

Female representation in the novel 'Founder' by Nélide Piñon

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ABSTRACT

Nélide Piñon (1937-2022) was one of the main Brazilian writers of the twentieth century. Piñon has explored themes related to identity, power, love, and resistance, and his female characters often challenge traditional gender stereotypes. She stood out for giving a voice to strong and independent women, who faced challenges and who seek their own life path.

This work aims at female freedom against patriarchy in the novel of her authorship entitled "Founder" based on the article by Lúcia Osama Zolin, from 2008, called "The Representation of Women in the Narrative of Nélide Piñon". In the aforementioned novel, Piñon addressed the conditions of women against the social expectations imposed on them, in the struggle for equality.

Keywords: Nélide Piñon, Freedom, Patriarchy, Founder, Feminism in Brazil.

INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to analyze the female representation in the novel *Fundador* by Nélide Piñon, produced in 1937. This work is especially distinguished by the symbolism that permeates the plot. Piñon is practically one of the most complex authors of contemporary times, and her need to reinvent writing, and thus, generating a very rich literary legacy that earned her representation in the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL), which she presided over in 1997, being the first woman in more than a hundred years to do so.

THE WORK THE FOUNDER

The work *The Founder* (1969), by Nélide Piñon (1937) is a beautiful literary expression of the educated imagination that expresses the tragic feeling of cultural mortality.

"The ancestors did everything so that we forgot, that there were no memories. Yes, may other cities console us, we live so far away that we suspect we are the last survivors of a land without goodbyes... According to Piñon (2011, p.125)".

Nélide Piñon clearly portrays this tragic feeling of the loss of tradition, as a feeling of the loss of origins and identity of a people who are incapable of reporting their past. In the founding novel, the sword stuck in the earth signifies the founding milestone of society.

In the novel Nélide Piñon, in addition to the unfolding that affects the male characters, there is also the disorder about oneself of the female characters. In this way, in each of the narrated cycles, the figure of the nun erupts, considered by critics, the organizing presence of the triad that sustains the



narrative. In the case of the female presence, the mirroring effect occurs even through the repetition of the same name, which is infinitely attributed to countless women who inhabit the city of the founder at different times.

"The elders assured that there were countless nuns since the time of the foundation of the city, all delicate to the same office." According to Piñon (1997, p.86).

The monastic nun whom the founder takes as his wife in archaic temporality reappears as the effigy to whom Johamus devotes his feeling in medieval temporality, at the same time that he becomes a real presence and enigma of it, serving as a mask for another young woman also called a nun, who receives the traveler, when he conquers the city and starts to visit her in his company, As we can read in the novel itself:

Whenever he had visited the city, she had accompanied him. With quick explanations, trusting in Johamus' apprehension. Nothing enslaved him but the chapel, to which they returned so many times. Johamus made sure that he had simply obeyed the script he had traced for the other nun, because he would spread symbols of his passage, so that recognizing him would follow him and come to love. He would pursue the woman supported by exaltation, and he had succeeded, he would even be able to bring to life two nuns, perhaps three all incarnated in a single one. "According to Piñon (1997, p.182).

In each of the temporalities, the characters and symbols unfold establishing a repetition and within this a difference the cartographer and the discoverer, basic characters of the text, appear and reappear in each of the narrated moments. Theodoric of Antioch, the map-maker of archaic time, becomes Stamponato in the Middle Ages, and when the cartographer goes to America, becomes Ptolemy, the hierophant of modern times.

In this way, the multiplication of the discoverer character is processed. Founder for Johamus and for Joe Smith, each time a character is instituted as a reflection of the other, as Aguiar observed:

In this Nelidian production, the time of founder reflects the time of Johamus that reflects the time of Joe, that reflects the time of founder and Johamus, and infinitum. For this to happen, the development of the plot is interspersed in times, apparently passing indiscriminately from one to the other. In this way, Ariadne's thread weaves in the labyrinthine narrative carpet, Joseph's modern time. As soon as we begin to come into contact with the weave, the thread begins to have the function of stitching together the plot of the founder who, suspended in the warp, gives way to the seam of Johamus' time. And so, from Joe to founder; from founder to Johamus; from Johamus to Joe; from Joe to Founder; from founder to Johamus; from Johamus to Joe; from Joe to Johamus; from Johamus to founder; from founder to Johamus; from Johamus to Joe, the threads are thus sewn, stitch behind, stitch ahead, behind the scenes of the narrative loom. "Segundo Aguiar (2008)".



