

**BRAZILIAN BILINGUAL BOOK CLUB | CLARICE LISPECTOR
| *UMA APRENDIZAGEM OU O LIVRO DOS PRAZERES* | *AN
APPRENTICESHIP, OR, THE BOOK OF DELIGHTS* and *AN
APPRENTICESHIP OR THE BOOK OF PLEASURES***

14th December 2023, 6.30-9 PMBST

BRAZILIAN BILINGUAL BOOK CLUB – Year Nine - Embassy of Brazil in London

2023 –Year of the Brazilian fictional escapism and mindful solace
#2023Brazilianfictionalescapism+mindfulsolace

SPECIAL YEAR NINE TRADITIONAL CELEBRATORY LITERARY QUIZ

Announcement of the Reading List for the first half of 2024

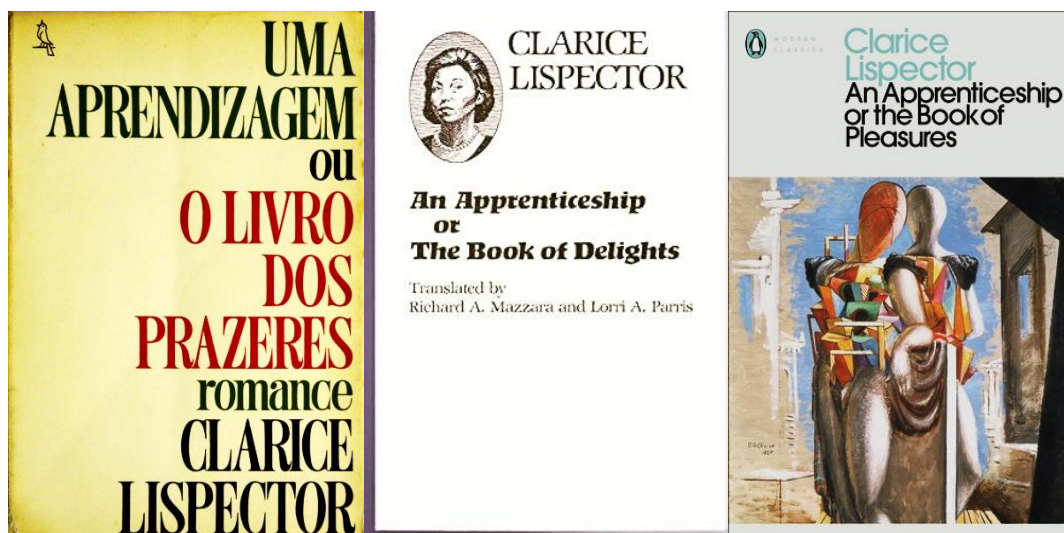
Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres (1969)

CLARICE LISPECTOR (1920-1977)

translated as

An apprenticeship, or, The book of delights (1986)

An Apprenticeship or The Book of Pleasures (2021)



A delightful love story interwoven with philosophical musings. Clarice Lispector's characters search for the meaning of life, their inner souls, and the workings of the human mind and thought!

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How to overcome strong passions of the soul and basic universal emotions such as fear, and a perception of haunting fear?

This is a meditative multi-layered novel, which will enthrall all readers. Why does the novel reference the *Apocalypse*, Augusto dos Anjos' *Monologue of a Shadow*, the *Pithecanthropus Erectus* (Javaman), Arthur Honegger's 1938 oratorio *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, the musicians Zdeněk Rytíř and Karel Svoboda, Solomon's *Song of Songs*, Heinrich Heines's *Die Lorelei*?

Readers ought to go with the flow of the meditative narrative in the company of the protagonist, and revel in the sights, sounds, scents, and hues of nature rendered through a consummate choice of words and idiosyncratic use of syntax along with the rhythm recorded in the quirky punctuation, delight in the learning (more than apprenticing) process, and perhaps even achieve a luminescent state of grace.

Who is Lorelei's Ulisses, or Ulysses, or is he the ancient wise Odysseus? The essence of what it means being human, humanness, and the human condition are recurrent themes in Clarice Lispector's works. Over half a century after the publication of this novel the issue of being truly human has become urgently relevant in this age of nefarious advances of A.I. and all sorts of make-believe it engenders!

Our members and dedicated readers will not miss the confluences of ideas with those contained at the core of her novels, specifically, *The Besieged City* (1948/9), *The Apple in the Dark* (1961), *The Passion According to G.H.* (1964), and *Água Viva* (1973) as well as some of the chronicles in *Discovering the World* (1967-1973).

How will readers react to Clarice Lispector's masterly narrative of philosophically erotic, sensual-affective nature? And perhaps of ought to wonder (audaciously/cheekily), what percentage of male authors would be her match?

A perfect literary escape with plenty of mindful solace to be found in this magnificent book, closing another marvellous year reading Brazilian literature, and refuting tired *clichés*.

Our book club has greatly enjoyed reading Clarice Lispector from the first year of our book club. Visit our website to learn more about her magnificent *oeuvre*.

