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# Collecting to the Core-Portugueses Linguistic, Literacy and Cultural Travessias

Suzanna M. Schadl

Univeristy of New Mexico, schadl@unm.edu

Anne Doherty

CHOICE/ACRL, adoherty@ala-choice.org

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added features include a list of related primary documents, a section of maps and a timeline of entries, as well as a general index.

The *Encyclopedia of Historical Warrior Peoples & Fighting Groups* should prove a useful reference for interested students by providing a basic foundation to initiate more in-depth exploration. Each entry provides background information about the force covered that is grounded in reliably sourced research. High school students and lower division undergraduates will find it of most benefit. Given the level of interest in military topics among some students, it a reference work that would be equally suitable for many circulating collections.

### Extra Servings

**Salem Press** has recently released some new titles:

- *Defining Documents in American History: Immigration & Immigrant Communities* (1790-2016) (Feb. 2017, ISBN: 9781682172858, \$175; e-ISBN: 9781682172865, \$175) is a single-volume work that “explores the full history of immigration issues in America, from those early immigrants making their way through Ellis Island, to immigration issues in modern society. With in-depth analysis of a broad range of documents, researchers come away with fresh understanding and insight to study this hot button topic...”
- *The Critical Survey of Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature*, 2nd Edition, (Mar. 2017, ISBN: 9781682172780, \$295; e-ISBN: 9781682172797, \$295) is a three-volume set that “combines biography and critical analysis of the most important contemporary and historic figures and works in science fiction and fantasy literature. This important reference provides stu-

dents and researchers with an easy-to-use source to help them embark on research in literary studies...”

**SAGE Reference** is planning a couple of new releases:

- *Historic Documents of 2016* (July 2017, ISBN: 9781506375007, \$350) is the latest volume in this annual series. Like its predecessors, it presents “excerpts from documents on the important events of each year for the United States and the World. Each volume pairs 60 to 70 original background narratives with well over 100 documents to chronicle the major events of the year, from official reports and surveys to speeches from leaders and opinion makers, to court cases, legislation, testimony, and much more...”
- *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender* (July 2017, ISBN: 9781483384283, \$550) offers researchers an “exploration of the intersection of gender and psychology — topics that resonate across disciplines and inform our everyday lives. This encyclopedia looks at issues of gender, identity, and psychological processes at the individual as well as the societal level, exploring topics such as how gender intersects with developmental processes both in infancy and childhood and throughout later life stages; the evolution of feminism and the men’s movement; the ways in which gender can affect psychological outcomes and influence behavior; and more...”

Among the latest from **ABC-CLIO Greenwood**:

- *Food in America: The Past, Present, and Future of Food, Farming, and the Family Meal* (Feb. 2017, 9781610698580, \$294; eBook: 9781610698597, \$294) is a three-volume reference that “examines all facets of the modern U.S. food system, including the nation’s most important food and agriculture laws,

the political forces that shape modern food policy, and the food production trends that are directly impacting the lives of every American family...”

Just released by **Oxford University Press**:

- *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (Jan. 2017, ISBN: 9780199677764, \$600) is a four-volume reference that contains “entries for more than 45,000 English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Cornish, and immigrant surnames, *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* is the ultimate reference work on family names of the UK. The *Dictionary* includes every surname that currently has more than 100 bearers...”

**Academic Press** has recently published a couple of multivolume sets:

- *The International Encyclopedia of Public Health* (Nov. 2016, ISBN: 9780128036785, \$3200; eBook: 9780128037089, \$3200; bundle \$3840) is a seven-volume set that provides a “guide to the major issues, challenges, methods, and approaches of global public health. Taking a multidisciplinary approach, this new edition combines complementary scientific fields of inquiry, linking biomedical research with the social and life sciences to address the three major themes of public health research, disease, health processes, and disciplines...”
- *The Encyclopedia of Spectroscopy and Spectrometry*, 3rd Edition (Oct. 2016, ISBN: 9780128032244, \$2450; eBook: 9780128032251, \$2450; bundle: \$2940) provides “coverage of all aspects of spectroscopy and closely related subjects that use the same fundamental principles, including mass spectrometry, imaging techniques and applications. It includes the history, theoretical background, details of instrumentation and technology, and current applications of the key areas of spectroscopy...”