The reader travels throughout the narrative from one chapter to the next and even within the same chapter, through temporalities that arise as a repetition of the previous one. However, the game of mirroring does not only serve to reflect subjectivities, but to create a space with authentic narratives made previously. The labyrinthine construction is established in the text through an unfolding of the text that aims to prolong the reader's permanence within the novelistic war, preventing him from finding the way out and that in doing so, the language fades away. In other words, it is possible to affirm using "According to Foucault (2006)", that the reduplication that appears as the foundation of the "founder" novel arises from a need to prolong its language, not letting it die.

Foucault observes that with the departure of the gods, literary language can only represent itself, say what has already been said. Thus, in the desire to retreat from death, the narrator Melidiano repeats, reduplicates in a time what had already been referred to in the past, making the text return on himself. From one narrative instance to another, from the archaic to the medieval and from the medieval to the modern, it is as if the writer understood that, as stated in "Segundo Machado (2005.p.79)".

"Before language there is only language; to write is to repeat words already said, the already said of language; writing is a language game with language".

A language that is similar to that of Raymond Roussel, which the French philosopher describes as "stretched out like a tablecloth" "seeking the direction of the impossible.

FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Nélida Piñon is in favor of feminist movements because they are extraordinary movements that have changed the face of the world. She joined the movement in favor of women. With a call at the ABI, the author spoke in defense of the implementation of the first March 8 in Brazil in New York, lived and closely followed the feminist movement and Black Power, which is also a matter of respect for her. He met great female personalities and learned from thinking about the fundamental question for human consciousness. The experience of others is not a transmissible legacy, we inherit the collective history. Piñon had the privilege of admiring historical, legendary women, women of her daily life, women whose greatness, dignity, sacrifice, honor, courage and love left solid foundations in society. A prodigious genus that cares for and dies for the species.

Feminism is a social movement for civil rights, led by women, which since its origin has claimed and fought for political, legal and social equality between men and women, seeking to combat the social model based on patriarchy, abuse and violence against women.

In Brazil, women conquered the right to vote in 1932, with the suffrage movement that took place in several democratic countries around the world, between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, for the organization of women for the right to vote. So the feminist



movement recognized that with self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-management, women can build a stronger mental base to impose themselves and claim their rights.

Nélida Piñon was one of the great representatives of literature by women due to the unusual nature of her writing and the symbolic value of her reflections on women and society. In an attentive and committed way to the Brazilian socio-political and cultural scenario, her writing has contributed to revisit, rescue and legitimize the participation of women as subjects of their own history and, thus, deconstruct the stereotyped view of their representation.

The author faced not only an unfavorable context for her first publications, but also obtained the recognition of her literary framework and insertion in the Brazilian canon in a subversive and deviant way.

In this way, Nélida Piñon has been standing out in the literary scene for dealing with the problem of women, which is a recurring theme in all her vast literary production. The natural tendency at first reading Piñon, therefore, can be none other than feminism. She is in fact the author engaged with feminine themes, as she states in interviews given, however her initial idea is nothing more than the desire to assert herself and her gender in the face of patriarchy.

Like her first work *Guia Mapa de Gabriel Arcanjo* (1961), the author only implies that she wants to present autonomous female figures, because more than that she is constantly the target of the process of identification with feminism, when relating one of her characters. She says: "(...) so I created a daring female character – I was already a feminist without knowing it – Mariela (...)" "According to Candido (2004, p.01)".

Therefore, it is evident that by not declaring her feminist goals, Piñon presents strong female characters, who with the passage of time and the maturation of her creative verve transform themselves into engaged and autonomous women. The criticism of Piñon in the context of his literature is the exotic, the new, projected and defined, and for the context of the reconstruction, the rupture with the current form of literature, which is considered androcentric, that is, paused in the masculine element with its direct and raw perspective, without the intensity or transparency that the feminine element can propose in the construction of the discourse that one wishes to imprint "Segundo Moniz (1984)".

NÉLIDA PIÑON: LIFE AND WORK

Nélida Piñon is from Rio de Janeiro, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1937, on May 3rd, her life experience is urban: daughter of merchant parents.

Nélida knows the social reality of Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s, highly influenced by the social and political expressions of her time (L&PM, 2016). A curiosity about Piñon is his name, Nélida is bitter about the name "Daniel", which belonged to his grandfather.