Details of available publications:

ENGLISH

1986-*An apprenticeship, or, The book of delights* by R. A. Mazzara and L. A. Parris.
University Texas Press ISBN: 0292790317 ISBN: 0292790309

Available to borrow from the Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/details/apprenticeshipor00lisp>

2021-*An Apprenticeship or The Book of Pleasures* by Stephan Tobler Penguin Classics and New Directions ISBN-10: 0241371368 ISBN-13: 978-0241371367
ISBN10: 0811230619 ISBN-13: 978-0811230612

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PORTUGUESE

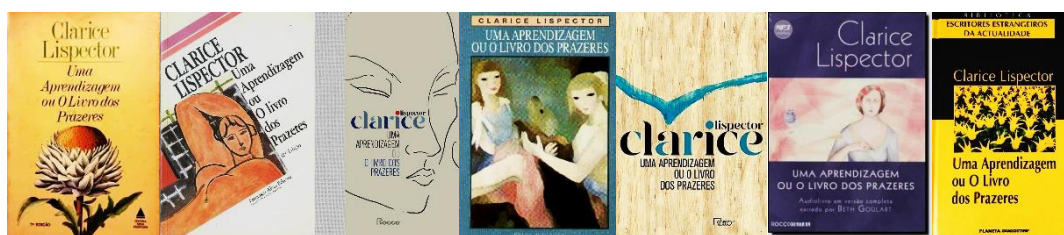
1969 - *Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres*

Various editions, e.g. by Rocco ISBN-10: 8532509525 ISBN-13: 978-8532509529
ASIN: B08H5WRMF7

Free downloads:

- <https://joacamillopenna.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/lispector-uma-aprendizagem-ou-o-livro-dos-prazeres.pdf>
- https://issuu.com/marlacerda/docs/uma_aprendizagem.._issuu

SHORT HISTORY OF THE BOOK AND TRANSLATIONS



Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres was published by the publishing house Editora Sabiá (180 pages) in Rio de Janeiro in 1969. The cover is by Belmiro Pires. Editora Sabiá was launched by the writers Fernando Sabino (1923-2004) and Rubem Braga (1913-1990) as a branch of the publishing house Editora do Autor, in 1966, later purchased by Livraria José Olympio Editora in 1972. Since then, the novel has been in print in Brazil by various publishers and formats.



The novel has two parts, a very short introductory *A origem da primavera ou A morte necessária em pleno dia* translated as *The Beginning of Spring or A Necessary Death in Broad Light* (1986) *The Origin of Spring or The Necessary Death in the Middle of the Day* (2021) and *Luminiscência, Luminescence*, with unnumbered chapters of varying sizes. Prominent is the punctuation and paragraph structure as the novel begins with a comma followed by a verb in the past tense printed in low case

, estava tão ocupada, viera das compras (...)

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And closes with a semicolon, defying the established purpose of the punctuation, and usual grammatical logic:

(...), eu penso o seguinte:

The paragraphs are set out in print in an unconventional form with shorter and longer paragraphs without any punctuation printed in blocks. An allusion perhaps to the flow of inner thought mirroring a rhythm reminiscent of musical sentences of the twentieth century modern era musical compositions.

The novel has three epigraphs. The first is from the *Apocalypse*, IV, verse 1:

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. (KJV)

Clarice Lispector referenced the *Apocalypse* in her 1948/9 novel *The Besieged City*.

The second epigraph is an edited selection of the twenty-fifth stanza *Monologue of a Shadow* by Augusto dos Anjos (1884-1914) from his only poetry anthology *Eu (e outras poesias)* published in 1912.

Provo.....
Que a mais alta expressão
da dor.....
Consiste essencialmente
na alegria.....



The whole stanza reads:

Provo desta maneira ao mundo odiento
Pelas grandes razões do sentimento,
Sem os métodos da abstrusa ciência fria
E os trovões gritadores da dialética,
Que a mais alta expressão da dor estética
Consiste essencialmente na alegria.

You can see whole poem at <https://www.revistaprosaversoearte.com/monologo-de-uma-sombra-um-instigante-poema-de-augusto-dos-anjos/>

In this way I prove to the hateful world
Through the great reason of feeling,
Without the methods of obtuse, cold science

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And the noisy thunders of the dialectic;
That the highest expression of aesthetic pain
Consists essentially in joy.

Source: From a translation in English <https://thegalwayreview.com/2013/10/31/augusto-dos-anjos-monologue-of-a-shadow/>

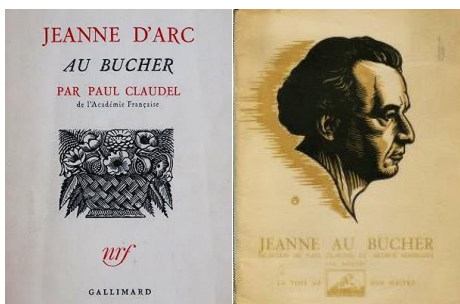
The third epigraph is from *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* (*Joan of Arc at the Stake*), an oratorio by Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), a Swiss composer born in France, who lived a large part of his life in Paris. A member of *Les Six*, his best known work is probably *Antigone*, composed between 1924 and 1927 to the French libretto by Jean Cocteau based on the tragedy *Antigone* by Sophocles.

Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher was set to a libretto by Paul Claudel (1868-1955), a French poet, playwright, and diplomat, and the younger brother of the sculptor Camille Claudel (1864-1943). He was most famous for his verse dramas, which often convey his devout Catholicism.

Jeanne:

Je ne veux pas mourir! J'ai peur!

.....
Il y a la joie qui est la plus forte!



<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/honegger-jeanne-darc-au-b%C3%BBcher>

On the following page, there is a puzzling or mystifying brief ‘note’, which defies standard rules of concord and syntax (reflexive verb form used to reference the request of an inanimate being which thus becomes ‘animate’) and semantic-grammatical logic (I am stronger than I) by ‘C.L.’

NOTA

Este livro se pediu uma liberdade maior que tive medo de dar. Ele está muito acima de mim. Humildemente tentei escrevê-lo. Eu sou mais forte do que eu.
C.L.

This book asked/entreated from itself greater freedom, which I feared to grant. It is appreciably greater than I. Humbly, I tried to write it. I am stronger than I. (N.K.)

C.L.

Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres is the sixth novel by Clarice Lispector and, similarly to her other novels, it contains a singular thesaurus of covert, often highly

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metaphorical, references to antiquity and world classics, history, archeology, anthropology, theology, faith and religions, flora and fauna in nature with numerous symbolic overtones, music and mathematics, passions of the soul (vices) and emotions, actual locations in Rio de Janeiro city and state (e.g., town of Campos dos Goyacazes, the borough of Glória, the barroque Saint Luzia Church and its site dating back to sixteenth century, Rua (do) Lage), locations overseas (e.g. Bern, Switzerland and site of the siren Lorelei in the Middle Rhine Valley between Bingen and Koblenz) along with numerous philosophical, theological and psychological concepts. Those references are neatly interwoven in the multi-layered narrative. The novel disguises a highly cerebral argument.

Clarice Lispector used to scribble on a myriad of notes in the process of writing her fiction and rewriting many times before publication. In the interview given to Edilberto Coutinho, on 29th April 1976, the author commented about how her writing process.

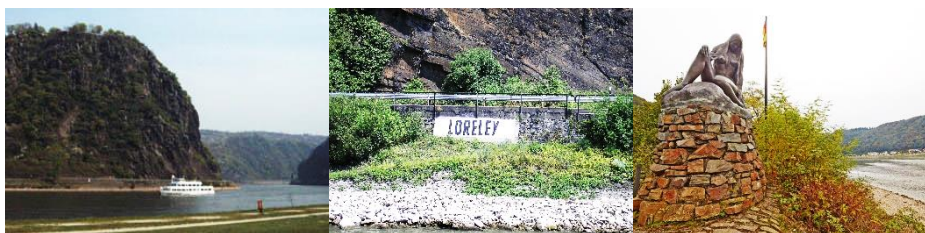
‘I take notes. At times, I wake up in the middle of the night, and scribble down a sentence before going back to sleep. I am able to write in the dark, at a cinema, my little notebook is always in my handbag. Later, even I find it difficult to decipher my handwriting. That’s how it’s been. Since my first book. I had lots of notes and could figure out what to do with them. Lúcio Cardoso (1912-1968) told me that if all the notes were about the same theme, then I had a ready book.’ (N.K.)

However, she would not bother to keep either original notes nor manuscripts. When Eliana Vasconcelos was preparing an inventory of her manuscripts for the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation, she found a single typed manuscript (*Água Viva*), which was published in 1994. Once Clarice Lispector commented that she ‘always made a last copy of my latest book, because by copying I am able to keep modifying, adding, and meddling with the books’. Once a book was published, she did not go back to revise it.

There have been four editions of *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres* during the author’s lifetime, the first two in 1969 and 1973 published by the Editora Sabiá with another two published by José Olympio in 1974 and 1976.

The author builds two multi-layered characters, naming them Lorelei and Ulysses. Both names contain onion-like metaphorical references. In a Sherlock Holmes-detective style (one of the authors whom Ulysses briefly quotes in the novel!) she conceals centuries of world tales associated to both names. Often, we see Lori described as an ‘ancient’ woman.

Where does the name Lorelei come from? The 1801 ballad *Zu Bacharach am Rheine* by Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) introduced the legend of the woman of Lorelei (Lore Lay) who was convicted of bewitching men, and murdering them, falls to her death from the cliff, leaving an echo of her name behind her. The poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) refined the story in his 1824 poem *Die Lorelei*. The poem describes a female siren who sits atop the cliff combing her hair. Her beauty and song lure men to their deaths on the cliff below.



<https://www.deutschland.de/en/the-siren-song-of-the-lorelei>

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Sirens also feature in the story of Odysseus, which in Roman times became Ulysses. His name is associated with numerous epithets, for example, Odysseus the Cunning or the Wise (Dares the Phrygian), man of many devices, from the Greek *πολύτροπον*, man of many turns/man of twists and turns, a complicated man.



