


Female representation in Nélida Piñon's novel 'founder'

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ABSTRACT

Nélida Piñon (1937-2022) was one of the leading Brazilian writers of the twentieth century. Piñon explored themes related to identity, power, love, and resistance, and her female characters often challenge traditional stereotypes of the genre. She has made a name for herself by giving a voice to strong, independent women who have faced challenges and are pursuing their own life path.

This work aims at women's 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 Nélida Piñon".

In the novel, Piñon addressed the conditions of women against the social expectations imposed on them, in the struggle for equality.

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

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INTRODUCTION

This article aims 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

Nélide Piñon's (1969) is a beautiful literary expression of the educated imagination that expresses the tragic feeling of cultural mortality.

"The ancestors did everything so that we would forget, there would be no memories left. 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 unable to relate 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 themselves of the female characters. In this way, in each of the narrated cycles, the figure of the nun emerges, considered by critics to be the organizing presence of the triad that sustains the narrative. In the case of the female presence, the mirroring effect occurs even by the repetition of the same name, which is infinitely attributed to countless women who inhabit the city of founder at different times.

"The elders assured us that there had been countless nuns since the time of the foundation of the city, all delicate in 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 sentiment 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 travel, when he conquers the city and begins to visit her in his company. As we can read in the novel itself:

Whenever he visited the city, she accompanied him. With quick explanations, trusting in Johamus' apprehension. Nothing enslaved him but the chapel, to which they returned so often. Johamus made sure that he had simply obeyed the script that the other nun had drawn for him, because he would scatter symbols of his passing, so that he would recognize him and come to love.



He would pursue the woman supported by exaltation, and he had succeeded, he would even succeed in bringing to life two nuns, perhaps Three, all incarnated in one. "According to Piñon (1997, p.182).

In each of the temporalities, the characters and symbols unfold, establishing a repetition and, within this 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, turn into Stamponate in the Middle Ages, and when the cartographer goes to America, become Ptolemy, the hierophant of modern times.

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

In this Nelidian production, the time of founder reflects the time of Johamus which reflects the time of Joe, which 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 Joseph's modern time into the labyrinthine narrational carpet. As soon as we begin to get in touch with the weft, the thread begins to have the function of stitching together the founder's plot that, suspended in the warp, gives way to the sewing 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 gone, sewing, stitch after stitch, stitch in front, behind the scenes of the narrative loom. "According to Aguiar (2008)".

The reader takes a journey through 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 mirroring game 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 permanence of the reader within the novelistic warp, preventing him from finding the way out and that in doing so, the language fades away. In other words, it is possible to affirm by resorting to "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, to say what has already been said. Thus it is that, in the desire to retreat from death, the narrator Melidiano repeats, reduplicates in time what has already been referred to in the past, making the return of the text about 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 by "Segundo Machado (2005.p.79)".



"Before language there is only language; to write is to repeat words already spoken, what has already been said in language; Writing is a language game with language."

A language that is similar to that of Raymond Roussel, which the French philosopher describes as "spread 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 women's movement. 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 of 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 genius that cares 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 won 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. Then the feminist movement recognized that with self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-management, women can build a stronger mental base to assert themselves and claim their rights.

Nélida Piñon was one of the great representatives of literature authored by women for 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 throughout her vast literary production. The natural tendency to first read Piñon, therefore, can be none other than feminism. She is in fact the author



engaged with women's 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 hints that she wants to present autonomous female figures, to make this constantly the target of the process of identification with feminism, by relating one of her characters. She says: "(...) so I created a cheeky 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 their creative verve are sensibly transformed into engaged and autonomous women. The critique 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 manages to propose in the construction of the discourse that one wishes to imprint "According to Moniz (1984)".

NÉLIDA PIÑÓN: 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 of 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, using material provided by her close relatives.

Her 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 her experience with the literary universe begins through her profession, working in several periodicals, among them, *Cadernos Brasileiros* (1966), *Tempo Brasileiro* (1976), *Impressões* (1997), *Cadernos Periódicos e Culturais* (1993), *Emeyclopedia of Latin American Literature and Arts* (1995), *Latin American image* (1993), *the day* (1995), in addition to having a life related to academic assistance in several institutions (L&PM, 2016).

In 1965, she created the literary chair of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and when she had the opportunity to travel around the United States, she received an award for the recognition of her



work given by the American government, it is important to also recognize her work at Stanford University, having held the chair of humanity at this institution (ACADEMIA BRASILEIRA DE LETRAS, 2016).

He has held positions on the advisory board of numerous cultural entities in Rio de Janeiro. The 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 annual courses, debates, meetings and lectures. In August 1996, he temporarily resigned from the Chair, when he 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 26 June 1999 and Secretary-General on 7 December 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 was a member of the movement that, after Guimarães Rosa, was guided by the formal renewal of language.

In the novel *Fundador* 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, who in the face of his individual problems, both in the face of his most dramatic contradictions as a social being, politically, culturally and economically determined. Hence its awareness of the writer's function, it should not be limited to just creating its maximum task, but it should also lend its consciousness to the conscience of its 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 have been published in hundreds of magazines and are part of Brazilian and foreign anthologies. He received several literary awards: Walmaps Prize for the novel *Fundador* (1970); Mário de Andrade Prize for the novel *A casa da paixão* (1973); Prize of the São Paulo Association of Art Critics and Pen Club Fiction Award for the novel *A República 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 body of works conferred by the government of the State of Rio de Janeiro (1990); Nestlé Biennial Lifetime Achievement Award (1991); Juan Rulfo International Prize for Literature, the most important in Latin America and the Caribbean, awarded for the first time to a woman and a Portuguese-speaking author (1995).



WORKS

Gabriel Arcanjo's *Guide-Map*: novel (1961); *Wood Made Cross* Novel (1963); *Times of Fruit Tales* (1966); *Fundador* novel (1969); *The House of Passions*: novel (1972); *Gun Room Tales* (1973); *Thebes of My Heart* novel (1974); *The Force of Destiny* novel (1977); *The Heat of Things Short Stories* (1989); *The Republic of Dreams*: novel (1984); *A doce canção de Caetana*: romance (1987); *The Daily Bread Fragments* (1994); *The Wheel of the Wind*, a children's novel (1996); *The Procession of the Divine* (L&PM, 1999); *Until Tomorrow Again* (1999); *The Presumptive Heart of America* (2002); *Voices of the Desert* (2004).

FINAL THOUGHTS

This study was made necessary through the perception that the struggle for female engagement in all its aspects has transcended past centuries, and is perpetuated by those 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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