




ANA PLÁCIDO E AS REPRESENTAÇÕES DO FEMININO NO SÉCULO XIX, BY FABIO MÁRIO DA SILVA (2023)

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Ana Plácido is a writer who lived on the fringes of her lover and spouse, Camilo Castelo Branco. Fernanda Cabral Dumas, alongside Camilo scholars, was one of the first critics to approach Plácido's work in a more detailed and accurate manner. Following that, numerous individual works about the author followed, such as those by Paulo Motta Oliveira, Cláudia Pazos Alonso, Adriana Mello Guimarães, Maria Eduarda Borges dos Santos, Conceição Flores, and Andréia de Castro. However, it is with Fabio Mario da Silva's book, *Ana Plácido e as representações do feminino no século XIX*, and various scattered articles published by the professor and researcher, that the writer's work has been more diligently and deeply analyzed.

Silva's work, a result of his post-doctoral studies at the University of Lisbon under the guidance of Camilo expert Ernesto Rodrigues, is divided into three parts. The first part discusses issues surrounding women, the laws that discredited them, and gender stereotypes that contributed to various prejudices about the female intellectual labor. Silva argues that Ana Plácido addresses these oppressions in her fictional texts, although at times she accepts the tragic fate of women with resignation. However, she warns her readers about how oppressive both society and the men who govern the laws can be, as they keep women under subjugation. Fabio Mario da Silva concludes the following regarding this first chapter:

To be a woman (mother, wife, and lady of the home) and to be a writer in the 19th century are feminine profiles that come into conflict because they violate the family and femininity standards of the time. [...] Ana Plácido also speaks of [...] gender issues and the social disadvantage that women, in the bourgeois world, have compared to men. (2023, p. 45–46).

The second chapter instead focuses on Plácido's educational background, the types of readings she undertook, her bourgeois cultural upbringing, with an emphasis on learning languages and norms of female behavior. In this context, the biography of the author is invoked, covering the period when she was persecuted and imprisoned, inspiring her to write narratives in which her female characters often find themselves in confinement and isolation. In this chapter, a story titled "Visões" is revealed and analyzed for the first time in Plácido criticism. The researcher notes traces of (ultra) romanticism, stating:

Ana Plácido, due to her bourgeois religious upbringing and the influence of romantic writers, ends up taking a position contrary to rationalist philosophers through her character in the story "Visões," foreseeing a romantic conception of a philosopher who sees beyond earthly life and common sense, providing solace for the soul in the Christian conception of the eternal life of the spirit. (2023, p. 78).

The third and final chapter addresses the problem of adultery and separation in a century without divorce, revealing the disadvantage of women as most of Plácido's female characters live unhappy marriages. In Plácido's work, female characters often end up dead at the end of the narratives because the bourgeois social model does not accommodate a pattern other than that of the married often through arranged and forced marriages with older, wealthier men), honest, and subservient woman. The patriarchal structure and taboo themes that Plácido mentions are also objects



of analysis in his work, even if briefly, such as harassment (in *Aurora*) and rape (in a text published in *Luz coada por ferros* and directed to the journalist friend Júlio César Machado). The analysis also reflects on female complicity and its reverse, rivalry, usually triggered by romantic competition. In summary, the foreword writer of the work, Oxford University professor Claudia Pazos Alonso, emphasizes the importance of this study: “Fabio Mario da Silva’s present work has the undeniable merit of focusing entirely on her, thus not only avoiding the risk of excessive dispersion but also bringing new contributions to the understanding of an emblematic work.” (2023, p. 12). Therefore, Fabio Mario da Silva becomes the key figure when considering the study and understanding of Ana Plácido’s work and the feminine condition in the 19th century, bringing new perspectives on the fight against sexism and violence, even if symbolic, against women.

REFERENCES

Silva, F. M. da. (2023). *Ana Plácido e as representações do feminino no século XIX* (C. P. Alonso, Preface). EdUFRPE.

DECLARAÇÃO ÉTICA

CONFLITO DE INTERESSE: Nada a declarar. **FINANCIAMENTO:** Nada a declarar.



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