Odysseus and the Sirens, a miniature from Benoît de Sainte Maure's *Le Roman de Troie* (1340-1350)

Oral literature most probably emerged as poetry and it has incorporated a plethora of myth and legends since time immemorial. Often, ancient oral poetry and story telling was told by singing poems, accompanied by various local and ancient musical instruments. Such songs and tales did feature sirens, sea (/river) nymphs, mermaids, *rusalky* and *mavky* (deeply rooted in ancient Ukrainian and Slavonic mythology), *yara/iara-mãe-de-água* (Brazil). In the novel, the reader will find numerous allusions to ancient myths. Our readers may notice that at a point the novel references Marc Chagall, born Moïse Shagal (1887-1985) in Byelorussia, who painted various sirens.

Clarice Lispector always interweaves her narratives with music. The brief reference to the composer Czech Karel Svoboda (1938-2007) and Czech poet and musician Zdeněk Rytíř (1944-2013) illustrate the point. The narrative mentions Solomon's Song of Songs (Canticle of Canticles) which is in the Hebrew Bible.

Song of Solomon

- 1 The song of songs, which is Solomon's.
- 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.
- 3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.
- 4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.
- 5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
- 6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.
- 7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?
- 8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.
- 9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
- 10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.
- 11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.
- 12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.
- 13 A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
- 14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.
- 15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.
- 16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.
- 17 The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Solomon%201&version=KJV>

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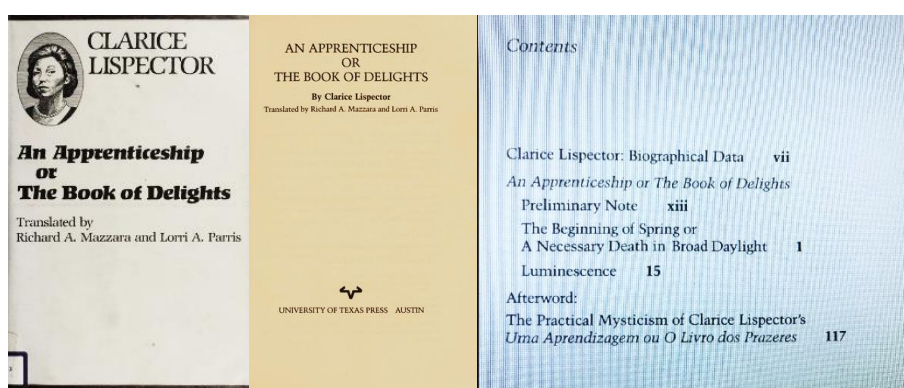
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Translations

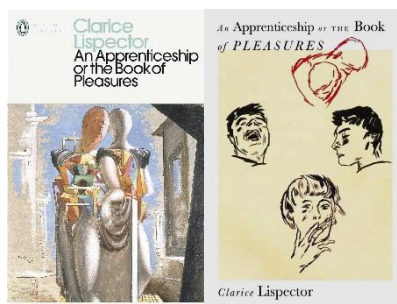
The first translation in English was *An apprenticeship, or, The book of delights* by Rirchard A. Mazzara and L. A. Parris and published by the University Texas Press in Austin in 1986. There are regrettably scant biographical details about the translators. Their translation obviously generated a great deal of interest and numerous academic works.

Earl E. Fitz published ‘A Discourse of Silence: The Postmodernism of Clarice Lispector’ in *Contemporary Literature*, [Vol. 28, No. 4, After the Boom: Recent Latin American Fiction \(Winter, 1987\)](#), pp. 420-436 (17 pages) published by the University of Wisconsin Press.

Susan K. Dulaney published her dissertation ‘Clarice Lispector's an Apprenticeship, or the Book of Delights: The Role of Silence in the Cultivation of Intimacy.’ Georgia State University, 2008 see <https://doi.org/10.57709/1059490>



The second translation appeared in 2021 as *An Apprenticeship or The Book of Pleasures* by Stephan Tobler published by Penguin Classics and New Directions Corporation. The publication was supported by Ministry of Citizenship, The Brazilian National Library Foundation, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It contains an afterword by the Canadian writer Sheila Heti (1976-). The Penguin Edition is better value for money.



The text is in US English (spelling, lexicon, grammar). Annoyingly, the publishers did not allocate enough human time to avoid splitting words in wrong places (half-way of syllables). It is a highly complex narrative to translate. An example of translators and editors missing local Brazilian cultural references appears in the translation of names of plants: (i) *cravos de cemitério* (also *cravos-de-defunto*) translated as ‘cemetery carnations’ and (ii) *parasistas*, rendered as ‘parasites’. The first is actually marigold-*tagetes*, *Asztec marigold*, *Mexican marigold* and/or French marigolds.

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(<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/105531/tagetes-patula/details>). Traditionally, these flowers are taken to the cemetery or planted around tombs.



