

# Social identity and discursive characterization of the “Popular Working Subject” in Samuel Feijóo: a study of *Diario abierto* and *Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros*

*Identidad social y caracterización discursiva del “sujeto popular trabajadores” en Samuel Feijóo: estudio de Diario abierto y Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros*

  Yaima Bermúdez Padrón<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Linguistics and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Central University “Marta Abreu” of Las Villas, Villa Clara, Cuba

Fecha de recepción: 17.07.2025

Fecha de revisión: 14.09.2025

Fecha de aprobación: 12.10.2025

Cómo citar: Bermúdez Padrón, Y. (2025). Social identity and discursive characterization of the “Popular Working Subject” in Samuel Feijóo: a study of *Diario abierto* and *Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros*. *Espergesia*, 12(2), e120205.

<https://doi.org/10.18050/rev.espergesia.v12i2.4220>

## Abstract

This article analyzes two representative texts of Cuban author Samuel Feijóo’s nonfiction prose: *Diario abierto* and *Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros*. The main objective is to discursively characterize workers as a popular subject, focusing on their role in shaping Cuban social and cultural identity. The analysis is structured around three key dimensions: physical description, actions and behaviors, and re-reflections and emotions. The methodology prioritizes textual analysis, complemented by approaches such as discourse analysis, sociology, and critical studies with a social and cultural focus. Through this interdisciplinary lens, the article examines how workers are portrayed as a resilient collective subject, bearers of memory and dignity, within the context of prerevolutionary Cuba. The theoretical framework draws on contributions from Díaz (2019), Pinedo (2020), Ovalle (2021), y Caplan (2022), among others. In conclusion, the study underscores the relevance of Feijóo’s non-fiction prose in understanding the construction of an inclusive national identity, in which workers—traditionally marginalized—emerge as humble and anonymous heroes, essential figures within the Cuban people. Furthermore, the texts contribute to the generalization of a Cuban subject who embodies the values, experiences, and tensions inherent to the country’s social and cultural identity.

**Key words:** popular subject; workers; Cuban social and cultural identity; discursive characterization; Samuel Feijóo; nonfiction prose.

## Resumen

Este artículo analiza dos textos representativos de la prosa no ficcional del autor cubano Samuel Feijóo: *Diario abierto* y *Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros*. El objetivo principal es caracterizar discursivamente a los trabajadores como sujeto popular, atendiendo a su papel en la construcción de la identidad social y cultural cubanas. El análisis se desarrolla a partir de tres dimensiones fundamentales: descripción física, acciones y comportamientos y reflexiones y emociones. La metodología empleada privilegia el análisis textual, complementado con enfoques como el análisis del discurso, la sociología y los estudios críticos con enfoque social y cultural. A través de este enfoque interdisciplinario se examina cómo los trabajadores son representados como sujeto colectivo resiliente, portador de memoria y dignidad, en el contexto de la Cuba prerrevolucionaria. El marco teórico se apoya en las contribuciones de Díaz (2019), Pinedo (2020), Ovalle (2021) y Caplan (2022), entre otros autores. Como conclusión, se destaca la relevancia de la prosa no ficcional feijooseana para comprender la configuración de una identidad nacional inclusiva, en la que los trabajadores, sujetos tradicionalmente marginados, emergen como héroes humildes y anónimos, figuras esenciales del pueblo cubano. Asimismo, se asiste a la generalización de un sujeto cubano, que encarna los valores, experiencias y tensiones propias de la identidad social y cultural del país.

**Palabras clave:** Fonética y Fonología, palatal africada sorda, fricativa, variantes alófonicas, fricativización, lenición.

## INTRODUCTION

The cultural and social subject is constructed in close relation to the identity and cultural processes that society undergoes, manifesting itself through art and literature as fundamental spaces for its expression and communication. In the creative sphere, this subject not only generates cultural meanings and symbolism, but also reflects moral, historical, and social dimensions, facilitating a profound dialogue between the individual and their environment. Su expresión estética permite que se convierta en la voz de su colectividad, reforzando su carácter grupal. Asimismo, su configuración está determinada por las representaciones sociales y la interacción comunicativa dentro de contextos culturales específicos (Soriano, 2017; Díaz, 2019). Its aesthetic expression allows it to become the voice of its community, reinforcing its group character. Likewise, its configuration is determined by social representations and communicative interaction within specific cultural contexts (Soriano, 2017; Díaz, 2019).