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## Collecting to the Core — Portuguese Linguistic, Literary, and Cultural Travessias

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by **Suzanne M. Schadl** (Associate Professor and Curator of Latin American Collections, University of New Mexico; Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures Editor, *Resources for College Libraries*) <schadl@unm.edu>

Column Editor: **Anne Doherty** (*Resources for College Libraries* Project Editor, CHOICE/ACRL) <adoherty@ala-choice.org>

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**Column Editor’s Note:** *The “Collecting to the Core” column highlights monographic works that are essential to the academic library within a particular discipline, inspired by the Resources for College Libraries bibliography (online at <http://www.rclweb.net>). In each essay, subject specialists introduce and explain the classic titles and topics that continue to remain relevant to the undergraduate curriculum and library collection. Disciplinary trends may shift, but some classics never go out of style. — AD*

“As the early Portuguese explorers navigated a vast ocean to discover a new world and **Guimaraes Rosa’s** ‘travelers’ crossed the *sertão*... so do language learners journey into uncharted territories of knowledge, embarking upon a *travessia* that will take them to new cultural horizons.”<sup>1</sup>

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*Os Lusíadas* (*The Lusíads*), by the often-cited master of the Portuguese language **Luís de Camões**, and *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* (*Grande Sertão: Veredas*), by the distinguished twentieth-century Brazilian novelist **João Guimarães Rosa**, are important departures for those who embark on the journey of learning Portuguese.<sup>2-3</sup> Both of these works often appear in foundational reading lists along with more recognizable authors like **Homer** and **James Joyce**. Their inventive use of structure and language makes their respective distinctions in the Portuguese and Brazilian literary canons incontrovertible. As cultural capital these works extend beyond basic literary and linguistic precepts and establish the trope of *travessia* (the long journey).<sup>4-5</sup> **Clarice Lispector's** 1977 novella *The Hour of the Star* (*A Hora da Estrela*) reinforces and builds on these cultural foundations.<sup>6</sup> Because of their intricacies and astute sociocultural references, these works are difficult, if not impossible, to translate or understand out of context. As a consequence, they are quintessential challenges for Portuguese language learners and emerging Portuguese readers, including native speakers. In the classroom, providing masterpieces like the above alongside accessible popular adaptations produced in television, film, or graphic media can create pathways for deeper cultural immersion. This essay makes a case for assembling diverse materials and formats to support Lusophone literacy — defined here as linguistic, literary, and cultural understanding of the Portuguese language. Brazilian examples dominate this essay, but they should be treated as models with corollaries in other Portuguese-speaking countries.

Portuguese speakers are diverse. Fifteenth and sixteenth-century Portuguese explorers navigated down the West African coast, around the Cape of Good Hope, along the southeast African coast to Calcutta, and also across the Atlantic Ocean, spreading the Portuguese language into areas of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Later, political turmoil in nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe and Japan prompted significant migration to Brazil. Strong Portuguese language and literature collections should include works reflecting these complex migratory histories or *travessias*, which have the compound effect of underscoring Lusophone cultural references even as they expand them beyond the boundaries of the Western canon.

One path to literacy is to begin with the concept of the long voyage as presented in the quotation above by the authors of *Travessia: A Video-Based Portuguese Textbook*.<sup>7</sup> This workbook, accompanied by audiovisual clips derived from Brazilian television, seeks to immerse students in everyday Brazilian Portuguese speech. The method is effective for making certain terms, phrases, references, and images more accessible to foreign language learners. However, this approach falls short of transmitting the depth required for understanding historically inscribed cultural

references like *travessia*, regional and ethnic nuances in spoken Portuguese, or quotidian torments and observations illuminated in modern prose. Literacy is not simply repetition of words or grammatical structures. It is the ability to retrieve and adapt information with reference to its cultural significance.

