

7 Novellas + 1 Novel = An Infinite Literature

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Faithful to the call for submissions of critical texts – articles or essays – for publication in *Revista Scripta*, issue 67, which aims to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the publication of the seven “novellas” of *Corpo de baile*¹ and the novel *Grande sertão: veredas*² by João Guimarães Rosa, we present here the result of this tribute.

We apologize for a certain delay in this publication, which was originally intended for the end of 2025, so that the tribute would occur at the very beginning of the “septuagenary” year, considering, quite precisely, the publication of *Corpo de baile* on February 29, 1956, and that of *Grande sertão: veredas* on July 16 of the same year. The author had already published *Sagarana* in 1946, which would therefore also be marking a milestone anniversary, its eightieth. However, the emphasis on the two 1956 publications also aims to draw attention to the release, within the same year and separated by only a few months, of approximately 1,400 pages (considering the first editions). In a way, this constitutes a literary phenomenon in itself, among so many others starring Guimarães Rosa.

This delay, however, deserves an explanation: the number of critical text submissions exceeded the editors’ expectations –

1 *Corpo de baile* has never been translated in its entirety into the English language as a single book. Some of the novellas that make up *Corpo de baile* have been published independently or in anthologies abroad.

2 Although the novel *Grande sertão: veredas* was translated into English for the first time in 1963 (*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*) and has new translations scheduled, such as Alison Entrekin’s *Vastland: The Crossing* (2027), the text will refer to the novel using its original title.

there were 47 (forty-seven) proposals. Consequently, it became necessary to mobilize a large number of scholars and researchers of Rosa's literature to assist us with their readings and peer reviews, to whom we extend our gratitude. Thus, selecting around one-third of the submissions – roughly 15 (fifteen) texts – to maintain *Scripta*'s customary publication standards was a laborious yet rigorous process, which “forced” the editorial team to expand the selection to 20 (twenty) articles/essays to be published. The acceptance of a larger number of works also considered PUC Minas's long-standing tradition regarding studies on the Minas Gerais-born writer.

Scripta has already featured, in its previous publications, three special issues dedicated to Guimarães Rosa, resulting from the memorable International Guimarães Rosa Conferences held in 1997, 2001, and 2004; as well as three voluminous issues of “Veredas de Rosa” in 2000, 2003, and 2007, which contain the complete proceedings of the Seminars. It is also worth noting the importance of these journals for critics, scholars, and researchers of Rosa's oeuvre, given the volume of citations these publications receive in national and international dissertations, theses, and books. Beyond these “commemorative” issues of *Scripta*, there were others, more scattered, within thematic dossiers that allowed for texts engaging in dialogue with other literatures and authors. With great joy, we also note the presence of around 6 (six) returning authors in this issue of *Scripta* 67, who have enriched Rosa's criticism in the past – on more than one occasion – with their stimulating essays and articles.

With our apologies presented, it is also time to thank all those who responded to the call for *Scripta* 67.

In the call for papers, we requested critical texts that would establish a dialogue between contemporary readings of Rosa's work, suggesting interpretive angles encompassing, for example, inclusion and diversity, ecocriticism, queer literature, intersemiotics, or interarts, and more "canonical" productions that form the backbone of Guimarães Rosa's critical fortune. This proposal for a dialogue between tradition and innovation, besides aligning with our Rosa's preference (we surmise) – for whom "this world is very mixed" and "everything is and is not" – acknowledges that readings of literary texts are unequivocally bound to the context of reception, while considering that literature is, to a large extent, a mimesis of society.

If a "classic" is a book that never ceases to speak, as Italo Calvino once said, then how can we not read this "Rosian classic" as a book of crossings that are also historical, social, and ideological, crossings of (and in) a "brave new world"?

The time has come for new readings; for "another old new story," to paraphrase "Fita verde no cabelo" (*Estas estórias*), made possible and welcomed by prior and circulating readings that have paved the way. *Scripta* 67 strongly aspires to be the vehicle and platform for this dialogue among critical interpretations. And so, we believe, it has been accomplished. Now it is up to the readers to offer their assessment.

As promised, this issue organizes the readings into three thematic axes: the axis of the novellas of *Corpo de baile*; the axis dedicated to *Grande sertão: veredas*; and a third axis encompassing other works by Rosa that dialogue with the works celebrating their 70th anniversary. It should be noted that this planned third axis did not materialize, primarily because the submitted texts, already surprising in quantity, as noted, had

clearly defined objects of study (either the novellas or the novel), and the few texts proposing the intended dialogue did not focus on an “aesthetic” conversation with the novellas and/or the novel.

Accordingly, Section 1 of the journal accommodates readings of the novellas of *Corpo de baile*, while Section 2 is dedicated to *Grande sertão: veredas*.

