The elderly woman in children's tales: Stereotypes of old age and symbolic violence

A mulher idosa nos contos infantis: Os estereótipos da velhice e a violência simbólica

La mujer mayor de los cuentos infantiles: Estereotipos de la vejez y violencia simbólica

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Abstract

This essay examines the meanings of old age in the image of the elderly woman presents in four children's stories written by the authors Jacob Ludwing Carl Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm, offering a reflection on the notion of old age, in view of the demographic reality of Brazil. Under this, we analyze symbolic violence associated with stigmas and labels related to old age and discuss the process of population aging, notably, the feminization of old age in the urban space and the social role played by the elderly. In this way, we use, in our theoretical foundation, the contributions of authors dealing with old age, symbolic power and violence, as well as contributions from Discourse Analysis of the French line.

Keywords: Feminization of old age. Elderdly woman. Image. Symbolic Violence

Resumo

Este ensaio examina os sentidos de velhice nas imagens da mulher idosa presentes em quatro contos infantis escritos pelos autores Jacob Ludwing Carl Grimm e Wilhelm Carl Grimm oferecendo uma reflexão acerca da noção sobre a velhice, diante da realidade demográfica do Brasil. Para tanto, analisamos a violência simbólica associada aos estigmas e rótulos

relacionados à velhice e discorremos sobre o processo de envelhecimento populacional, notadamente, a feminização da velhice no espaço urbano e o papel social desempenhado pelas idosas. Dessa maneira, recorremos em nossa fundamentação teórica, às contribuições de autores que tratam da velhice, do poder e violência simbólicos, bem como aos aportes da Análise do Discurso de linha francesa.

Palavras-chave: Feminização da Velhice. Mulheres idosas. Imagem. Violência Simbólica

Resumen

Este ensayo examina los significados de la vejez a partir del análisis de la imagen de la anciana presentes en cuatro cuentos infantiles escritos por los autores Jacob Ludwing Carl Grimm y Wilhelm Carl Grimm, ofreciendo una reflexión sobre la noción sobre la vejez, en vista de la realidad demográfica de Brasil. Por lo tanto, analizamos la violencia simbólica asociada a estigmas y etiquetas relacionadas con la vejez y discutimos el proceso de envejecimiento de la población, en particular, la feminización de la vejez en el espacio urbano y el papel social desempeñado por los ancianos. De esta manera, utilizamos, en nuestra base teórica, las contribuciones de autores que tratan sobre la vejez, el poder simbólico y la violencia, así como las contribuciones del Análisis del discurso de la línea francesa.

Palabras clave: Feminización de la vejez. mujeres de edad avanzada. Imagen. Violencia simbólica

Introdução

> Finally, society assigns its place and role to old age considering its individual idiosyncrasy: its helplessness, its experience; conversely, the individual is conditioned by the practical and ideological attitude of society towards it. It is not enough, therefore, to describe the various aspects of old age in an analytical way: each of them reacts on and is affected by all the others; it is in the indefinite movement of this circularity that it is necessary to apprehend it.
> (BEAUVOIR, 2018, p. 13)

The feminization of old age is a phenomenon that implies greater and better longevity for women compared to men. In this connection, the social role played by the elderly is encompassed, especially in the urban space. They are new functions performed by them and that promote positive impacts on the family and

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the economy. In this perspective, cities are apprehended by elderly women in their immateriality. That is, not necessarily as salaried workers, but they are present exercising a social reorganization that points to the subjectivities of the urban space and the temporalities that are being constituted (CORREA, 2016).

However, during profound social and demographic changes, it is recognized that in old age the elderly tends to suffer, in some way, symbolic violence. This directly affects women, as official statistics show that the use of various types of violence against them is recurrent throughout their life cycle. The Atlas of Violence (2020) indicates that lethal violence against women can be considered the final and extreme result of a series of violence suffered. In the study carried out on violence, Cunha (2007) informs that violence is gender-specific when considering the adult population and that it is against the category that is subordinately registered in the context of these relationships. In this way, elderly women are subjected to this type of violence and it is practiced, in most cases, by family members and in the private sphere.

