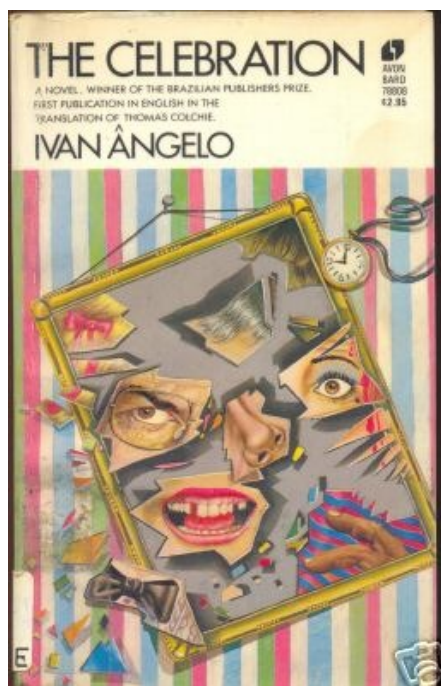




The Celebration

Ivan Ângelo

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In the early morning of March 31, 1970 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, the annual birthday celebration of a prominent and wealthy young artist is taking place; and a train docked in Plaza Station filled with starving, drought-stricken migrant workers seeking relief gets turned away by the authorities, sparking a riot. From these seemingly unrelated events, Ivan Angelo's remarkable debut novel connects and implicates the lives of a complex of characters spanning three decades of tumultuous social and political history in twentieth-century Brazil. But with the central event - the celebration - missing, the reader is thrust into the middle of an intricate puzzle, left to construct the story from the evidence that accrues in a range of comic, unnerving, misleading and tragic episodes.

The Celebration Details

Date : Published 1982 by Avon Books (Mm) (first published 1975)

ISBN : 9780380788088

Author : Ivan Ângelo

Format : Paperback 223 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Brazil, Latin American

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From Reader Review The Celebration for online ebook

Lori Lammert says

The second chapter of my dissertation is about this novel. It is considered one of the best, if not the best, novel of the dictatorship from Brazil. This is true experimental fiction. The structure is very unusual and surprising!

Freestewart says

This was another book that just blew me away. Like Bread and Wine, I'm afraid to pick it back up because I'm afraid it won't be as good the second time around.

the gift says

this is the first brazilian book i read that was not amado. as other reviewers are accurate in describing the novel structure (see Troy), all i can add is how strongly i enjoyed this book, though some of that might just be sentimental. i read this about the stage i first got interested in postmodern work, about the age others might read something like joyce, of modernists, though the others i had read at this time were robbe-grillet and mishima. brazil as a place fascinates me. the way all the information is laid out for the reader, who must write the story herself, with minimal authorial aid- for me this is a guarantee of intimate relationship to the text, powerful emotions resonate without being didactic or moralistic, seeming to emerge from the various sources spontaneously.

<http://www.michaelkamakana.com/uncate...>

Michael Baumgartner says

Der Autor nähert sich dem Ereignis auf vielfältige Weise. Er erhellt mit Zitaten aus Büchern und Zeitungsberichten die Hintergründe der Flucht der Landarbeiter und die Biographie des Organisators des Fluchtversuchs, der eine bewegte Vergangenheit als Guerillero hat. Darauf werden in kurzen Dialogen und Erzählungen die Beteiligten in für sie charakteristischen Lebenssituationen dargestellt. So schildert er die Kindheit des homosexuellen Veranstalters des Festes mit der besonderen Vaterbindung. Eine wirklichkeitsfremde und ichbezogene Klatschkolumnistin wird durch ihren vermeintlichen Liebhaber, den oben genannten Mann, portraitiert. Der Geheimdienstchef wirft sich gar in einer Art Verteidigungsrede als Verteidiger der Aufklärung auf und entlarvt damit indirekt die Ver-messenheit und Arroganz des Apparates. Vor dem Hintergrund dieser Ereignisse zeichnet der Autor ein ungeschöntes, facettenreiches Bild der brasilianischen Gesellschaft, in der die Entscheidungen eines Einzelnen nicht zählen, und soziales Engagement folgenlos bleibt.

Der Autor scheint gegen alle Simplifizierung der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse anzuschreiben, besonders gegen das Bild von der politischen Wirklichkeit, das die sehr einflußreiche Geheimpolizei verbreitet. Dabei ist ein aufklärerischer Anspruch unverkennbar. In einer Art Collage aus fiktiven und authentischen Elementen hat er die angemessene Form für seine vielschichtige Erzählweise gefunden.

All diese Eigenschaften machen das Buch lesenswert, nicht zuletzt deswegen, weil es dem Klischee von

lateinamerikanischer Literatur so gar nicht entsprechen will.

Troy says

Celebration is an odd book, set up like a puzzle, with the book's pivot or cusp (the party) conspicuously missing. It is a book with a hollow middle. You, the reader, have to reassemble the book's events and put them in the proper order. In a way, it's like reading disjointed articles from newspapers, society pages, short stories and magazines, and trying to figure out how and why all of them are connected. And they are connected, but the connection, the party, is missing.

The first half of the book is the lead up to the hedonistic artist's party. It starts with a montage of clippings (faux newspaper articles, police testimonies, other 'official' texts) that follow the aftermath of a violent peasant uprising: a group of starving farmers from the North have come down to the city to escape death. The police and the government pen them down and a young journalist and an older radical convince them to march. Many die.

After the stilted documentation of violence, we are thrust into inter-personal dramas written in various novelistic styles. For the most part, we follow a group of spoiled cafe intellectuals trapped in hedonism and inertia. The author is definitely a member of that group - he constantly chides himself for not finishing the novel that you're reading, and he constantly laments his inaction against his country's repressive politics.

The last half of the book follows the aftermath of the violent suppression and occurs after the party. We find out how and why the party is connected to the uprising (largely circumstantial). The last half of the book is even more fragmented than the first, and stylistically, even more experimental. The author constantly intrudes with his own notes, various explanations, additional story ideas and meta-commentary.

The novel "radically problematizes the very notion of representation, whether journalistic or novelistic." It is a "performance of unmasking, one that reveals the processes [and systems and myths:] which sustain a given—patriarchal, capitalistic, military—order." [source:] My only complaint with the book is that the author's constant interruptions and meta-digressions is too self-referential and bogs the book down in navel-gazing. (BTW, the book's fore-edge is physically split into a white section and a black section (the second half has the black border.))

Also, the original title is *A Fiesta*, and I think a better translation would be *The Party* since the book revolves around a party we are never privy to, but then again, the celebration can sardonically refer to the demented mob-like events that happen before and after the party.

BTW, as a physical object, Angelo has made something fantastic: the book's fore-edge is vertically split into a white section and a black section (the first half is white, the second half is black). Picture a phone book with a border split between white pages in the front and black pages in the back, and you will get the idea. It's clever and it works for the story.