In the section dedicated to *Corpo de baile*, we find articles/essays that address themes established in Rosa’s critical fortune while providing them with a more contemporary façade; texts dealing with the “human man” in his condition as a desiring subject, promoting a healthy blend of classical knowledge and contemporary experiences; and texts whose readings of *Corpo de baile* are grounded in issues crucial to our contemporary era, such as sustainability, ancestry, and ageism, within the perpetual framework of world mixtures and paradoxes so dear to Guimarães Rosa.

We present each of the 4 (four) essays dedicated to *Corpo de baile*:

The essay “*Corpo de baile*: Desires and Loves in the Old Age”, by Cleusa Rios P. Passos, examines desires and romantic love experienced in mature age. This proposal immediately prompts the reader to explore a pressing contemporary topic. Maturity – or, without euphemism, old age – has been mistreated in society, even giving rise to a specific prejudice: ageism. Welcome indeed is this text which, reading four novellas from *Corpo de baile* (“Uma estória de amor”, “Buriti”, “A estória de Lélío e Lina”, and “Cara-de-Bronze”), addresses this issue anchored in psychoanalytic theory – namely Freud and Lacan – bringing to light the desire so often denied, subjectively and socially, to those who have lived longer.

“The Swamp of Earthly Delights”, by Edinael Sanches Rocha, focuses on “Brejo de umbigo” in *Corpo de baile* to analyze the depiction of nature, constructed almost as a character, alongside evocative imagery of a certain eroticism peculiar to fictional beings, suggesting multiple layers of meaning and enhancing the richness of the reading through both stylistic analysis and connections established with various sources.

In “From Mutum to Buriti Bom: Miguilim’s Journey Across *Corpo de baile*” Mayara de Andrade Calqui proposes a reading of the *Corpo de baile* cycle, tracking the movement of characters across its 7 (seven) texts, focusing particularly on Miguilim’s trajectory – the central figure of “Campo geral” – and his return as Miguel in “Buriti”. This focus reveals one of the underlying dynamics of the cycle through the characters’ displacements across the *sertão*, understood also as a symbolic space wherein diverse affective bonds emerge.

Also focusing on the same text from *Corpo de baile*, Michel Riaudel contributes the article “Beleza geral: Uma leitura de *Campo Geral*”, in which he addresses one of the singular features of Rosa’s fictional craftsmanship, highlighting how the narrative constructs a third-person voice tensioned by the first person. To this device is added a unique articulation between the dramatic and the reflective; these aspects underscore the fundamental role of beauty and joy active in “Miguilim”, guided throughout the plot by the presence of birds.

In the section dedicated to Rosa’s novel, we find critical articles/essays that revisit themes established by more “orthodox” criticism while contextualizing them in our contemporary moment, or address pressing issues of these first decades of the 21st century, such as cognitive science, ecocriticism, decolonial

thought, and queer literature. These texts rethink interpretive directions that, while respecting what has already been read and recorded in Guimarães Rosa's critical fortune, project new analytical paths in dialogue with tradition. Furthermore, they emphasize the potential circulation of Rosa's literature through another translation (in both strict and broad senses) and through strategies that "democratize" the Rosa's fiction, frequently regarded as a complex read.

There are 16 (sixteen) texts dedicated to the novel *Grande sertão: veredas*:

"Evil and Good in *Grande sertão: veredas*" is authored by Adélia Bezerra de Menezes. If the article's title might deceptively suggest well-trodden questions of *Grande sertão*, we rediscover them treated in an innovative manner, demanding renewed reflection from the reader. Alluding to the "mythomorphic novel" concept according to Benedito Nunes, the text addresses Good/God and Evil/Devil through the lens of reversibility and ambiguity, highlighting the figure of the paradox so dear to Guimarães Rosa. Worthy of special emphasis in the author's critical text is the close reading of the pact scene, in which the common contradiction, God/Devil, is stylistically enunciated for the reader, challenging the apparent objective driving Riobaldo toward the pact as read in the literal statements of the novel. To forge this path toward a new interpretation of the pact, the author delves deep: drawing upon Hegelian philosophy, Isaac Luria's Kabbalah, and philosopher Simone Weil. The analytical-interpretive reading does not stop there: the text also brings in Quelemém, for whom comparing and selling are "nearly identical actions", etymologically echoing Indo-European roots as noted by Bakhtin. As can be seen, Good and Evil / God and

Devil in *Grande sertão* under a new perspective makes for a deeply engaging read.