The term *travessia* resonates as a trope across the three literary works discussed here. The concept echoes the Portuguese seafaring accomplishments and failures as represented in *Os Lusíadas*. It emerges in postcolonial negotiations of transatlantic and transcultural matrixes addressed in part through the meandering dialog of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*.<sup>8</sup> It also reverberates through the personalized reflections on the exotic and the mundane encountered in *The Hour of the Star*.

The epic sixteenth-century poem *Os Lusíadas* weaves a history of the Portuguese people through a fantastical account of explorer **Vasco da Gama's** voyage from Lisbon to India. As the foremost example of Portugal's Renaissance literature, its cantos present the Portuguese people as protagonists in a series of difficult and victorious encounters with mythological figures, African and Asian contemporaries, and the sea itself.<sup>9</sup> **Guimarães Rosa's** *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* maps the intersection between a tumultuous psycho-spiritual journey presented by way of dialog unfolding on the scene of a mental and physical sojourn through the semi-arid, sparsely populated Brazilian backlands, infamous for devastating drought, lawless bandits, and historic rebellions. An exemplary manifestation of Brazil's New Novel (the twentieth century Latin American novel), this chapterless work introduces a uniquely Brazilian vocabulary and grammar against the backdrop of the country's unforgiving hinterlands. It is a geographic, linguistic, and psychological tour-de-force.<sup>10</sup> *The Hour of the Star* is equally complex, offering a meditation on writing and vulnerability. It migrates along an awkward interstice among the narrator, the heroine, and the story itself, which depicts the heroine's journey from the destitute Brazilian northeast to the flush surroundings of Rio de Janeiro. While there she balances hopeful prophecies with inauspicious visions, always struggling to connect with others. **Lispector** states that the story is about "an anonymous misery."<sup>11</sup>

Providing these canonical works of literature alongside popular surrogates like the comic book *Os Lusíadas Em Quadrinhos*, the miniseries *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, and the film *A Hora da Estrela* facilitates critical discussions of *travessia* along with the feasibility of translating linguistic and narrative innovations into graphic and audiovisual frames. *Os Lusíadas Em Quadrinhos*, not available in translation, is a graphic novel by Brazilian illustrator **Fido Nesti**.<sup>12</sup> This contemporary work repackages six of **Camões's** ten cantos with revised snippets and comprehensible comic frames. Reading the comic version enables Portuguese language learners to access segments of **Camões's** verse with images. While certain language gems are lost in this format, the graphics offer struggling

readers a contemporary vision of the fantastical — and sometimes prejudicial — portrayals in the original poem. These encapsulations of African cannibals, Persian scribes, and Indian warriors open new doors for commentary. The Globo miniseries *Grande Sertão: Veredas* follows

**Guimarães Rosa's** protagonist Riobaldo as he wanders across the hinterland and narrates its history, with special attention to stories of banditry, retribution, love, and death — some of which feature his own experiences.<sup>13</sup> One of the stories repackaged in the twenty-five-chapter television adaptation offers an interesting twist on Riobaldo's relationship with a fellow bandit, Reinaldo, also called Diadorim. In the novel this character stands between the hero and his desired love. The television adaptation unveils Reinaldo as Maria Deodorina, who pretends to be a man in order to join the bandits as an alternative to her unhappy existence as a marginalized woman in the hinterlands. While it doesn't convey the narrative and linguistic genius of the novel, the miniseries does depart from the text in ways that open new topics for understanding. Similarly, the film adaptation of *The Hour of the Star* directed by **Suzana Amaral** misses the reflective and inventive narrative structure in **Lispector's** novella, but its focus on the heroine Macabéa's migrant experience and her failed attempt to escape poverty offers important opportunities for discussions of the "anonymous misery" **Lispector** noted, not to mention gender inequalities.<sup>14</sup> The film allows students to explore what the author means by its anonymous misery and how the film and book alternately reflect this.