To gain a deeper understanding of the notion of “workers” in this study, it is essential to consider their collective and popular identity, which encompasses their cultural configuration and their role within the social structure. It also meant broadening the perspective and considering a reality that is deeply intertwined with their environment and the sociocultural dynamics that shape it.

In relation to the subject of this research and the line of study prioritized in the analysis, the academic essay “Palabras hacia el Diario Abierto” (Words towards the Open Diary) by Prieto (2008), published in the journal *Islas*, is cited as background information. This essay focuses on the study of *Diario Abierto* (Open Diary) by Feijóo. This is therefore an exploratory study which, although it does not delve deeply into academic analysis, provides relevant reflections and focuses on the reasons that justify the urgency of republishing this work. However, it is an important work from a thematic, demonstrative, and argumentative point of view, because it concludes with the impact that non-fictional prose has on the overall understanding of Samuel Feijóo’s work and its relevance, by analyzing the representations of popular subjects during the period of Cuba as a mediatized republic.

In terms of non-fiction prose, this work addressed a discourse or writing style that contributes to studies of the individual in Latin America, based on the representation of marginalized and popular voices in the form of specific individuals, as studied in Ovalle (2021), Caplan (2022), and Pinedo (2020). In accordance with these authors and with Prieto (2008), the diaries of Cuban author Samuel Feijóo, specifically *Diario Abierto* and *Diarios de Viajes Montañeses y Llaneros*, are two texts of social and cultural significance because they highlight the human component embodied by the voices of different popular subjects who lived in the interior of the island during the period immediately prior to the Revolution. In particular, they follow the writing style of autobiographies, personal diaries, and memoirs (Prieto, 2008), as a vital exercise that delves into the individual, events, and essences (López, 1994; Vitier, 1970, 1985; Padrón, 2005). Thus, both of Feijóo’s texts are valuable sources for interdisciplinary analysis in the social sciences and humanities. At the same time, they reveal the historical reality of the country, its social situation, and the identity of specific popular subjects.

With theoretical contributions such as those inferred from Pampín’s essay (2018), it is possible to verify the relationship of the written form of the diary, autobiographical discourse, and subjective communication for the formation of social analysis in non-fictional prose, and even for the construction of an inclusive national identity. Above all, because the selected texts by Cuban author Samuel Feijóo reveal not only personal experiences, but also the history of the most humble members of society, whose names and lives are often left out of the official narrative. By writing short stories and incorporating diverse voices in these Feijóo-inspired journals, a genuine social narrative is fostered, contributing to the formation of a national “we” that integrates all social and cultural sectors.

The notes that Samuel Feijóo presented in these texts show a conscious approach and reflection on the individual, as suggested in Ovalle (2021). The Cuban author even constructs and represents a social and cultural subject, as explained by Soriano (2017) and Díaz (2019). Soriano (2017) notes a cultural subject in the sense of “a creative subject who manifests an entire accumulated cultural experience. Therefore, it is the voice of a collectivity” (p. 20), understood for the present

research as “collectivity” in the sense of a social group that may be determined by specific conditions that influence the construction of its identity, behavior, perception of the world, and social dynamics, within a given social and cultural context. These may include laws, norms, and/or shared values, common history and tradition, power structures, economic factors, and the influence of external elements, as suggested by Ovejero (1998). In line with this, Diaz (2019) argues that, in order to understand the subject in cultural terms, it is necessary for theory and artistic creation to recognize the presence of a subject that is influenced by their cultural and historical context. This aspect is intertwined with the assumptions of Farrán (2020). Consequently, a “dialogue between man and his culture through his social groups, embodied in the aesthetic object of art” becomes possible (Díaz, 2019, p. 40).

For this reason, this particular study was based on the concept of collective subject, according to authors such as Cross (2003), Rossi (2015), and Soriano (2017). From this point, it is possible to understand how the experiences, values, and representations shared by a social group influence the construction of its identity and the way it expresses itself in culture and literature, as concluded in Mansilla (2006). With this idea in mind and in accordance with Giménez’s perspective (2009), it should be noted that the collective subject possesses “attributes of social belonging that imply the identification of the individual with different categories, groups, and social collectives” (para. 19). It takes into account that its identity is characterized by the ability to differentiate itself from the environment, maintain boundaries, and define their shared history and memory as essential elements that provide stability and social recognition (Giménez, 2009, paras. 19-30).

In short, the collective subject is a dynamic social construct that is maintained and redefined through interaction with other groups and based on their history and struggle to maintain their identity boundaries. For the present work, this conceptualization is important for analyzing how subjects, in their collective nature, share the same cultural and social environment while asserting themselves as popular subjects. In this way, their presence in non-fiction prose reflects the social, historical, cultural—and even political—dynamics that shape them, allowing their social and cultural characterization to be constructed and manifested through this genre.