In this context, symbolic violence appears with different conformations, normally it is present in the speeches, in the supposed homemade "games" and in the popular sayings. For this analysis, it is noticed in children's stories when the figure of the elderly is associated with an ugly, bad, toothless "old woman", with a threatening and sloppy physiognomy, with physical disabilities as an element that causes fear.

It is essential to note that language is linked to the history of a society, of a collectivity. The speeches are not detached from the social and dominant thought in each era. Orlandi (2015) comments that words contain the meanings of discursive formations in their relationships. Language in the form of discourse is not insent, but it is crossed by ideologies.

For this research, children's stories written by Jacob Ludwing Carl Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786-1859), in the 19th century, better

known as the Grimm brothers, were studied. The stories analyzed were: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, João and Maria, Rapunzel and the Six Servants. In them, there are speeches and conversations that stigmatize the elderly woman and, thus, prejudice old age. With this, it was noted for investigating in children's stories, previously selected, the identity of the elderly woman and the symbolic violence contained in the present dialogues and how similar aggressions are reiterated in daily life in contemporary times.

Consequently, the concepts of old age are endorsed by society and are loaded with a negative definition. This reinforces the view of senility as a decline and indicates that those who age fail. These conceptions make possible the exercise of symbolic violence, which is also disguised as care and zeal by the people closest to it. Discursive memory favors the formulation of meanings that are immersed in discursive formations conceived over time. These come into operation as the meanings regarding aging are established.

Elderly women internalize the views alluding to old age, which are incorporated into different discourses and reproduced by society. Most of the time, they do not realize or are unable to defend themselves from outrageous situations. In view of this, it is essential to evaluate the questions that guide this situation, as these are socially elaborated statements in which beauty and youthfulness are in dispute with the aging of skin, body, facial wrinkles, hair whitening. as components that censor old age.

In this understanding, the present study aims to investigate which discourses permeate the construction of old age and how they are embodied in tales, speeches, dialogues and perpetuate the idea of old age as something that must be avoided by going against a process natural for humanity.

Methodology

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For this investigation, the French Discourse Analysis method was used. The children's stories chosen for study were: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, John and Mary, Rapunzel and the tale the Six Created created by Jacob Ludwing Carl Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm. In them, the attributes intended for the elderly woman and how these characteristics can traverse the senses in the discursive materialities about old age were observed. This study is part of the research project approved by the Ethics Committee filed with CAAE number 20065219.0.0000.5578.

Through a search carried out on the internet, on the website www.grimmstories.com, we had access to the collection of all children's stories written by the mentioned authors. Then, 200 (two hundred) children's stories were selected. In these, it was verified, using the browser search tool, which ones contained the old word. The selection, initially, was based on the higher incidence of this expression related to elderly women. After this exploration, 04 (four) short stories were separated and studied, as they presented the figure of the elderly woman as a villain in the plots. That said, we sought to understand the particularities that make this image impregnated with the harmful senses that accompany the meaning of old age itself.

It is essential to highlight that in all the stories that are appreciated, the elderly, evil and without apparent beauty character refers to the woman. Therefore, it is perceived how the female gender, in old age, is addressed in each story. With that, it is noticed that the characteristics destined to the characters are related to the "adversities" that are socially defined as inherent to the aging process and, thus, there is a chain with symbolic violence. In tales, this type of violence is concatenated with the depreciation of physical appearance and the description of unacceptable actions continually marked by the expression "old" as an aggravation for the behaviors that generated suffering for other people mentioned in the children's narratives.

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The feminization of old age

Population aging is a Brazilian reality. Thus, from the 1950s, Brazil had its demographic profile modified in accordance with the urbanization process that corroborated the advent of the population migrating to the cities and society is no longer mainly rural.