These popularly accessible revisions of *Os Lusíadas*, *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, and *The Hour of the Star* trade experimental literary and linguistic inventions for visual renderings which re-create enough of the actual stories to inspire popular investment in the cultural capital of these works. At the very least, the literary adaptations familiarize students with the protagonists and general plots to facilitate additional context and discussion. In spliced frames they offer glimpses of the intricacies and sociocultural issues these works address. When offered in conjunction with the actual literature, these adaptations present diverging pathways for deeper immersion into myriad cultural cues. Most importantly, when provided together, these masterpieces and their adaptations create intersections that lend to a more informed literary and cultural criticism. Like most authors writing in the Portuguese language — with one noted exception, **Fernando Pessoa** — **Camões**, **Guimarães Rosa**, and **Lispector** fall outside of the Western canon despite their acclaim and accomplishments as writers.<sup>15-16</sup> It is no surprise, considering the limits of the Western canon. Portuguese is an interesting case, however, because it exists currently inside and outside of western contexts. For this reason it is often difficult to classify and hard for many discovering learners to locate without some provocation. Graphic novels, television miniseries, and full-length films might be just the incitement necessary

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to introduce challenging Portuguese literary texts to emerging Portuguese readers and language learners. Once in that space, the journey can unfold within uncharted territories to reveal myriad new *travessias* and diverse cultural horizons. Facilitating this kind of educational exploration requires library resources beyond the book to other forms of cultural production such as music, film, television, children's books, and graphic novels. 🌿

#### Endnotes

1. **Tolman, Jon M., Ricardo Paiva, John B. Jensen, and Nivea P. Parsons.** *Travessia: A Video-Based Portuguese Textbook*. Preliminary Edition. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1988.
2. **Camões, Luís de.** *Os Lusíadas*. Edited with an introduction and notes by **Frank Pierce**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.\* See also electronic versions available via Project Gutenberg and the Internet Archive.
3. **Rosa, João Guimarães.** *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. Translated by **James L. Taylor**, and **Harriet De Onís**. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.\*
4. For a general discussion of cultural capital in the literary canon, see **Guillory, John.** *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.\*
5. The concept of *travessia* is addressed critically in **Medeiros, Aldinida.** *Travessias Pela Literatura Portuguesa: Estudos Críticos De Saramago a Vieira*. Campina Grande, PB: EDUEPB, 2013.
6. **Lispector, Clarice.** *The Hour of the Star*. Translated by **Benjamin Moser**. New York: New Directions, 2011.\*
7. **Tolman et al.** *Travessia*.
8. For a critical discussion of postcolonial negotiations of transatlantic and transcendental matrixes, focused on Lusophone Africa with linkages to Brazil, see **Arenas, Fernando.** *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
9. **Camões, Os Lusíadas**.
10. **Rosa, The Devil to Pay in the Backlands.** See also **Chiappini, Ligia, David Treece, and Marcel Vejmelka.** *Studies in the Literary Achievement of João Guimarães Rosa, the Foremost Brazilian Writer of the Twentieth Century*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011.
11. **Lispector, The Hour of the Star.** See also **Lispector, Clarice.** TV Cultura, February 1, 1977. <https://youtu.be/w1zwGLBpULs>
12. **Nesti, Fido, and Luís de Camões.** *Os Lusíadas Em Quadrinhos*. São Paulo: Editora Peirópolis, 2006.
13. *Grande Sertão Veredas*. Directed by **Walter Avancini**. 2009. Brazil: Globo Marcas. DVD. For a more recent graphic novel, see **Guazzelli, Rodrigo Rosa, and João Guimarães Rosa.** *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. São Paulo: Editora Globo, 2014.
14. *A Hora Da Estrela = The Hour of the Star*. Directed by **Suzana Amaral**. 1986. New York: Kino on Video, 2005. DVD.
15. **Bloom, Harold.** *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.
16. There are a few comic works on **Fernando Pessoa** as well. See **Ventura, Susana Ramos, and Guazzelli.** *Eu, Fernando Pessoa : Em Quadrinhos*. São Paulo: Editora Peirópolis, 2013. See also **Pérez Verneti, Laura.** *Pessoa & Cia*. Viladamat: Luces de Gálibo, 2011.