In light of this, it should be noted that Pampín (2018) studies the effective interrelationship of three main elements: the written form of the diary, his autobiographical discourse, and his subjective and personal communication in dialogue with the individual voices and stories of other subjects. All of this is done in the same written form: non-fictional prose. Based on this observation, it is understood that, in his discourse, this genre allows subjects who participate anonymously in history, from a less privileged social, cultural, or political situation, to be named and given a personal voice.

Thus, from the analysis of non-fictional prose, it is possible to reconstruct the social reservoir shown by a particular author, based on the multiple individual stories and names that he relates in his texts, as proposed by Pampín (2018). Above all, from specific stories as unique and singular subjects, but also from their configuration as collective subjects. To better understand this idea, it is necessary to refer to Prieto’s work (2008). Here, the influence and significance of the principle of “communion with reality” (p. 63) in Samuel Feijóo’s thinking and writing is confirmed. Meanwhile, he explains, it constitutes a component that becomes evident in “that testimony [which] is made from a singular perspective, (...), through anonymous yet unique individuals” (p. 64). In any case, they are individuals representative of a specific historical, social, cultural, and political moment: humble men of the Cuban people, especially “earthly” (Piñeiro, 2012, p. 81).

Specifically, Prieto (2008) notes key points for understanding the Cuban author’s discourse. He emphasizes the importance for Feijóo of “affirming his place alongside the broken, whatever their homeland” (p. 70) and highlights the universal character of the man who speaks and describes himself in the book: since he presents “the battle of man” (Vitier, 1985; as cited in Prieto, 2008, p. 64). In this way, the working man presented in his notes not only represents a people and their identity, but also reveals the essence of being in its general sense: the working man, the Latin American working man, universal.

The texts analyzed in this work show a representation of the people based on the subjects represented by Feijóo, from the point of view of collective subjects. In addition to the subjective writing that encompasses Feijóo’s impressions and experiences, annotated with

poetic features. In both, this collective subject appears, in its plurality, as a social and cultural subject shaped by its conditions and context. Taken together, Samuel Feijóo's two books reveal the daily life of working people. With the same sociological and ethnographic approach, the Cuban author writes about their customs, appearances, characteristics, and essential aspects. As a skilled poet, Samuel Feijóo delves into the small stories of lives that, due to their simplicity and deeply human meaning, compose fragments of poetry and Cuban social and cultural memory, tinged with the sadness and joy of this popular subject.

There is no doubt that the articles in both journals bear witness to social issues, along with their analysis and criticism, precisely because they highlight the human component. As such, they reveal the feelings, behaviors, and earthly and universal essences of these ordinary people. In this same sense, they constitute two books representative of non-fictional prose that insists on showing the reality of the country and the value of what is local and national, defending the existence of different subjects. Hence, the overall objective of this research was to characterize workers as a popular subject in two diaries by Samuel Feijóo: *Diario Abierto* and *Diarios de Viajes Montañeses y Llaneros*, taking into account their participation in Cuban social and cultural identity.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was framed within a qualitative approach, employing traditional methods for the analysis of this type of corpus. Specifically, textual analysis was used, based on interpretive principles that allowed for an understanding of how texts construct meaning and express cultural and social values. This technique proved key to the development of the study, especially in the literary analysis.

Textual analysis was applied at two stages: 1. identification of recurring subjects (individual or collective) in the text; 2. description of their physical characteristics, actions, behaviors, and thoughts. In addition, this technique allowed for the comparison of fragments between both Feijóo's diaries, incorporating a reading based on discourse analysis and supporting a

critical approach oriented towards the social and cultural study of the representations of the collective subject of workers in the Cuban author's diary-literary texts. Consequently, it was possible to analyze them as popular subjects and figures of social and cultural resistance in the aforementioned context.

The theoretical framework of this study integrated contributions from authors and literary and sociological movements that address the representation of the subjects, their role in the construction of national identity, and the view of the marginal, that is, the marginal subject, the "other" subject, shaped by rural life and diversity (Boivin et al., 1998). Given that the study focuses on two texts classified as non-fictional prose, specific theoretical and methodological clarifications are required in order to address the analysis of the workers as a collective and popular subject.