Tagetes erecta



Tagetes patula

'Parasitas' are epiphytic plants and the Brazilian Atlantic Forest and the Amazonian Forest has a huge variety of such plants.

The best-known epiphytic plants include mosses, orchids, and bromeliads such as Spanish moss (of the genus *Tillandsia*), but epiphytes may be found in every major group of the plant kingdom. Eighty-nine percent of (or about 24,000) terrestrial epiphyte species are flowering plants. The second largest group are the leptosporangiate ferns, with about 2,800 species (10% of epiphytes). About one-third of all fern species are epiphytes.[5] The third largest group is clubmosses, with 190 species, followed by a handful of species in each of the spikemosses, other ferns, Gnetales, and cycads. (Wikipedia)



Clarice Lispector mentions numerous plants and her knowledgeable of botany was exceptional. Please see post for her *Discovering the World* <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/embaixada-londres/sections/cultural-section/book-club/cult-bookclub-a-descoberta-do-mundo.pdf>

Stefan Tobler (1974-) was born in Belém, Brazil, to English and Swiss parents, Stefan Tobler is the publisher of *And Other Stories* and he is a literary translator from Portuguese and German, including much German poetry. He loves to read in French and Spanish too. His translation of Arno Geiger's *The Old King in His Exile* was shortlisted for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Prize and Schlegel-Tieck Prize, and his other translations include the Oxford Weidenfeld Translation Prize, shortlisted *Água Viva* by Clarice Lispector <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/embaixada-londres/sections/cultural-section/book-club/cult-bookclub-agua-viva.pdf> , and the Man Booker International Prize longlisted *A Cup of Rage* by Raduan Nassar.



In June 2007, Stefan Tobler as a young translator participated in one of the Machado de Assis's Week workshops at the Embassy of Brazil in London. In convening the Machado de Assis's Week, which launched the worldwide celebrations of birth centenary of Machado de Assis (1839-1908), I invited the English poet Stephen

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Watts to run a poetry translation workshop. Stephen Watts is an extraordinary poet and has collected details of all poems translated from Portuguese, and especially Brazilian Portuguese both in the U.K. and U.S.A. and created a database of poetry. <https://www.littletoller.co.uk/the-clearing/poetry/interview-stephen-watts>. On that occasion, Stefan Tobler joined the workshop and later, he would launch the successful And Other Stories Publishing. <https://www.andotherstories.org/authors/stefan-tobler/>

Translations of the novel have been appearing in other languages.



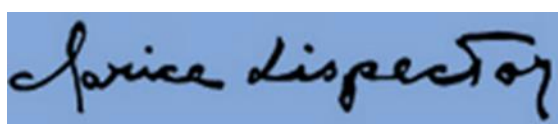
The novel was adapted for the cinema as *The Book of Delights* by Marcela Lordy in 2021 as an Argentinian-Brazilian film initiative. It is a free adaptation of *An Apprenticeship or the Book of Delights*. The film had its world premiere at the São Paulo International Film Festival, and went on to receive Special Mention and Best Performance (Simone Spoladore) prizes at the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema. In January 2024, the Cineclub at our Embassy will exhibit the film with a discussion.



<https://www.filmmovement.com/educational/film/the-book-of-delights>

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

CLARICE LISPECTOR
(10th December 1920 – 9th December 1977)



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Sculpture of Clarice Lispector – 2013 in Recife, Pernambuco | Sculpture of Clarice Lispector with her dog Ulisses, 2016
Near her house, Demetrio Albuquerque, photo by A. Júnior | by Edgar Duvivier (1955-) Pedra do Leme, Rio de Janeiro.

Clarice Lispector has been granted the accolade of the most notable Brazilian woman writer. Her *oeuvre* offers a multiplicity of legacies, many of which have yet to be unveiled. Without any doubt, she is one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. Her standing is often compared to that of Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Franz Kafka and many other men and women of genius.

Furthermore, her life story is truly fascinating and illustrative of the history of countless immigrants in Brazil, who eventually become Brazilian nationals: mothers and fathers with their children born abroad or in Brazil, who have been coming to Brazil to find shelter from multiple world wars, persecutions, and other international cataclysms especially from 19th century onwards. These immigrants have come and contributed to forging a new life for their families in Brazil, making invaluable contributions to a wealth of Brazilian culture, life, and institutions.

Haia Lispector, the third child of Pinkouss and Mania Lispector was born on 10th December 1920 in the town of Chechelnyk, in the Vynnytsia Oblast, Ukraine (which had come into Russian rule at the time). Her father changed the names of the family: Haia became Clarice, her parents, became Marieta and Pedro Lispector. Her family fled the persecutions in their homeland and arrived in the state of Maceió, Brazil, when she two months old in 1921 and, then moved to Recife in 1924, where her mother's sister, Zaina lived with her husband José Rabin, a prosperous local businessman. She spent her childhood in Recife at Maciel Pinheiro Square and attended João Barbalho Primary School and, subsequently, the traditional Ginásio Pernambucano (founded in 1825). She also studied piano, Yiddish, and Hebrew from 1930.

