

BRAZILIAN LITERATURE

CLASSICAL BOOKS

TITLE	REVIEW
<p>Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas (Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas) (1881)</p> <p>Often subtitled The Epitaph of a Small Winner</p> <p><i>by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis</i></p>	<p>The Brazilian novel is told from the perspective of the dead protagonist Brás Cubas, who tells his own life story from beyond the grave, while highlighting his mistakes and failed romances. Being already deceased allows Brás Cubas to sharply criticize the Brazilian society and reflect on his own disillusionment, with no sign of remorse or fear of retaliation. Brás Cubas dedicates his book to the first worm that gnawed his cold body: "To the worm who first gnawed on the cold flesh of my corpse, I dedicate with fond remembrance these Posthumous Memoirs." Cubas tells his story beginning with his death, and then proceeds to the story of his life since childhood.</p> <p>Machado's works had a great influence on Brazilian literary schools of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1941, the Brazilian Academy of Letters founded, in his honor, the Prêmio Machado de Assis (Machado de Assis Prize), the most prestigious literary award in Brazil. Machado's success as a novelist contributed to a more open society in Brazil.</p> <p>Source: Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 14, 2017.</p>
<p>O Tempo e o Vento (Time and the Wind) (1949)</p> <p><i>by Erico Verrisimo</i></p>	<p>Considered one of the great masterpieces of Brazilian novel, and written as a trilogy, this historical saga recounts the lives of two families – the Terras and Cambará's, and their evolution over 200 years from 1745 to 1945, told through key historical events. Taking place in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil, both families were deeply affected by the transformations of their country through colonization and war [1].</p> <p>Some themes remain consistent throughout the saga: the wind, destined to herald events in the family history, and the Sobrado, the great castle-like mansion, which was their home. There is authenticity in the feel, mood, and in the blend of realism, superstition, violence, and poetry. But, the story itself seems to ride off in all directions, and the thread loses itself again and again. Possibly, the shift back and forth in time, from 1745 to 1895, makes</p>

it not as successful as the author would have liked, but at its close, the scattered pieces seem to come together to a satisfying conclusion [2].

Sources: [1] O Tempo e o Vento. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 14, 2017.
[2] Time and The Wind. (n.d.). In Goodreads. Retrieved April 14, 2017.

**Grande Sertão:
Veredas (The Devil to
Pay in the Backlands)
(1956)**

*by João Guimarães
Rosa*

This is a complex story of Riobaldo, a former mercenary of the poor of Rio São Francisco at the dawn of the 20th century. Now an old man and rancher, Riobaldo tells his long story to an anonymous and silent listener from the city. Structurally, it is a remarkably crafted story, told in the first person for 608 pages, without chapters or breaks in the narrative.

Riobaldo looks back on his time fighting with various groups allied to various ranchers, while portraying the local power struggles and competition of life in the sertão. In the process, he develops a deep friendship with Diadorim, with whom he shares a deep emotional bond. Riobaldo also becomes the leader of a band of bandits, and at a key point of the book, he heads to a crossroads in an attempt to make a deal with the devil for his success. It is clear through the remainder of the book, however, that he is not certain if the deal was completed or not. Ultimately, the book ends with a climactic battle between Riobaldo's band and the rival band. Diadorim dies, and Riobaldo is devastated. However, in the final ten pages, as Riobaldo's men wash Diadorim's body for burial, Diadorim's grand secret is finally revealed: Diadorim was a woman, and the mystery of their love is cleared up. Riobaldo resigns command of the jagunços, and settles down to a more conventional life.

The final musings of the book are regarded as some of the most beautiful fragments of Portuguese language literature.

Source: The Devil to Pay in the Backlands. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 14, 2017.

CONTEMPORARY BOOKS

TITLE	REVIEW
Eles eram muitos cavalos (There Were Many Horses) (2001) <i>by Luiz Fernando Ruffato de Souza</i>	<p>This is Ruffato's first novel, and won the Brazilian National Library's Machado de Assis Award, as well as the APCA Award for best novel with its debut in 2001.</p> <p>It is May 9, 2000, and Sao Paulo teems with life. The city is more than just traffic jams, parks, and global financial maneuvering. In 70 fragments about life during that one day, the author describes every minute and second of the metropolis marked by human diversity—a mosaic of people from all over Brazil and the world,</p>

marking the city's personality at the turn of the twenty-first century.

The idea of this book came from Ruffato's desire to pay tribute to São Paulo; the Brazilian city that welcomed so many immigrants like Ruffato. According to the author, the book is not a novel, but a sort of literary installation and homage to São Paulo.

Source: Luiz Ruffato (Eles eram muitos cavalos). (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved April 14, 2017.

Barba ensopada de sangue (Blood-Drenched Beard) (2012)

by Daniel Galera

"The opening pages of Daniel Galera's Blood-Drenched Beard, are indeed blood-drenched. Moments before committing suicide, the narrator's father reveals a family secret; the narrator's grandfather was brutally murdered.

In the wake of that revelation and his father's suicide, the narrator of this atmospheric novel moves to Garopaba, a small fishing village on the south coast of Brazil, where his grandfather once lived. In a house, he rents by the beach, the narrator spends his days bathing in the sea, teaching swimming, and discussing the Buddhist concept of reincarnation with other drifters, while seeking answers to the questions surrounding his grandfather's death.

Galera is one of Brazil's most celebrated young writers, and Blood-Drenched Beard, winner of the 2013 São Paulo Literature Prize, is his first novel to be translated into English. It is a story about family and fate, and also grapples with the question of what mysteries should be left alone."

Source: Book Review: 'Blood-Drenched Beard' by Daniel Galera (February 24, 2015). In Washington Post. Retrieved April 14, 2017.

The Complete Stories (An Anthology) (2015)

by Clarice Lispector

There's a whiff of madness in the fiction of Clarice Lispector. The Complete Stories of the great Brazilian writer, edited by Benjamin Moser and sensitively translated by Katrina Dodson, is a book not to be read quickly or casually because it is so delirious. Lispector is exhilaratingly strange. Her perceptions come so fast, and move wildly between the mundane and the metaphysical, that after a while, you don't know whether you are in fantasy or reality.

"Coherence, I don't want it anymore," a character in one of her stories thinks. "Coherence is mutilation. I want disorder."

Lispector's writing included many of the techniques employed by James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf. Like Woolf, Lispector's narratives closely follow the inner lives of her characters, chronicling their feelings and emotions in streams of consciousness with such passion, that it puts a spell on her readers.

Source: 'The Complete Stories' by Clarice Lispector (July 27, 2015). Reviewed in The New York Times. Retrieved April 14, 2017.