In these texts, working-class subjects emerge as figures of a silenced, minimized, or distorted reality. Methodologically, it is therefore important to analyze how Samuel Feijóo represents them from a historical, social, and cultural perspective, in order to draw conclusions about their importance in the construction and configuration of Cuban social and cultural identity. The characterization of this subject in both texts was based on three fundamental points: their physical description, actions and behavior, and reflections and emotions.

Consequently, in the course of this research, the representations of popular subjects appearing in both newspapers were analyzed. The study covered both their individualization and their generality, in the form of collective popular subjects, with special attention to the figures of the collective subject of workers. The analysis focused primarily on the interaction of the subjects within social and cultural processes, but also in relation to a collective construction in which they actively participate as subjects of resistance and identity affirmation.

## Results and discussion

In the two texts by Feijóo selected for analysis, the collective subject of workers is presented as a popular subject. In both, various rural occupations are highlighted and the workers

are humanized, as well as their routines and invisible struggles. With his diaries, Feijóo offers two documents that also include a wide range of occupations typical of pre-revolutionary Cuba. In *Diarios de Viajes Montañeses y Llaneros*, for example, the Cuban writer writes about “coffee workers” (p. 26), “small rice harvesters” (p. 64), “carters with their shouts and long poles” (p. 90), and “Negro Llerena,” the officer (p. 78).

This text describes coffee growers and muleteers. The former, for example, appear in moments of camaraderie: “The coffee workers gather around me; I chat with them in the courtyard and enjoy their laughter” (p. 26). The muleteers, for their part, are portrayed in their daily work: “Rows of mules climb the mountains. The muleteers’ whips crack like gunshots” (p. 15), where the sound of whips and bells create a characteristic soundscape. This text also introduces the charcoal burners, who embody resistance in the face of physical exhaustion as they experience firsthand the effort they must make: “I got very tired climbing almost a thousand feet over rough terrain, carrying [a sack of charcoal]” (p. 14). Meanwhile, when he writes about the macheteros or sugar cane cutters, he explains that they are totally dependent on the harvest, which condemns them to a period of downtime in which they try to survive as best as they can (p. 125).

With these fragments, the author opens up space for profound criticism of various aspects of life in Cuba during the period described. From a social perspective, the example of the *macheteros* represents the poor and marginalized individual. He appears dressed in rags, bedraggled and dirty. In response to this, Feijóo speaks of “everyone’s pain” (p. 125) and suggests that the situation of the *macheteros* is shared by a wider community. Thinking about this overwhelms the author. Undoubtedly, the economic sphere receives harsh criticism through the collective subject of the workers, especially the sugarcane workers. Sugarcane cultivation is both a sign of hope and contradiction for the workers. On the one hand, it promises food for their families (“My children will eat...”, p. 125). On the other, it highlights the exploitation to which they are subjected: “the big guys will get rich” (p. 125).

Likewise, from an emotional standpoint, the suffering cane cutters, agonizing under the sun, exhausted, hungry, and destitute, represent a person who suffers intense pain and poverty. The

narrator feels pierced by the collective tragedy: “A great darkness descends upon me” (p. 125). Thus, this ragged machetero becomes a symbol of the poverty of the collective subject of rural workers. At the same time, they represent their tragedy and needs, which are part of the just causes for a struggle against their situation as a popular subject.

Similarly, in another note dedicated to coffee growers, the *Diarios de viajes...* emphasize: “People of peace. People with hands of simple deeds. But with a horizon defined by the crimson bean. Coffee.” (p. 30). Feijóo highlights another contrast in the lives of the workers: their simple, humble character, lovers of peace, but long-suffering, without a future (“horizon”), marked by the imprint of red (“crimson”) and pain. That same sense of effort and extreme fatigue is evident among the carters (*carreteros*). In the *Diarios de viajes...*, their efforts, routine, skill, strength, and deep connection to the land are described. It is a relationship between man and nature that transcends national borders and is interwoven with the cultural tradition of the continent.

The workers also include the charcoal burners. An excerpt from page 97 of the *Diarios de viajes...* reveals the harshness of the charcoal burners’ work and the strong spirit that symbolizes them. Here, Feijóo celebrates the dignity of rural work, the art of transforming the environment, and the communion between human beings and their landscape. The author emphasizes the resilience of these workers, their tenacity, but also their struggle. He bids farewell to the charcoal burners with an air of hope and reunion (“I say yes, I will return”). In contrast, he writes pessimistically about how the work itself becomes a ritual, monotonous, always the same: they cut, prune, and stack the marabou with precision. However, in Feijóo’s writing, this routine takes on the value of inherited and respected practical knowledge. Their hard work and skill are appreciated, and once again, the relationship between the charcoal burners and nature is highlighted.

