character and his rags-to-riches story, stating that the book

¹⁹ A statement made by Aguiar in the prologue strongly suggests that Carvalho was approached by the Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas to publish his life story, which is unusual for this kind of text. There is, however, some disagreement as to whether Carvalho chose to write in Portuguese and publish his text in Portugal because it was

is dedicated:

à emigração portuguesa, seja ela da América, da África ou da Europa, mas destina-se especialmente – pelo menos é esse o objectivo da sua principal e única figura – à juventude dum Portugal que necessita que o façam reviver. [...] Na juventude, está o futuro deste Portugal de oito séculos. (9)

[To Portuguese emigration, be it from America, Africa or Europe. It is particularly aimed at – at least this is the main objective and envisaged readership – the youth of a Portugal that needs to come back to life. [...] The future of the eight century-old Portugal lies in its youth.]

Castro goes so far as to refer to Carvalho as “um verdadeiro português” (7) [Portuguese through and through] at the same time that he is “um homem como qualquer outro, como qualquer de nós” (9) [just like any one of us]; someone who, to paraphrase Castro, never lost his tenacity or love for his family (which can here be read also as family-as-nation, in what seems a deliberate extension of the word, as explored earlier). Both Aguiar and Castro’s introductions guide the reader toward a particular reading of Carvalho’s self, and a particular aim behind the publication of the text; if Carvalho could, and did, succeed against all odds, then so too can everyone and anyone else.

This aim acquires a particularly powerful meaning when we consider the socio-political situation in Portugal in December 1986, when the book was published. Coinciding with Portugal’s entry into the European Economic Community (known today as the EU) in 1986, the text could be seen as part of the celebrations surrounding the success of the democratic process started by the April Revolution of 1974.²⁰ For Portugal, the 1970s marked the beginning of a reorientation of its national discourse, a need to look beyond an inward orientation of Portugal as the head of a vast overseas empire.²¹ The April Revolution also accelerated the period of social change which had begun in the late 1960s, and Europe presented an alternative to the empire, enabling an outward orientation of the national discourse towards seeing itself as being in Europe, and part of a global

cheaper, suggesting Carvalho chose to publish it on his own (see Suárez, *op. cit.*, p. 25), or whether Carvalho financed the publication of his own book (see Fagundes, “Portuguese Immigrant Experience,” p. 711).

²⁰ For a more detailed examination see Eduardo Lourenço, “Psicanálise mítica do destino português.” *O Labirinto da Saudade* (Lisbon: Gradiva, 2004 [1978]), pp. 23-66.

²¹ See Boaventura de Sousa Santos, ‘State and Society in Portugal.’ in Helena Kaufman and Anna Klobucka, eds., *After the Revolution: Twenty Years of Portuguese Literature, 1974-1994* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 31-74, and António Barreto, ‘Portugal na periferia do centro: mudança social, 1960 a 1995’ *Análise Social*, Vol. XXX, No 132 (1995), 841-855.

system.²² For Portugal, entry into the EU was thus an important reorientation in terms of its national identity, and the emigrant became a central part of this reorientation. Feldman-Bianco, writing in 1992, comments that “in preparation for the unification of Europe, the term “immigrant” was recently abolished and replaced by the expressions “Portuguese Abroad” and “Portuguese spread around the world”.²³ These communities of emigrants were assimilated into “the new and expanded construction of a “global” Portuguese nation”²⁴ in Portugal’s reconfiguration of its national identity parameters. Portugal increasingly saw itself as a nation with a global community brought about by the historical movement of its people, and the former colonies and emigrant communities across the world were absorbed into this new discourse.