At an early age, she began to write. Once after going to the theatre, she wrote a short three-act play *Pobre menina rica* (*Poor Rich Girl*). She would go to a friend's father's bookshop to borrow books (her family could not afford them!) where she discovered *Reinações de Narizinho* (*'Reignings' of Little Nose Girl*) by Monteiro Lobato

(1882-1948). She began to write stories at that early age, which from the outset portrayed feelings and sensations, and deep critical thought.

Her mother died in 1930 and, in 1933, her father moved with the family to Rio de Janeiro, where Clarice continued her studies at the Sílvio Leite High School. She read a great deal from the usual romantics such as M. Dely, who most Brazilian teenage girls read, but also classics such as Machado de Assis, José de Alencar, Júlio Dinis, Eça de Queirós, Fiodor Dostoyevsky, and twentieth century writers such as Graciliano Ramos, Jorge Amado, Rachel de Queiros, to mention but a few. Her book collection (now at the Instituto Moreira Salles) contains many books on art, and even mathematics. A bit later, she discovered Katherine Mansfield's works at a small private lending library at Rua Rodrigo Silva.

As she prepared herself at the Colégio Andrews (1938) to read law, she would also make ends meet by providing private tuition in Math and Portuguese. She learned how to type and studied English at the Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa. In 1939, she started her Law studies at the Rio de Janeiro Federal University (at the time, the National University) and worked – translating scientific texts for a lab and as a secretary for a law firm. Her father died in 1940. In 1941, she became an editor of *Agência Nacional* working with author Lúcio Cardoso (1912-1968), who would become one of her best friends. Whilst at university she began to write her first novel *Perto do Coração Selvagem* (*Near the Wild Heart*). In 1943, she worked as editor for *A Noite* and *Diário da Tarde*, writing a ladies' column signed by Ilka Soares, as her ghost writer. In that year, she became a Brazilian citizen and married the diplomat Mauri Gurgel Valente (1921-1994).



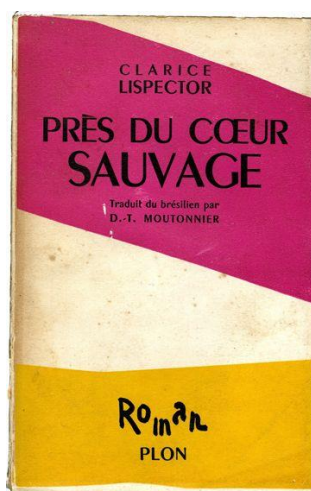
The Brazilian Expeditionary Force, FEB, in Italy.

The following year she accompanied her husband to his post in Rome; she volunteered as a nurse at the hospital for Brazilian FEB soldiers in Naples. She began to write *O Lustre* (*The Chandelier*) in Rio and completed it in Naples in 1944, published in 1946. In the same year, her first novel was awarded the Graça Aranha Literature Prize. She lived in Bern and visited Spain and other countries. In Bern, she wrote the one-act play *A Pecadora Queimada e os Anjos Harmoniosos* published in 1948. In the same year she published *A Cidade Sitiada*, and short stories which later appeared in *Laços de Família*. In 1949, she was in France and Italy and met the Italian modernist poet Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1970) and Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), who painted her portrait (oil).

Her first son, Pedro was born in Bern in September, and she continued writing with her little son on her lap until she would return with her husband to Rio de Janeiro. There, she mingled with her fellow writers and friends (Fernando Sabino and others).

In 1951, Clarice Lispector spent six months in Torquay in England, where she drafted her first notes for *Maçã no Escuro* (*Apple in the Dark*). She had a miscarriage then, and the Brazilian Vice-Consul, the poet João Cabral de Melo Neto (1920-1999), offered her the necessary assistance. She returned to Brazil. In 1952, she published six short stories in *Cadernos de cultura* and a chronicle *Entre Mulheres* (*Among Women*) under the pen name Teresa Quadros at the request of her friend and fellow author Rubem Braga (1913-1990).

Next, she travelled to Washington with her husband where her second son, Paulo, was born. In 1953, she met the acclaimed Brazilian writer Érico Veríssimo (1905-1975) and his wife Mafalda; they became good friends. In the same year, she was also delighted that her book *Perto do coração selvagem* was published in a French translation by Plon with a cover by Henri Matisse (1869-1954).



Cover by Henri Matisse (1869-1954)

She divorced in 1959, as life of the wife of a diplomat presented various challenges. She returned to live in Rio de Janeiro with her children. She was a caring mother. To complement her income, she wrote a column under the pen name Helen Palmer, 'Feira de Utilidades', in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* (1959-60). She also did literary translations.

In 1962, she was awarded the Carmen Dolores Prize for her novel *A Maçã no Escuro*. She gave a lecture on Contemporary Brazilian Literature in Austin, Texas, USA in 1963. In 1964, she published a collection of short stories *A legião estrangeira* and her novel *A Paixão Segundo G. H.* and moved to her new flat. International acclaim was finally forthcoming. In 1965, a selection of excerpts from *Perto do coração selvagem* by the playwright and actor Fauzi Arap (1938-2013), was presented at La Maison du Théâtre, Paris, featuring Glaucé Rocha, Dirce Migliaccio and the beginner José Wilker. This was a first adaptation of her work to the theatre.