In the text entitled “La siembra” (Sowing), in *Diarios de viajes...* (Travel Diaries...), Feijóo returns to a note describing the routine nature of the job, but distinguishes this example by the implicit sadness conveyed in the very mechanics of daily work: the effort, the burden, and the fatigue; the anonymity: “From their well-filled sacks, the cane cutters take the pieces, which they throw into

the open holes. Other laborers follow them: they cover the planting with the earth piled up at the edges of the furrow.” (p. 88).

In the following example, also taken from *Diarios de Viajes Montañeses y Llaneros*, choral singing portrays workers as a more complete collective subject, that is, with emotions, history, and poetry: “I hear a worker singing: he speaks of work on the rivers and of a disdainful *guajira*” (p. 30). The song represents a refuge from the harshness of the job and symbolizes a form of collective and even ancestral identity, because it conveys cultural and social characteristics specific to the collective subject of the workers. In the same way, it reinforces the popular meaning in its social and cultural configuration. A second excerpt speaks of his humble character and resilient attitude: “The coffee workers surround me; I talk to them in the courtyard and hear them laugh” (p. 26). Similarly, the connection between workers and nature is emphasized, and understood in almost mystical tones: “the vines fall from the trees onto the heads of the workers in the open-air sawmill” (p. 37).

Feijóo does not shy away from the social tensions of the collective subject of workers. Instead, the Cuban author openly denounces exploitation in the sugar cane fields. For example, he writes: “The miserable cane cutters, dirty and poorly paid, yes, they are planting the sweet plant. They cut it into short pieces (with brownish knots). Each knot on the stalk is a seed. A horse, walking between two furrows, moves slowly forward” (p. 88). In these passages, he makes clear his position on these situations and the anger they arouse in him.

With the same sense of condemnation and sadness regarding the workers’ situation, the following excerpt from *Diarios de Viajes...* presents a marked semantic duality by contrasting the harshness of the sugarcane workers’ human condition and their physical description with the symbolic sweetness of the plant they cultivate: “The miserable sugarcane workers, dirty and poorly paid, yes, are planting the sweet plant.” (p. 88). Thus, the description of the workers stands out for the contrast between the idealized nature of the product and the precariousness of those who produce it.

At times, the exhaustion of these men transcends the pages of the book, as does the author’s compassionate gaze. The text reveals in another passage: “I catch up with a black machetero

returning from his miserable job. We walk, night falls upon us. There are hardly any words. We enter silently into the first alleys of the slum, covered with weeds, and already we can hear the infamous speeches...” (p. 116). In other passages, such as: “The sun beat down on the brims of their wide-brimmed hats. They walk steadily, wearing muddy shoes, shouting harsh commands to the oxen” (p. 90), the author describes the physical condition of the carters and reinforces their social status.

In this sense, *Diario abierto* is not only a text that shows Samuel Feijóo’s greater maturity as a writer, evidenced above all in the value of his criticism of the injustices experienced by workers during the era of Cuba as a media-influenced republic, but also in the poetic dimension achieved by his explicit denunciation, even more so given that this is a book representative of Cuban non-fictional prose.

Below are three examples that illustrate precisely these reasons. They also reveal the life of the collective subject “workers” and reaffirm their status as symbols of social, cultural, and popular resistance. The first is an excerpt from the note entitled “Life of Ena” which, in the *Diario abierto*, is a note full of sadness, empathy, and resilience:

Ena is a little peasant girl who was born two years ago on a farm in “La Josefa”. Yesterday was her birthday. She couldn’t celebrate her birthday with a party in the hut, so that she could receive, like other lucky children, a series of gifts: dresses, socks, shoes, and toys. It couldn’t be, because her father is a small farmer grinding 9,000 arrobas of cane, a pittance, with six minor children, all of them (that “escapes”, promoting tiny “sites” and making “the square” (shopping) in the village) (pp. 212-215).

Then, in “Discourse to the Poor of Caonao,” («Discurso ante los pobres de Caonao») other subjects within the working class are added: the schoolteacher, the miner, the cleaner. Feijóo reaffirms their popular character, their capacity for resistance, and their potential for social change. It reads:

The humble man who cleans a floor, bent over it, is sacred; he is a human being, perhaps the poorest, who strives physically to be honest and earn his living without committing crimes; the ragged cane cutter who cuts sugar cane during the long hours of the day, exhaustingly,

poorly fed, is sacred, he is an emperor of great honor and of the highest honor: mistreated, destitute, in rags, he earns his meager wages so as not to commit crimes; he who performs the most humble, most dangerous jobs is always a hero, because he sweats and dies so as not to commit crimes. (...) Those are my heroes, from the sane teacher to the dirtiest of miners, because in them the honor of the despised and discriminated against is fulfilled, in them, in the fine blacks and in the fine children of misery (pp. 67-68).

