In this conversation with my P5530 class (dedicated to the study of the cultural relations between Portugal and Brazil from the mid-1990’s to the present), we will talk about Alexandra Lucas Coelho’s 2016 novel Deus-Dará, the legacies of a long-standing colonial history in both countries, and the experiences of a Portuguese woman, writer and journalist living in Brazil in the period immediately preceding Brazil’s political and social turmoil that led to the election of authoritarian president Jair Bolsonaro in 2018.

Alexandra Lucas Coelho is a Portuguese writer and journalist. She has published 14 books. As a reporter she covered crisis zones from the USSR to the Middle East, Central Asia and Latin America. She lived in Jerusalem and Rio de Janeiro as a correspondent. Her first novel, E a Noite Roda, set mostly in Israel/Palestine, received the Portuguese Association of Writer’s (APE) main prize. Followed by O Meu Amante de Domingo, a political-sexual satire; Deus-Dará, a long illustrated novel set in contemporary Rio de Janeiro but intersecting 500 years of colonial history; and A Nossa Alegria Chegou, a short novel. Her non-fiction includes Oriente Próximo; Caderno Afegão; Viva México; Tahrir; Vai, Brasil; Mumtazz; Cinco Voltas na Bahia e um Beijo para Caetano Veloso (APE Prize for Travel Literature), and her last volume, also with photos, Libano, Labirinto. She’s currently working on her fifth novel, connected with a poetry volume.