Carvalho’s account is commissioned and published at a very specific time, and could be seen to serve a very specific purpose for the Portuguese state. Its function is akin to how biographies and life stories are currently examined in what Lechner terms as the “validated subjectivities” of biographical narratives, whereby

[o]n the one hand it allows for an understanding of the forms of experience and concrete interpretations of a narrator, on the other, it sheds light on the social and political meaning of private experiences (biographical narratives) allowing for an attempt at collective understanding of experience (research based on and into these narratives).²⁵

Lechner also asserts that the emigrant narratives “represent a silent heritage that actually could bring a valuable contribution to Portuguese history, culture, and society.”²⁶ What Lechner calls attention to here is not only what the life narratives say, as this article has examined, but also how the narratives are then used to fit within a collective experience and a particular political narrative. Carvalho’s comments about being an emigrant from the moment he left his childhood

²² See António Barreto, *op. cit.*, Russell Hamilton, “Lusofonia, Africa, and Matters of Languages and Letters.” *Hispania* Vol. 74, No. 3 (1991), pp. 610-617 and Boaventura Sousa Santos, “Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Inter-Identity.” *Luso-Brazilian Review*. Vol 39, No 2 (2002), pp. 9-43.

²³ Bela Feldman-Bianco, “Multiple Layers of Time and Space: The Construction of Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Among Portuguese Immigrants.” *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*. Vol 645 (1992), pp. 145-174 (p 150).

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 149.

²⁵ Elsa Lechner, ‘Autobiographical Writings by Portuguese Emigrants in Newark: Glocal Emancipation and resisting Stereotypes’ *Journal of Lusophone Studies*, Vol1.2 (2016), pp. 51-71: p. 59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55-56.

home; of being an everyman, yet a person worthy of being honoured with the Medalha de Valor e Mérito; and of being an example for a collective youth, yet a hero by force of circumstances, fits within the reconfiguration of Portuguese national identity described above. Carvalho embodies the characteristics of an outward looking, global Portuguese citizen, or rather he is made to embody these characteristics. This would explain the text's editing inconsistencies, the inclusion of curious commentaries on social history that punctuate the account, its emphasis on changes in society due to modernisation, and its emphasis on Carvalho's humility, simplicity and sense of honour.

The use of photographs in Carvalho's account brings to mind Linda Haverty Rugg's warning that "uninterrogated presentations of photography and autobiography [...] can work towards the most powerful support of unconscious ideological assumptions."²⁷ With this in mind, and returning to the photograph of the letter sent by Eisenhower to Carvalho, Castro might be deliberately misinterpreting the content and intent of the letter in Carvalho's account in order to fulfil the editing steer. To suggest that Eisenhower sent the letter personally, as recognition of Carvalho's role in the Second World War, fits within the wider aim of inspiring Portuguese youth to emulate Carvalho's example. Moreover, as stated above, the matter-of-fact narrative tone found in Carvalho's account should be seen not only as a feature of Carvalho's narration, but also as a deliberately-cultivated style to steer the reader away from questioning Carvalho's actions too closely, thus undermining the image of Carvalho as a role model. In effect, there is a particular sense of Carvalho's self being constructed, perhaps crafted and honed, not only by Carvalho – who is considering his audience (Castro/Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas/wider Portuguese public) carefully –, but also by Castro, who is under guidance to fulfil the aims expected from the final text.

It is perhaps for this last reason that Carvalho's book seems neutral in its political statements at first glance. In many ways, Carvalho's account could be seen as an exercise in editing that offers a subtle examination of Portugal's situation in the twentieth century, without any overt or personal undermining or criticism. As Aguiar indicates in her introduction, Carvalho's book is more than:

²⁷ Linda Haverty Rugg, *Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography* (Chicago and London: University of

uma simples colectânea de recordações, de episódios pitorescos ou mesmo dramáticos, que são apresentados com notável sobriedade quanto à sua escolha e à expressão literária, o que não obsta a que evoquem muito concretamente, juntamente com o material fotográfico de grande interesse também aqui reunido, muito [sic] dos problemas sociais, dos usos e costumes, da evolução do estilo de vida neste século XX, sobretudo até a década de 60, com suas constantes, e muitas vezes profundas, mudanças. (1)

[(it is more than just) a simple collection of memories, of interesting or dramatic episodes, presented with remarkable self-restraint both with regards to their choice of what to include and their literary expression. Alongside all this, the very interesting photographic material included palpably evokes many of the social problems, the customs and behaviours, of the evolution in the way of life in the twentieth century, especially until the 1960s, with its constant and, often, deep changes.]