Finally, *Diario abierto* showcases different individuals, including Ocaña, a representative figure of rural workers. This man does not have a steady job; he is simply a laborer. In this capacity, he even becomes the most popular representative of the Cuban people in the pre-revolutionary era. In this excerpt from the note “La noche del hambre” (The Night of Hunger), Samuel Feijóo gives voice to his own experiences, needs, shortages, hardships, and deaths:

“My father,” [Ocaña] tells me, “is no longer fit to work as a night watchman. He is 72 years old and anemic. I earn 15 pesos a month standing guard in his place. At 6 in the morning, I arrive home, exhausted. I sleep for three hours and then go to the woods, cut sticks, and make charcoal kilns. I have four young children, and I work until dark so that they can eat, just so that they can eat...” (pp. 66-67).

In terms of analysis, a characterization can be observed that oscillates between the general and the particular. In this way, the Cuban author shows the suffering, difficulties, and hardships of all workers. Then, through some individual traits, he adds different nuances, which result in the description of an explicit humanity. Furthermore, it can be seen that in both of Feijóo’s texts there appears a collective subject that can be referred to as “workers,” whose lives are diluted in daily tasks, in the fields and mountains of pre-revolutionary Cuba. Feijóo’s notes on the workers are characterized mainly by physical descriptions and records of their actions and human attitudes.

So, in general, workers are a popular collective group, marked by exhausting work, discipline, and the roughness typical of the countryside. Then, through a characterization based fundamentally on actions and behaviors, truthful lines are presented that honor their efforts,

without failing to glimpse the wear and tear that this entails, their marginality, their internal struggles, their own knowledge and practices, and their cultural memory.

On the other hand, this working-class subject is marked by a latent humanity. It is not limited to strength or labor, but broadens the view to include sensitivity and collective memory, heritage, and tradition. Therefore, it is a subject that responds to Cuban social and cultural identity, reinforces rural resilience, and demonstrates its popular character. Hence, it is precisely their trades, their particularities and generalities, that are the main hallmark of their physical and behavioral characterization. Thus, Feijóo has an empathetic view of the collective subject of workers, one that is close to their reality, one of admiration, respect, and compassion. At times, he denounces this work context, and at others, he applauds their human resilience.

Both in the *Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros* (Mountain and Plains Travel Diaries) and in *Diario abierto* (Open Diary), an incipient social consciousness is expressed in the face of social exploitation, class differentiation, and marginalization. Feijóo takes it upon himself to record dialogues and intimate notes that denounce injustices of all kinds. The human and social conflicts of the collective subject of the workers, together with the articulation of their reflections and emotions, result in notes that revolve around their situation of extreme poverty, the land (legal dispossession), survival (lack of resources, the ridiculous wages they receive), the desire for spatial and/or social mobility of some, and their struggle—sometimes violent—to remain in their land.

Therefore, both Feijóo’s diaries are a testimony of denunciation. They accuse the lack of respect towards workers, forcing them to continue working in order to earn a living, despite all the human, physical, or natural abuse. Finally, they denounce the fear suffered and the pain caused by their economic and social otherness. In addition, the Cuban author’s indignation at the misery and social injustice faced by rural workers is evident. For example, in his *Diarios de viajes...*, Feijóo writes: “A silent wave washes over me, and my eyes wander across a thousand villages (...). But these ragged cane cutters... A growing anger pulls me away from the pages.” (p. 89).

Ultimately, it can be said that both texts construct a human mosaic in which workers embody the subjects of rural Cuba. These subjects are not static types but complex beings who navigate between the poetry of the land and the harshness of injustice. In characterizing the collective subject of workers, trades, urgent physical descriptions, and social conflicts are paramount, intertwining to reveal a resilient Cuban identity, where poverty and beauty coexist in perpetual dialogue with the landscape. From this perspective, his participation in Cuban social and cultural identity is reinforced.