\*Editor's note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a title selected for *Resources for College Libraries*.

## To Blog or Not To Blog — Librarian Bloggers

by **Pat Sabosik** (General Manager, ACI Scholarly Blog Index; Phone: 203-816-8256) <[psabosik@aci.info](mailto:psabosik@aci.info)>

**L**ibrarians blog. They share opinions and processes with their colleagues in a peer to peer networked global community. Blogs gained popularity in the 1990s and are now an accepted communication tool for many professions — critique, chronicling, hypotheses, opinion and observations, new developments — there are similarities and differences between academic blogging and librarian blogging.

*The Guardian* published an article in 2013 by **Pat Thomson**, Professor of Education and Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies at the **University of Nottingham**, UK, and **Inger Mewburn**, Director of Research Training at **Australian National University**. The article, “Why Do Academics Blog? It’s Not for Public Outreach, Research Shows” sums up an informal study of one hundred academic bloggers into two key findings: “Firstly, many bloggers are talking together in a kind of giant, global virtual common room. Over at one table there is a lively, even angry, conversation about working conditions in academia in different parts of the world.” “Secondly, we have come to see blogging as a variation of open access publishing. Academics can get to print early, share ideas which are still being cooked and stake a claim in part of a conversation without waiting to appear in print.” Visit <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/dec/02/why-do-academics-blog-research> to view *The Guardian* article.

Librarians, as academics, certainly fit into the discussion of blogging as a “virtual common room,” the tone is lively, but librarian blogs are generally more helpful and guidance-focused than academic blogs. Let’s look into some of the ways librarians are using this social media tool to advance librarianship.

During 2016, I curated a feature of selected scholarly blogs to be published in the *Choice Magazine’s* tablet edition. One of the subjects I was selecting was Library Science and I identified five to six scholarly blogs each month from the collection of blogs included in the **ACI Scholarly Blog Index**.

From this exercise, I saw that librarian blogs seemed to naturally fall into several

recognizable categories: technology, the profession itself, librarian practices, and product reviews. **Marshall Breeding**, an independent consultant, and his blog, *Library Technology Guides*, reports on the latest product and vendor developments, and keeps the library profession informed. *Library Stuff*, written by **Steve M. Cohen**, Senior Librarian, **Law Library Management, Inc.**, and *Letters to a Young Librarian*, by **Jessica Olin**, Library Director, **Wesley College**, focuses on professional development. **Olin’s** recent blog post: “Writing (and Righting) Library Policies” is a good example of providing guidance to younger professionals.

There is a generous number of librarian blogs on technology topics, all warranted with different points of view, on how to approach incorporating technology into library service, discovery, analytics, and communicating to the user community through various library websites.

**Jason Griffey’s** blog, *Pattern Recognition*, is a good starting point for looking at technology and public policy. **Griffey** is Head of Library Information Technology at the **University of Tennessee** and a Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at **Harvard University**. **David Lee King’s** blog, *David Lee King*, looks at social media, trends, technology, and libraries. A recent post, “One Big Social Media Prediction for 2017,” sums up **King’s** views on social media channels and libraries’ use of them for communication. **King** is Director of Digital Services at **Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library**.

Scholarly blogs in the **Library of Congress** Classifications of librarianship, information science, technology, and the history of scholarship are all worth reading to keep up with the trends in librarianship and participate in what’s being discussed in the “virtual common room.” 🌿

**Column Editor’s Note:** All of the blogs mentioned here are included in the **ACI Scholarly Blog Index** along with other *Library and Information Science* blogs. — **PS**