In this situation, there is a differentiation when it comes to life expectancy at birth between men and women. A person born in Brazil, in 2018, expected to live, on average, up to 76.3 years. The life expectancy of men increased from 72.5 years in 2017 to 72.8 years in 2018, while that of women went from 79.6 to 79.9 years (IBGE, 2018).

Allied to this phenomenon, the Demographic Transition has accelerated and the fertility rate, which consists of an estimate of the average number of children that a woman has during her life, has decreased. Over time, birth rates have also started to fall. Indeed, there is an accelerated population aging and greater longevity in the country.

According to data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey - Characteristics of Residents and Households, released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2017, the Brazilian population maintained the aging trend of recent years and won 4.8 million elderly people since 2012, expressing the mark of 30.2 million (in 2012, people aged 60 or over amounted to 25.4 million). Women are a significant majority in this age group, totaling 16.9 million (56% of the elderly), while elderly men are 13.3 million (44% of the group).

As a result of these changes, it is vital to note that the phenomenon of the feminization of old age in Brazil is increasingly growing. This population of 60 years and over has grown, especially, the number of women, that is, the female gender is more relevant the older the segment is, notably, in the urban space (NERI, 2007).

Associated with the greater longevity of women when compared to that of men, there is an expansion of these elderly women in the labor market (formal-informal, productive-unproductive) and a greater number of them as heads of household. In percentage terms, households headed by men decreased from 72.6% in 2001 to 59.5% in 2015, while the percentage of households headed by women rose from 27.4% to 40.5% in the same period (CAVENAGHI & ALVES, 2018). However, it is essential to consider that the manifestation of the female presence is not just about demographic data (DEBRET, 2004).

Given this reality, it is worth noting the social role played by elderly women in the context of the feminization of old age. The geographical space is conceived as a product, reflection, medium and condition for social reproduction and it also happens in the domain of everyday life. This allows the creation of a range of meanings and coherence that are intertwined by history, culture and establish identities, as it is the place where life occurs. For Carlos (2007), the relationship between man and the world has at least two meanings: the production of humankind and the constant reproduction of the world itself.

In this perspective, elderly women are participating in the urban space in several ways. To this end, they have taken on primordial roles in modern society. It is known that, previously, some activities were not assigned to them. The command of the house, for example, has always been a male task even though domestic service was constantly given to women. However, in this phase of life, these attributions are being redefined.

For married elderly women and those in which their spouses are sick or have died, they have been responsible for the government of the home. Cavenaghi & Alves (2018) reports that "the types of family are very much related to age [...] the highest proportion of male heads is in the younger ages, while the highest proportion of female heads is in the older ages". In other situations, it is the

grandmothers who, many times, have taken on the duties related to the parents and take care of the children for themselves.

Some elderly women share their homes with sons and daughters who returned to their parents' homes after the divorce. However, they are also the ones who financially maintain the home through the receipt of their retirement. In this direction, they promote a reorganization in the conception and meaning of aging, even though they do not perceive this process. Nevertheless, the social role of women is changing over time, even if they continue to be connected to care with the home and family.

The drop in income from formal work drives elderly women to have an extra income that is usually linked to artisanal tasks. These activities were not performed in the youth due to lack of time and now, they are able to exercise them and commercialize the manufactured products. Some alternatives are sought to minimize the impacts of decreased income, such as: ironing clothes from other families, making minor adjustments to clothing, making homemade cakes, among other examples.

Thus, they allow themselves to be reintegrated into the contemporary city in an immaterial way, as it does not expressly represent a return to paid work or the routines of work outside the home. It is a process of symbolic reintegration into the city's spaces, since there is a reinvention in the ways of managing time, work, leisure, living together, places and social ties (DEBRET, 2004). It is necessary to assimilate that old age has become a female issue and, as such, the strategies for a greater visibility of elderly women have been as varied as possible. For this reason, support networks enjoy growth when they decide that living collectively helps them to rebuild their lives and their daily lives.