The essay “Companion Species: a Reading of Guimarães Rosa’s Poetics from the Perspective of Ecocriticism and Animal Studies”, written by Angela Guida and Gleidson André Pereira de Melo, seeks to enter the critical arena that, since the early decades of the 21st century, has turned its attention to planet preservation and its trajectory amidst potential environmental disasters. In this regard, the article grounds itself theoretically in ecocriticism as one of the essential lenses for reading Rosian literature.

Following critical studies on the narrator’s loves in *Grande sertão: veredas* – notably Benedito Nunes’s chapter “Love in the Work of Guimarães Rosa” in *Fortuna crítica: Guimarães Rosa* (edited by Eduardo Faria Coutinho) – Claudia Campos Soares revisits the narrator’s affections: Diadorim and Otacília. “Revisiting Riobaldo’s Two Loves” compares outlawed love with socially accepted love, examining their impact on Riobaldo’s path. The conflicts are analyzed as tension between passion-love (boundless) and balance-love. How do these shape the narrator’s crossing? Are they antagonistic, complementary, or interdependent amidst the world’s mixtures? A compelling inquiry.

The article “Epicidade rosiana e a questão romântico-idealista de uma nova mitologia: senso de épico e vontade de individuação”, by Constantino Luz de Medeiros and Lucas Branco de Araújo Motta, revitalizes studies on literary genres in Guimarães Rosa’s novel. It brings renewed reflections on the blending and hybridity of literary genres and forms, which may function as authorial strategies to stage the very act of writing the

novel. The article surveys Rosian critical fortune, emphasizing the *sertão* as a mythopoetic space where “heroic heritage” and “subjective fragmentation” exist in tension, thereby pointing to the representation of the “contradictions of the modern subject” and prompting readers to engage with yet another singularity of *Grande sertão: veredas*.

“Riobaldo’s Theater of Consciousness: A Semiotic-Cognitive Analysis of *Grande sertão: veredas*”, by Dênia Moreira Andrade, traces Riobaldo’s stream of consciousness, examining in particular the staging of his love for Diadorim. Grounded theoretically in textual analysis, Cognitive Semiotics, and Phenomenology, it explores the narrator’s subjectivity and search for meaning. The article employs a rigorous, analytical-interpretive close reading of meticulously selected romantic scenes within Riobaldo’s narrated “staging”, offering rich insights to the reader.

Erich Soares Nogueira writes “Guimarães Rosa and the Song of the Sirens”, employing the myth of these mythical beings and the lure of their song, akin to Homer’s *Odyssey*. Nogueira identifies three distinct vocal modulations, articulating them with poetic language and Rosa’s narrative act, selecting figures such as Diadorim and Lina. His critical approach incorporates reflections by psychoanalyst Hervé Bentata regarding the Greek universe, alongside observations by thinkers such as Maurice Blanchot, Jeanne Marie Gagnebin, and Adorno & Horkheimer.

Regarding the reception of the novel, Fabrício Lemos da Costa’s “The Reception of *Grande sertão: veredas*, by Guimarães Rosa, in *Jornal do Brasil*” examines the initial critical response in 1956-1957. The article explores early readings, analyzing non-human metaphors to capture the untamed essence of Rosa’s fiction, drawing upon Silviano Santiago’s critical framework.

“*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands: Perspectives on the Anglophone Grande sertão: veredas and Some of Its Effects on Translation Teaching*”, by Gilberto Alves Araújo, Gizélia Maria da Silva Freitas, and Eliene Rodrigues Sousa, provides a timely critique of the English translations of Rosa’s masterpiece. With Alison Entrekin’s new translation anticipated for 2027, the article critically evaluates the first English translation (1963) through translation theory. Analyzing ten excerpts, the authors examine strategies of domestication, omission, and modulation, identifying losses in rhythm, ambiguity, and symbolic density, while also demonstrating how these “productive flaws” can serve pedagogical purposes in translator training.

“‘It takes a lot of courage’: Afro-indigenous and Galician Crossings in *Grande sertão: veredas*”, by Henrique Rodrigues Leroy, analyzes an episode of the novel through translingual and decolonial frameworks aimed at highlighting examples of a “counter-language” to de-naturalize and deconstruct language colonialities. It relies on dictionaries of Bantu, Yoruba, Tupi, and Galician languages, alongside anthropological insights and reflections on the linguistic diversity present in Rosa’s prose.

“Transvestite Women: A Comparative Journey Between Diadorim in *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* and the *Assemblywomen* of Aristophanes”, by Jean-Paul Giusti, Edinaura Linhares Ferreira Lima, and Marcelle Pereira Santos, addresses “gender” from two perspectives: literary genre (Brazilian novel and Greek comedy) and the problematization of gender through queer theory, focusing on two cross-dressed characters: Diadorim in the *sertão* and the Athenian women. This comparison, across different historical periods and spaces, illustrates how cross-dressing connects fictional subjects, offering an invigorating dialogue between tradition and modernity.

