CLARICE LISPECTOR (1920-1977)

A hora da estrela (1977)

translated into English as

The Hour of the Star (1986)

Three poignant intertwined narratives and about thirteen characters in less than 100 pages!

A most powerful modern novella about the plight of the lonely poor migrants and their angst in large cities.

Colm Tóibín:
CLARICE LISPECTOR’S THE HOUR OF THE STAR IS AS BEWILDERING AS IT IS BRILLIANT.
A proverbial fortune teller, tells the protagonist, Macabéa, that her life is about to take a new turn, a foreigner with a key role ....

No big philosophical terms or twisted logic for this superbly talented Brazilian author. Her motto could be ‘every individual is responsible for giving meaning to life and living it passionately and authentically’.

Details of available publications:

ENGLISH


Also:


PORTUGUESE

Various editions in Portuguese.

Free downloads from:


SHORT HISTORY OF THE BOOK AND TRANSLATIONS

A hora da estrela was published on 26th October 1977 a short time before Clarice Lispector was admitted to the hospital (Lapa/National Public Health Hospital–
with terminal cancer. It was handwritten on various bits and pieces of paper, which were assembled into a final version. Clarice Lispector’s secretary, friend and confidant Olga Borelli (1931-2002) assisted her with the task.

Clarice Lispector used to scribble down things that inspired her and then create her works by typing them herself often interrupted by her sons Pedro and Paulo. She excelled as a mother and regarded her writing as incidental in her life. She always typed her works. However, as she started writing *Um sopro de vida – Pulsações* and later *A hora da estrela*, she suddenly turned to handwriting. She would claim that she felt too lazy to type, which at the time seemed rather odd. Later, the reason for the apparent state of laziness became clear. It was the ailment undermining her body that was the cause for the change. O. Borelli spoke about C. Lispector’s writing process and about her manuscripts in a 1979 recording, featured in a TV Cultura programme by Gastão Moreira in 2006.

Paulo Gurgel Valente, the youngest son of the author, started to deposit her manuscripts at the Instituto Moreira Salles (IMS) in 2004. The first set contained the original manuscripts of *A hora da estrela* (1977) and *Um sopro de vida* (1978), which were typed manuscripts in bound format with signed notes and amendments. In addition, the first lot also included the short story ‘A bela e a fera’ (1979); her letters and 896 books on a wide range of topics from magic tricks to astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, psychology and literature. Further comprehensive details, available at the IMS site: [http://claricelispectorims.com.br/Facts](http://claricelispectorims.com.br/Facts)
A hora da estrela gained great acclaim both in Brazil and abroad. Perhaps it was the film A hora da estrela by the talented Brazilian woman film director, Suzana Amaral (1932 - ), A Hora da Estrela (Hour of the Star), that projected the profile of Clarice Lispector further afield. Her film, a Submission to the 59th Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film, earned the actress Marcelia Cartaxo the Silver Bear for Best Actress and at the 36th Berlin International Film Festival. By 1986, the film was shown throughout Brazil bringing attention to Clarice Lispector’s oeuvre.

In 1984, Earl Eugene Fitz published a biography, Clarice Lispector, followed by an enlarged version the following year (Boston: G.K. Hall).

At the Faculdade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, in December 1986, N. Kerecuk spoke about Clarice Lispector and particularly A hora da estrela and Suzana Amaral’s recent film in a lecture on modern Brazilian literature, which generated great interest.

The British scholar and translator, Giovanni Pontiero (1932-1996), published the first translation of the novella in 1986, published by Carcanet as a hardback and has been reprinted many times since.

The French critic and scholar Hélène Cixous (1937-), author of Reading With Clarice Lispector (Theory and History of Literature), 1990, stated that The Hour of the Star ‘is a text on poverty that is not poor’.

The Quebecois author Claire Varin that has nurtured a passion for Portuguese, discovered Clarice Lispector writing her doctoral thesis on Clarice Lispector. She visited Brazil six times and her research resulted in two books Rencontres Brésiliennes (1987, revised & enlarged edition 2007) and Langues de Feu!, (1990, translated into Portuguese: Línguas de Fogo, 2002). She also produced an interesting video on Clarice Lispector (http://clairevarin.com/).

In 1994, Jesse Larsen included the novella in her 500 Great Books by Women, stating, ‘In less than one hundred pages, Clarice Lispector tells a brilliantly multi-faceted and searing story.’


CLARICE LISPECTOR (1920-1977)

A short biography is available on last year’s posting of our Brazilian Bilingual Book Club for February 2015
http://culturalbrazil.org/2015/01/22/february-clarice-lispector-the-passion-according-to-g-h/

Further details can be found (in Portuguese) at
http://claricelispectorims.com.br/Facts

The film *A hora da estrela* can be seen on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WADoAAwc2E
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=376JgN-2Ec

©Nadia Kerecuk
Convenor of the © Brazilian Bilingual Book Club