Nélida's family is not of Brazilian origin, her ancestors came from Galicia, a region close to Portugal, having arrived in Brazil in 1980. This geographical diversity plays a fundamental role in Piñon's work, because the author had contact with literature from an early age, through material provided by her close relatives.

His professional experience begins with a degree in journalism at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Pontifical, Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC/RJ) and his experience with the literary universe begins through his profession, working in several periodicals, among them, *Cadernos Brasileiros* (1966), *Tempo Brasileiro* (1976), *impressions* (1997), *Cadernos Periódicos e Culturais* (1993), *Emeycloparedia of Latin American Literature and Arts* (1995), *Latin American image* (1993), *the day* (1995), in addition to having a life related to academic adjunct in several institutions (L&PM, 2016).

Nélida has always had a life dedicated to the literary arts in 1965, she created the literary chair of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and when she had the opportunity to travel to the United States, she received an award for the recognition of her work given by the American government, it is also important to recognize her work at Stanford University, having held the chair of humanity in this institution (BRAZILIAN ACADEMY OF LETTERS, 2016).

He held positions on the advisory board of numerous cultural entities in Rio de Janeiro. Trips to other countries were fundamental for her biography, works and to better show her Brazil, a country that had a greater concern for her, the reason for her intellectual restlessness. He took over as holder of the Chair in 1991, and from that year on he held courses annually, debates, meetings and gave conferences. In August 1996, he temporarily resigned from the Chair, when he fully assumed the presidency of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, in the absence of President Antônio Houaiss.

At the Brazilian Academy of Letters, she was director of the archive since 1990; elected first secretary on June 26, 1999 and secretary-general on December 7, 1995. Her debut in Literature was with the novel *Guia-Mapa* by Gabriel Arcanjo, published in 1961, which deals with the theme of sin, forgiveness and the relationship of mortals with God through the dialogue between the protagonist and her guardian angel. From the beginning, the writer joined the movement that, after Guimarães Rosa, is guided by the formal renewal of language.

In the novel *Founder*, published in 1969, Nélida Piñon abandons the realist basis that commands the analogical literary creation of the eminently aesthetic world. Throughout more than 35 years of uninterrupted creative activity, Nélida Piñon is a witness that among the possible ways of expressing himself that man has at his disposal, the word is the one that most directly lays him bare with himself, that in the face of his individual problems, or in front of his most dramatic contradictions as a social being, politically, culturally and economically determined. Hence his awareness of the writer's function should not be limited to just creating his maximum task, but should also lend his conscience to the conscience of



his readers, especially in a country like Brazil, and it is necessary to make the people reflect on their reality and claim a fairer reality.

Nélida Piñon's works have been translated into several countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, the Soviet Union, the United States, Cuba and Nicaragua. His short stories are published in hundreds of magazines and are part of Brazilian and foreign anthologies. He received several literary awards: Walmaps Award for the novel *Founder* (1970); Mario de Andrade Award for the novel *A casa da paixão* (1973); Prize of the São Paulo Association of Art Critics and Premio Fic Pen Clube for the novel *A Republica dos sonhos* (1985); José Vieira Award from the Brazilian Union of Writers of São Paulo for the novel *A doce Canção de Caetana* (1987); Golden Dolphin Award for the set of works conferred by the government of the State of Rio de Janeiro (1990); Nestlé Biennial Award for the body of work (1991); Juan Rulfo International Literature Prize, the most important in Latin America and the Caribbean, awarded for the first time to a woman and a Portuguese-speaking author (1995).

WORKS

Guia-mapa de Gabriel Arcanjo romance (1961); Wood made cross romance (1963); Times of Fruit Tales (1966); Fundador romance (1969); The House of Passions novel (1972); Sala de armas contos (1973); Thebes of My Heart Novel (1974); The Force of Destiny novel (1977); The Heat of Things Tales (1989); The Republic of Dreams novel (1984); A doce canção de Caetana romance (1987); O pão de cada dia fragmentos (1994); A roda do vento, a children's novel (1996); The procession of the divine (L&PM, 1999); See You Tomorrow Again (1999); The Presumed Heart of America (2002); Voices of the Desert (2004).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was necessary through the perception that the struggle for female engagement in all its aspects transcended past centuries, and is perpetuated by those who are yet to come, because the achievements already obtained are the result of arduous and constant struggles, recorded throughout the history of humanity.



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