Still concerning Diadorim... This extraordinary and haunting character of Brazilian literature insists on returning, and readers insist alongside her. Leandro Bessa's essay, "Diadorim: A Spectral Image in *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*", signals this presence in its title. Diadorim embodies the tension between love and death; in Bessa's reading, she is an "unsettling, spectral figure haunting Riobaldo's memory and discourse". Engaging with Diadorim as a phantasmic figure opens avenues into what Riobaldo calls "a Diadorim somewhat singular, like a ghost". Through psychoanalysis, the text reads a melancholic discourse in Riobaldo's tone, contributing an analytical interpretation that demonstrates Rosa's enduring relevance while engaging queer theory and gender studies.

"Listen, sir – listen beyond what I am telling you": *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* as a Listening Space" an essay authored by four researchers – Luiza Milano, Gibran Ayub, Augusto Stevanin, and Ramiro Machado – presents a reading of Rosa's novel through its phonic marks and combinations. It emphasizes that the work functions as a space of listening where, in addition to Riobaldo's interlocutor, the reader emerges as a "listener", taking an active role in constructing narrative meaning.

Another article on *Grande sertão: veredas* takes a proverb as its title: "Shared is the harvest, but weeding is a solitary endeavor": Ecumenical Micro-narratives and the Sharecropper Poetics of Oraliture in *Grande sertão: veredas*", by Marcelo Marinho and Elizabete da Conceição Vieira. The text uses the metaphor of an "ecumenical omelet" to read the novel across universal and spiritual dimensions – complementary categories in Riobaldo's "mixed world". Grounded in religious syncretism

and the concept of *oraliture*, the article frames the narrator as a bard/rhapsode integrating sacred and profane elements, examining Riobaldo's philosophical and spiritual quest.

"Narrating and Re-existing: a Way of Being in the *Sertão*. *Sertanejo* Narratives and the Novel *Grande sertão: veredas*" is authored by Rosa Amélia Pereira da Silva and André Fernandes Rodrigues Pereira. The lengthy title manages to announce what the essay intends: to narrate and resist in the *sertão* (backlands) as 'two sides of the same journey.' Departing, it seems to us, from the cognitive linguistics premise that 'the mind is narrative,' there is also a commitment to another meaning for to resist, highlighted by the graphic play – (r)exist, in which existing, living makes itself present. The reader is then motivated to read the results of research conducted with storytellers from the *sertão* of Minas Gerais who, analogously to Riobaldo who tells tales of experiences he lived and others that resulted from attentive listening – recreate 'their very existence and [remain] existing as a narrating community of the *sertão*.'

"The Story of Ornelas in *Grande sertão: veredas*", by Suely Corvacho and Renato de Araújo Cruz, focuses on one of many stories Riobaldo retells from hearsay. Riobaldo adopts the Benjaminian persona of the narrator of experience, orally imparting to a listening listener ("a writer") material that becomes the novel itself. This Rosian strategy – a "high aesthetic operation" (Antonio Candido) or "technical schema" (Davi Arrigucci Júnior) – underscores the metapoetic nature of the novel. The episode of rancher Ornelas offers a thought-provoking proverb: "Another can be us; but we cannot be another, nor should we...", evoking Jolles's "simple forms". The article applies psychoanalytic concepts from Freud *et al.* to

interpret the tale heard in Barbaranha, illustrating how retelling creates an “enunciative *mise en abyme*” that synthesizes central themes of the novel.

Taking a comprehensive approach, Willi Bolle presents “*Grande sertão: veredas* – a Synthesis” discussing fundamental aspects of the novel: plot, relation to portraits of Brazil, the Sertão as a mode of thought, the *jagunço* system, the devil’s pact, the love between Riobaldo and Diadorim, geography, and language reinvention.

This is *Scripta* 67, presented by the Graduate Program in Literary Studies at PUC Minas to its readers as a gift.

To read Rosa is to allow oneself to be carried away by an infinite reading.

This infinite reading can be metaphorized as a thread weaving and embroidering many stories. The thread spins softly, touching language like spiders in their webs, connecting meanings (*point de capiton*?). In *Scripta* 67, we celebrate the embroideries that “transform literature into threads and textures” through the “Teia de Aranha” Group, founded 25 years ago, which provided our cover image. We extend our gratitude to Dr. Beth Ziani and the women of “Teia de Aranha”, whose art makes reading an act of resistance. The inner thread steps from behind the scenes onto the literary stage, expressing infinite movement – symbolized by the lemniscate, the Borromean knot, or the Möbius strip – closing the novel while opening it a new to every reader.

Infinitely