## CONCLUSIONS

The texts entitled *Diario Abierto* and *Diarios de Viajes Montañeses y Llaneros*, both by Cuban author Samuel Feijóo, bear witness to pre-revolutionary Cuba, especially the countryside and rural communities of the central region of the country. Both works showcase the creation of committed non-fiction prose, arising from the fusion of genres such as the personal diary, social criticism, and poetry, focused on the search for truth as the core of the writing genre. Feijóo's works transcend mere description and expose a collective subject of workers who embody human struggles such as poverty and dispossession, while also shaping a social and popular map. This research fills a critical gap by systematically analyzing the subjects that inhabit the pages of this text, representative of Feijóo's non-fictional prose.

Both in the *Diario Abierto* and in the *Diarios de Viajes...*, the characterization of this working-class subject is based on several fundamental aspects: their physical description, their actions and behavior, and their reflections and emotions. Feijóo does not present this collective subject as a passive victim, but rather as a protagonist of their time, because their voice takes on an important presence in the books analyzed here. Even beyond the characterization of the collective subject studied, the author introduces three essential dimensions that cut across his work. The first dimension highlights the explicit defense against the marginalization and neglect suffered by the working class. There is also a poetic and human ambiguity between beauty and heartbreak that runs through his

work. Finally, there is evidence of a deep ethical commitment, because the Cuban Samuel Feijóo does not adopt a distant stance, but chooses to accompany and, at the same time, denounce the injustices that affect the protagonists of his work, turning his writing into a space for active memory and poetic justice.

Taken together, these two diaries offer a rich and nuanced representation of a Cuban subject, constructed from the characterizations of those subjects who inhabit the texts. In this sense, the Cuban subject appears defined by their resilience, their popular character, and their strong connection to the land. Feijóo portrays them with naturalness and dignity, distancing himself from traditionalist or paternalistic approaches. On the contrary, his writing opens up a space where he expresses himself in all his human and cultural complexity, thus shaping an authentic and deeply Cuban literary individualization. In short, a Cuban social and cultural identity is shaped and represented through this subject.

The Open Diary and the Mountain and Plains Travel Diaries constitute a collection of non-fiction prose that demonstrates Cuban author Samuel Feijóo's deep personal interest in bringing visibility to those individuals who, until then, had remained an anonymous crowd in national literature. Driven by the need to give them a voice, the author elevates them to the status of humble heroes endowed with unique testimonies. In this way, he manages to construct a broad and diverse representation of the social classes, genders, and individuals that make up the Cuban people and, in particular, he gives prominence to the long-suffering, the poor, and the workers. In any case, he privileges the others, the underprivileged and neglected, as Cuban subjects who inhabit his poetry.

### Limitations

The analysis is limited to two specific texts by Samuel Feijóo, which means that not all of his work is covered, nor are other manifestations of Cuban non-fiction prose. The research focuses exclusively on the collective subject "workers" and leaves out other popular figures present in the author's diaries, such as black people, rural women, and children. Likewise, the study is limited to the author's writing in pre-revolutionary Cuba, without considering how these representations evolved in later periods.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the study be expanded in two complementary ways: on the one hand, by delving deeper into the analysis of other texts by Samuel Feijóo that share the non-fictional prose format. On the other hand, by exploring the representation of different popular subjects present in his work, beyond the workers' collective, in order to enrich the understanding of his literary and social project.

## Contributions to knowledge

This article contributes to the understanding of Cuban social and cultural identity through a discursive analysis of the working-class subject (sujeto popular trabajadores) in Samuel Feijóo's non-fiction prose. It highlights the literary function of the diary as a space for denunciation, memory, and symbolic construction of the marginal, the rural, and the popular. It also offers a characterization of this collective subject from its physical, emotional, and social dimensions, which allows for broadening the field of study on the representation of the "other" in Cuban literature and in national non-fiction narrative. The work reinforces the value of Feijóo's writing as an ethical and aesthetic testimony of a silenced Cuba, and as a critical tool for shaping an inclusive national identity

### Author's contribution

**Yaima Bermúdez Padrón:** Conceptualization, Research, Methodology, Writing, Review, and Editing.

### Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

## REFERENCES

Boivin, M., Rosato, A., & Arribas, V. (1998). *Constructores de otredad*. <https://antroporecursos.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/bolvin-m-rosato-a-arribas-v-2004-constructores-de-otredad.pdf>

Caplan, R. (Dir.). (2022). *Escrituras de no ficción en América Latina (siglos XX y XXI)*. Editions des archives contemporaines. <https://doi.org/10.17184/eac.9782813004062>

Cross, E. (2003). *El sujeto cultural: Sociocrítica y psicoanálisis*. Fondo Editorial, Universidad EAFIT. <https://books.google.com.pr/books?id=KrffT-mit1gIC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Díaz, A. I. (2019). *La función antropológica del arte en textos de la literatura cubana contemporánea de temática canaria* [Tesis doctoral, Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas]. <https://dspace.uclv.edu.cu/items/7009fda8-053f-4317-8184-a02979fb239a>

Farrán, R. (2020). Acelerar la transformación del sujeto: Uso de los dispositivos, tecnologías del yo, consumo y organización popular. *Identidades*, 18(10), 30–43.

