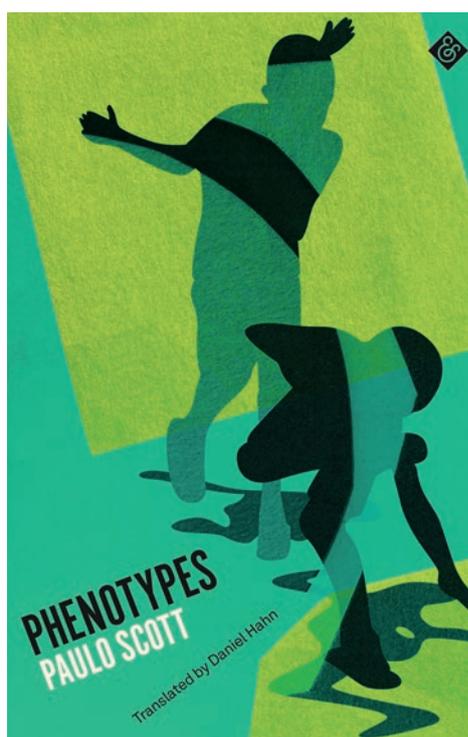




Reading Guide



Phenotypes

Paulo Scott

Translated by Daniel Hahn

And Other Stories

thebookerprizes.com

What the judges said

'A remarkably open and honest study of race, Paulo Scott's *Phenotypes* grapples with contentious issues we may not yet have the language to discuss, which makes it all the more urgent. Daniel Hahn's masterful translation engages with the text with humility and perceptiveness.'

About the book

A smart and stylish account of the bigotry lurking in hearts and institutions alike.

Federico and Lourenço are brothers. Their father is black, a famed forensic pathologist for the police; their mother is white. Federico – distant, angry, analytical – has light skin, which means he's always been able to avoid the worst of the racism that Brazilian culture has to offer. He can 'pass' as white, and yet, because of this, he has devoted his life to racial justice. Lourenço, on the other hand, is dark-skinned, easy-going, and well-liked in the brothers' hometown of Porto Alegre – and has become a father himself.

As Federico's fiftieth birthday looms, he joins a governmental committee in the capital. It is tasked with quelling the increasingly violent student protests rocking Brazil. Before he can come to grips with his feelings about this initiative, not to mention a budding romance with one of his committee colleagues, Federico is called home: his niece has just been arrested at a protest carrying a concealed gun. And not just any gun. A stolen police service revolver that Federico and Lourenço hid for a friend decades before. A gun used in a killing.

Paulo Scott here probes the old wounds of race in Brazil. Exploratory rather than didactic, a story of crime, street-life and regret as much as a satirical novel of ideas, *Phenotypes* is a seething masterpiece of rage and reconciliation.

About the author

Paulo Scott was born in 1966 in Porto Alegre, in southern Brazil, and grew up in a working-class neighbourhood. At university, Scott was an active member of the student political movement and was also involved in Brazil's re-democratisation process. For ten years he taught law at university in Porto Alegre. He has now published four books of fiction and four of poetry. He also translates from English. He moved to Rio de Janeiro in 2008 to focus on writing full-time.

About the translator

Daniel Hahn is a writer, editor and translator with some sixty-something books to his name. His work has won him the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, the Blue Peter Book Award and the International Dublin Literary Award, and he has been shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize, among others. He was born in London in 1973 and lives in Lewes, UK.



The author says...

'The book is inspired by a non-place (or an in-between place) – something that is experienced by light-skinned black people, as is my case, people who are identified, in Brazil (this country which is not a country of white people), depending on the situation, as white people. In the novel, the anger that this subjectivity can express is the driving element of the narrative. In the initial conception, the intention was to write a novel, without easy answers, about anger in a society as unequal as Brazilian society.'



The translator says...

'There are many motivations for translating, but one of them is an urge to bring a book to new readers. *Phenotypes* is definitely one of those for me – I think it's a truly astonishing work, not just important for its subject and how that subject is handled, but also incredibly original and sophisticated as a work of literature.'

Further reading

Clarice Lispector *The Hour of the Star*
Machado de Assis *The Collected Stories*
Graciliano Ramos *Barren Lives*
José Eduardo Agualusa *A General Theory of Oblivion*
Juan Rulfo *Pedro Páramo*
Jorge Luis Borges *Labyrinths*

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