In other words, the account's emphasis on the changes resulting from modernisation provides a subtle commentary on the evolution of Portuguese society, and how Portugal has responded to socio-historic changes throughout the twentieth century. Specifically, Carvalho's life stands as an example of how changes in land ownership laws introduced at the turn of the twentieth century affected rural communities. Carvalho's account also serves to illustrate the interaction between different social layers in Portuguese society, the treatment of the workers by richer families, and the lack of empathy between classes at the beginning of the twentieth century. Carvalho's life furthermore provides an example of how widespread emigration helped the Portuguese economy throughout the twentieth century. Overall, what Carvalho's account subtly alludes to is a society that is no longer present in the Portugal of 1986, when the text is published. The editing steer thus seems to present a Portuguese society that is ostensibly in the process of being phased out, in the process of changing for the better, thanks in large part to people like Carvalho and to the modernisation of Portuguese society.

That said, Carvalho does make reference to historical events, both within Portugal and beyond. For instance, Carvalho crosses over to France and works in the French mines to replace the labour lost when German prisoners of war are freed (99). When Carvalho returns to the United States in 1927, having travelled to Portugal to get married, he briefly remarks on the unstable

atmosphere in Portugal: “[s]e algo foi conseguido, nem o soube, porque, entretanto, parti e nas vezes que cá vinha, talvez por estar numa grande nação, na maior e mais desenvolvida nação do mundo, nunca senti que as coisas mudassem para melhor quanto era necessário.” (155) [I really don’t know if anything was achieved in the meantime because I moved to and from Portugal and, because I lived in a great nation, the greatest and most developed in the world, I never felt that things changed for the better when it was necessary.]²⁸ In other words, rather than simply perceiving the apolitical nature of Carvalho's account as an editing strategy on the part of Castro to fulfil the aims of its publication, it is also pertinent to consider that Carvalho comments on political situations only when they directly affect him. Such a reading is supported by Eduardo Mayone Dias, who notes that the low education of the Portuguese emigrant, coupled with the tendency to seek isolation when s/he emigrated, resulted not only in a lack of political sophistication, but also in a deliberate political reticence.²⁹ This observation is echoed by Suárez, who notes that this reticence was “not because [it] lacked a defined ideology, but perhaps out of a sense that politics can bias a reader and detract from the story.”³⁰ It must also be remembered that Carvalho spent a total of 60 years in the US at a time that being an emigrant (read: different) was not appreciated by either Portugal or the US, as Feldman-Bianco describes, and thus would naturally steer away from making political statements about either society. The comments made, therefore, represent not only an editing steer followed by Carvalho and/or Castro, but also a historical reference made to situate the reader within significant world events that brought about global change. The result, as stated above, remains; this is a text that highlights how far Portugal has come.

Concluding remarks

Re-reading Rui de Castro's comments that the book was dedicated “à emigração portuguesa,

²⁸ According to José Suárez, this is the closest that Carvalho comes to praising the US (20). The understated praise is might be due to Carvalho being aware of the audience for his text.

²⁹ Eduardo Mayone Dias, “A Literatura emigrante portuguesa na California.” *Arquipélago* (1983): 467-568. pp. 480 and 564.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

seja ela da América, da África ou da Europa” (9) confirms this article's close reading of Carvalho's text as a deliberate cog within the wider machine of Portuguese national identity building in the 1980s. A commissioned book by a department of the Portuguese government, Carvalho's account has been used to aid, and even to illustrate, a particular set of political aims within Portugal. The contradictions and inconsistencies found in the text suit a particular political and social function in Portugal's global configuration of its national identity. Carvalho's account, therefore, is an example that exposes the mechanisms through which the Portuguese State constructed itself as a global nation made up of different emigrant communities in the mid 1980s – a national identity discourse which is still present today.