It is seen that the elderly woman redefines the meanings of aging and transforms it into a period of life to be lived in a more mature and profitable way

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(DEBRET, 2004). That said, it is essential to think about the production of old age, as elderly women are increasingly present in urban areas, occupying spaces (material and immaterial), in the labor market, especially in informality. They are assiduous in universities and social groups, for example.

In this context, there is no way to disregard the specifics of the human organism. In this way, changes are presented, not only behavioral, but physical and emotional changes that alter the relationships with daily life, with the world and other ways of seeing yourself and others. The changes in the aging period are real, visible, but they are neither determinant nor excluding.

It is known that in the period of senility, the strength and vigor characteristic of youth are lost. It is common for the elderly to maintain a slower pace, with less agility. Locomotion difficulties increase, vision limitations accelerate and, as a result, all activities need to be viewed from a different perspective and structuring. As a result, the elderly need more time to adapt to the natural limitations of aging and the different realities imposed by economic and emotional conditions. After all, aging is the continuous loss of adaptability, which results in increasing instability (JEFFERY, 2001).

However, the problem to be exposed is that old age ends up being deliberated by the historical and social moment in which it is inserted and, in this way, several annoyances can be experienced in this phase. That is, in old age as at any age, its conditions are prescribed by the society to which it belongs (BEAUVOIR, 2018). So, it is worth noting how contemporary society perceives old age and the elderly subject, in this case, the elderly woman. Old age is a social construction, so it is full of symbolism, meanings, and conceptions that define it.

Along this path, the social identity of elderly women is defined in terms of the many ways of experiencing old age. The fact of having greater longevity, and possibly a greater participation in modern life, can contribute to new experiences during this period. Neri (2007) assesses that feminization points to changes in age

and gender norms that drive the behavior of elderly women, intergenerational relationships, and exchanges of material and affective support between generations.

Given this, another important aspect to be observed is the incentive to consumption by the media. We live in a globalized world in which there is an acceleration in relation to the offer of services and products designed for this social category. Sibila (2011) reiterates that a set of products is continually communicated with an eloquence specialized in guaranteeing the most hallucinating certainties. Likewise, due to the increase in the elderly, the multiple services offered to meet the challenges of aging and to make them enjoy a better quality of life are increasing.

Therefore, a range of high-tech equipment is noticeable in the various areas to serve them with speed and comfort, from rejuvenating cosmetics, "miraculous" remedies to devices that promise to help them have a more efficient, safe and peaceful life. Silvertsone (2005) says that the media uses ephemerality to stimulate consumption. For that, the fantasies must be offered and embodied in the images of the advertisements and cannot be satisfied but sustained eternally.

This social category is increasingly encouraged to consume goods that reproduce the beauty standards created and manipulated by society and the labor market. Silverstone (2005) declares that the media offers goods that are part of an alienating production system in order to create the sense that we have of ourselves.

Thus, it appears that media productions use elderly people in advertisements to approach this category to link them to the consumer market and move the economy. The construction of old age by society tends to determine the consumption of certain products associated with the processes of rejuvenation and concealment of old age.

For Haddad (2016), the objective conditions of existence and representations about old age are reflections of the relationships, processes and structures of capitalism. The elderly, in general, is not treated as an independent being, lucid with rights and duties, but is portrayed as an object, it is uncharacterized. In this connection, it is understood that elderly women, especially after retirement, when they leave the formal job market and when they distance themselves from the public space have their sociability weakened, since it was regularly built, mainly, in accordance with relationships of work. To this end, it is provided that modern life mirrors a logic based on economic productivity and the subjection of individuals to it (DEBERT, 2004).

In this context, it is necessary to think about the definitions of old age historically constructed, preferably of the image that is shown about the elderly, especially with regard to the female gender. There are several beliefs, ideologies, prejudices and meanings that guide old age. These are produced, socially welcomed, and transmitted to children, adolescents and young people.