Feijóo, S. (1958). *Diarios de viajes montañoses y llaneros* (1939–46). Departamento de Relaciones Culturales, Universidad Central de Las Villas.

Feijóo, S. (1969). *Diario abierto*. Dirección de Investigaciones Folklóricas, Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos, Universidad Central de Las Villas.

Giménez, G. (2009). Cultura, identidad y memoria: Materiales para una sociología de los procesos culturales en las franjas fronterizas. *Frontera Norte*, 21(41), 7–32. [http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0187-73722009000100001&lng=es&tlng=es](http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0187-73722009000100001&lng=es&tlng=es)

López, V. (1994). *Samuel o la abeja: Estudio de la poética de Samuel Feijóo*. Editorial Academia.

Mansilla, S. (2006). Literatura e identidad cultural. *Estudios Filológicos*, 41, 131–143. <https://www.re-dalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=173414185010>

Ovalle, J. (2021). *La pregunta por la identidad del sujeto latinoamericano dentro de una realidad contradictoria en la obra ficcional de Alfredo Iriarte. Un problema de modernidad, modernización y extrañamiento*. [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/9139821.pdf&ved=2ahUKewjY14bPueK-NAxU8SzABHZwlDwlQFnoECBYQAQ&usq=AO-vVaw0R-T1SSVDjZOnSpJEAn\\_ea](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/9139821.pdf&ved=2ahUKewjY14bPueK-NAxU8SzABHZwlDwlQFnoECBYQAQ&usq=AO-vVaw0R-T1SSVDjZOnSpJEAn_ea)

Ovejero, A. (1998). *Las relaciones humanas: Psicología social teórica y aplicada*. Biblioteca Nueva. <https://centrohumanista.edu.mx/biblioteca/files/original/c726ab919481ec5125a-9f1657670591c.pdf>

Padrón, S. (2005). La dimensión cultural de Samuel Feijóo. Centro de Investigaciones y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana “Juan Marinello”.

Pampín, M. F. (2018). Historias mínimas: Autobiografías y biografías en los diarios de José Martí. *Gramma*, 61(12), 22–32. <https://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/103780>

Pinedo, P. P. (2020). El género de no ficción en América Latina: Caracterización a partir de dos obras pioneras, Relato de un naufrago y Operación masacre. *Tesis*, 14(13), 7-20. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349677374\\_El\\_genero\\_de\\_no\\_ficcion\\_en\\_America\\_Latina\\_caracterizacion\\_a\\_partir\\_de\\_dos\\_obras\\_pioneras\\_Relato\\_de\\_un\\_naufrago\\_y\\_Operacion\\_masacre](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349677374_El_genero_de_no_ficcion_en_America_Latina_caracterizacion_a_partir_de_dos_obras_pioneras_Relato_de_un_naufrago_y_Operacion_masacre)

Piñeiro, T. (2012). *Visión feijoseana de lo cubano en el poema Faz* [Tesis de licenciatura, Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas]. <https://dspace.uclv.edu.cu/server/api/core/bitstreams/b73fb4bb-5980-4a46-a8d3-b85ce97d6aeb/content>

Prieto, C. J. (2008). Palabras hacia el Diario abierto. *Islas*, (155), 62–71. <https://islas.uclv.edu.cu/index.php/islas/article/view/370>

Rossi, C. (2015). *Individuo, ser social y sujeto colectivo: Conceptos fundantes del socialismo y la teoría social*. XI Jornadas de Sociología, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires. <https://cdsa.aacademica.org/000-061/276.pdf>

Soriano, D. N. (2017). *Configuración del sujeto emigrado en las colecciones de cuentos Llamadas telefónicas (1997) y Putas asesinas (2001) de Roberto Bolaño* [Tesis de licenciatura, Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas]. <https://dspace.uclv.edu.cu/items/d78850e5-3008-4fca-aaa5-69f633c27a8f>

Vitier, C. (1970). *Lo cubano en la poesía*. Editorial Letras Cubanas, Instituto Cubano del Libro.