After that, she dedicated herself to her children as her son Peter needed special care. She lived a life of much financial hardship despite the publication of various books and

translations. In 1966, disaster struck as she fell asleep with a cigarette, which caused a fire in her flat; she had rather serious burns, which left her scarred.

Subsequently, she would write a weekly column for *Jornal do Brasil* (1967-1973), publishing short stories, children stories and much more. Gradually, she came to be regarded as the great writer that she was. She died in Rio de Janeiro in December 1977.

In my post in the centenary year of Clarice Lispector's birth, I commented:

In this year of the centenary of her birth, Clarice Lispector is recognised in Brazil and everywhere as the Brazilian *grande dame* of letters, one of the world's most extraordinary authors of unique talent. It is high time all usual comparisons to other world authors be cast away for good. Such comparisons are vacuous and redundant. Even the odd-sounding supernatural appellation of 'witch' in Clarice Lispector's case and 'wizard' in Machado de Assis's case can only serve to corroborate the fact that the unique talent of these truly Brazilian authors is of the highest order. This practice represents a failure to acknowledge the reality that great world authors do not require any supernatural help – the power of their imagination result in marvellously alluring fiction. Machado de Assis was a reliable civil servant, with a busy working life, and wrote in his own time. Clarice Lispector worked to study, worked to support herself adopting pseudonyms, gave up the glamorous life of a diplomat's wife, looked after her two sons, and produced works of rare imagination. Let us celebrate her by reading her works and sharing our discoveries of her fictional universes.



1945 Portrait de Clarice Lispector
by Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978)

1972 portrait by Carlos Scliar (1920-2001)

MAIN WORKS

Novels

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Perto do Coração Selvagem (1943)
O Lustre (1946)
A Cidade Sitiada (1949)
A Maçã no Escuro (1961)
A Paixão segundo G.H. (1964)
Uma Aprendizagem ou O Livro dos Prazeres (1969)
Água Viva (1973)
A Hora da Estrela (1977)
Um Sopro de Vida (1978)

Short Stories

Alguns contos (1952)
Laços de Família (1960)
A Legião Estrangeira (1964)
Felicidade Clandestina (1971)
A Imitação da Rosa (1973)
Onde Estivestes de Noite (1974)
A Via Crucis do Corpo (1974)
O Ovo e a Galinha (1977)
A Bela e a Fera (1979)

Children's Literature

O Mistério do Coelho Pensante (1967)
A Mulher que Matou os Peixes (1968)
A Vida Íntima de Laura (1974)
Quase de Verdade (1978)
Como Nasceram as Estrelas (1987)

Chronicles

Para Não Esquecer (1978)
A Descoberta do Mundo (1984)

For further details:

Our Book Club has read and discussed Clarice Lispector since February 2015, and we have many Claricean devotees:

- ❖ [*The Passion according to G.H.*](#) in February 2015 – the post is no longer available but published in the book [*How to Run a Bilingual Book Club Featuring the First Year of the BRAZILIAN BILINGUAL BOOK CLUB at the Embassy of Brazil in London*](#), by Nadia Kerecuk ISBN 978-1-5272-3265-5 (Oct 2019)
- ❖ [*The Hour of the Star*](#) in January 2016 and our CineClub showed Suzana Amaral's film. Please see the post at http://londres.itamaraty.gov.br/en-us/book_club.xml
- ❖ [*The Apple in the Dark*](#) in April 2017, please see post at <https://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/Londres/en-us/file/cul-bookclub-17-maca.pdf>

- ❖ *The Chandelier* in June 2018, Please see the post for <https://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/Londres/en-us/file/cul-bookclub-31-lispector.pdf>
- ❖ *Near to the Wild Heart* in April 2019, Please see the post for <https://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/Londres/en-us/file/cul-bookclub-41-lispector.pdf>
- ❖ *Family Ties* February 2020 <https://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/Londres/en-us/file/cul-bookclub-50-lispector.pdf>
- ❖ *A Cidade Sitiada* (1948/9) *The Besieged City* (1994/5,1997, 2019) December 2020 <https://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/Londres/en-us/file/cul-bookclub-60-A Cidade Sitiada.pdf>
- ❖ *Água Viva* (1973)- *The Stream of Life* (1978)- *Água Viva* (2012-2014) – November 2021 <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/embaixada-londres/sections/cultural-section/book-club/cult-bookclub-agua-viva.pdf>
- ❖ *A Descoberta do Mundo* (1982, 1984) - *Discovering the World* (1992) *Selected Crônicas* (1992) – March 2023 <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/embaixada-londres/sections/cultural-section/book-club/cult-bookclub-a-descoberta-do-mundo.pdf>

References and sources:

- ❖ The Instituto Moreira Salles has created an excellent comprehensive site for Clarice Lispector at <https://claricelispectorims.com.br/>
- ❖ Timeline in Portuguese - <https://claricelispectorims.com.br/vida/>
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Visit CASA RUI BARBOSA for Clarice Lispector’s archives: http://www.casaruibarbosa.gov.br/dados/DOC/literatura/clarice_lispector/bibliografia_sobre.html
http://www.casaruibarbosa.gov.br/dados/DOC/literatura/clarice_lispector/arquivosliterarios_clarice_Lispector.html
- ❖ CLAIRE VARIN - Quebecois author Claire Varin that has nurtured a passion for Portuguese, and 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/>) .
- ❖ The MUSEUM OF SOUND AND IMAGE produced a booklet about the interview Clarice Lispector gave in 20 October 1976 - Collection ‘Depoimentos no. 7’ (1991)

- ❖ CLARICE LISPECTOR GAVE A SINGLE TV INTERVIEW in February 1977 (TV Cultura, São Paulo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= aP4qgyu2o0>)
- ❖ In 1994, Jesse Larsen and Erica Bauermeister included *The Hour of the Star* in her *500 Great Books by Women*, stating, ‘In less than one hundred pages, Clarice Lispector tells a brilliantly multi-faceted and searing story.’
- ❖ Biographies/biographical precis about Clarice Lispector, listed here in chronological order:

BRASIL, Assis. (1969) *Clarice Lispector*. Ensaio. Rio de Janeiro: Simões.
BORELLI, Olga. (1981) *Clarice Lispector*. Esboço para um possível retrato. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira
FITZ, Earl E. (1985) *Clarice Lispector* (biography) Twayne Publishers Inc., U.S.
NUNES, B. (1989) *O drama da linguagem - Uma leitura de Clarice Lispector*. Ática.
CIXOUS, H. (1989) *L'heure de Clarice Lispector, précédé de Vivre l'Orange. Des femmes*.
MARTING, D.E. (1993) – Clarice Lispector – A Bio-Bibliography. Greenwood Press.
GOTLIB, Nádía B. (1995) *Clarice -Uma Vida Que Se Conta*, Ática.
GOTLIB, Nádía B. (2008) *CLARICE FOTOBIOGRAFIA* (EDUSP| Imprensa Oficial)
FERREIRA, Teresa C. M. (1999) *Eu Sou uma Pergunta: uma Biografia de Clarice Lispector*. Rocco.
VARIN, Claire (1990) *Langues de feu* (Éd. Trois, 1990) traduit au Brésil en 2002 (*Línguas de Fogo*, Ed. Limiar, São Paulo).
MOSER, B. (2009) *WHY THIS WORLD A Biography of Clarice Lispector*. Oxford University Press.

- ❖ A relevant 2010 review by Benjamin Abdala Junior, Professor of comparative literature at the São Paulo University in which he compares and finds confluences with Nádía B. Gotlib’s biography is worth reading - ‘Biografia de Clarice, por Benjamin Moser: coincidências e equívocos’ in *Estudos Avançados* vol.24 no.70 São Paulo 2010 versão impressa ISSN 0103-4014 downloadable from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0103-40142010000300020>
- ❖ See also a critical essay by Thiago Cavalcante Jeronimo (2018) *Benjamin Moser: quando a luz dos holofotes interessa mais que a ética acadêmica* at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330922175 Benjamin Moser quando a luz dos holofotes interessa mais que a etica academica](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330922175_Benjamin_Moser_quando_a_luz_dos_holofotes_interessa_mais_que_a_etica_academica)
- ❖ ROCCO is the current publisher of Clarice Lispector’s works in Brazil – they reprinted her main works <http://www.rocco.com.br/especial/claricelispector/>



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- ❖ LISPECTOR, C. (2020) *Todas as cartas* – 300 letters annotated by Teresa Montero
- ❖ LISPECTOR, Clarice. *A pecadora queimada e os anjos harmoniosos*. In MONTERO, Teresa; MANZO, Lícia. (ORGs) *Clarice Lispector – outros escritos*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2005.
- ❖ FITZ, Earl E. “A pecadora queimada e os anjos harmoniosos:” Clarice Lispector as Dramatist. *Luso-Brazilian Review* 34/2, by the Board of Regents of the University of Winsconsin System, 1997.
- ❖ A new film adaptation *A Paixão segundo G.H.* directed by Luiz Fernando Carvalho (1960-), adapted from the novel *A Paixão segundo G.H.* by Melina Dalboni in 2023 featuring the actress Maria Fernanda Cândido.



<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11687126/>

- ❖ Literary Agency: [Clarice Lispector: Agencia Literaria Carmen Balcells \(agenciabalcells.com\)](http://agenciabalcells.com)



The Brazilian Post Office issued commemorative stamps for Clarice Lispector’s birth centenary in September 2020.



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A plaque honouring Clarice Lispector in the town of Chechel'nyk, Ukraine
unveiled in 2002.

Further details can be found at:

❖ Rocco <https://www.rocco.com.br/livro/agua-viva-edicao-comemorativa/>

HAPPY READING!

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