Mostly, singularly in Brazil, the idea of old age is communicated by the television media, by religion, by art, through literature and the internet and, most of all, finds shelter in the family and social groups. After all, people tend to trust more in the usual principles with which they were born and grew up, much less in arguments against it (MILL, 2006).

Consequently, many of these ideas and teachings spread the fear of getting old, of becoming "old", because, in general, dependence, fragile health, loneliness and loss of dignity are associated. This makes it possible to create prejudices and stereotypes that result in swift and unfounded conclusions about productivity and, periodically, the competence of the elderly. When presenting the formulation on old age, Neri (2003) says that the concept that prevails over old age is negative, whether analyzed from an individual or social perspective.

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Through these considerations, it is understood that women are subjected to various types of aggression and symbolic violence is one of them. From children's stories to popular speeches and sayings, expressions that are permeated by symbolic violence are perceived and this is multifarious and directly affects the elderly woman, since they often do not identify the various violent situations to which they are exposed.

Image, children's stories, and symbolic violence in old age

Violence and human aging are intrinsic to humanity. In the urban space it is common to observe the high rate of violence and its most numerous facets. Among them, aggressions against women have increased in different social classes. In the analysis of Saffioti (2012), violence is the disruption of any form of integrity of the victim, be it physical, psychological, sexual, and moral.

It is known that physical violence is a disgusting and punishable act. However, there are other forms of hostility that are extremely dangerous, perverse, subtle and are not viewed as harshly as physical violence. Perhaps because, historically, women have been targets of coercion, humiliation, above all, by men (CUNHA, 2007). Elderly women suffer attacks and they do not always distinguish them as violence.

Thus, it appears that there is a symbolic power that is exercised over a certain group of people or class. Bourdieu (1989) states that symbolic power is like an invisible domination which can only be exercised with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they exercise it. Thus, the elderly aim to believe in the concept of old age that is established by the current society. For the exercise of this type of control, language is used, as it expresses a discourse, since it is loaded with notions that guide old age and its complexities. The language is naked in memory, in events, in illustrations and in

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dialogues. It is marked by the social and economic moment of a community. For Pêcheux (1999, p.46), "[...] the discursive memory would be that which, in the face of a text that appears as an event to be read, comes to reestablish the 'implicit' (that is, more technically, the pre -constructed, elements cited and reported, transversal speeches, etc.)". In view of this, the opinions about old age are inscribed in the memory, and as such, it is alive and, consequently, is consolidated in the practices exercised in daily life.

The speeches that refer to old age are full of elements designed to make the natural aspects of the aging process invisible. That is, in some of them, when they say about old age, they have their own negation, because the elderly subject is not accepted as such, but as it should be. There is the discursive functioning through which memory is materialized in the discourse (INDURSKY, 2011). It is observed that the image that serves as a representation of the elderly (a) is usually guided by the assumption of "eternal" youth, of the haughtiness and agility of youth.

In this article, as previously indicated, the dialogues that expose the image of the elderly woman in the following titles will be analyzed: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, João and Maria, Rapunzel, as well as the Six Servants. In them, the "old woman" is portrayed as an evil character who is constantly punishing or making someone suffer. Concomitantly, it exposes the figure of an elderly woman who is tied to some non-recommended conduct, usually causing the misfortune of one or more characters. In the conversations of these tales, it is usual to have terms that indicate the physical appearance of a certain elderly woman and, usually, typified with derogatory arguments. In this occasion, when looking at some stories in children's literature, this type of identification is recurrent.

With this, from the tenderest childhood, the expressions come to be known: ugly, badly dressed, bad, witch, skeletal, bad, unhappy, decrepit, full of wrinkles and with a body in decay as representing the elderly woman. Siliba (2011) ponders that there are signs of defeat in the insane struggle to look younger, as wrinkles

have become reprehensible. These are just a few among other stereotypes and stigmas that are put under the elderly, since in these children's stories they are rarely protagonists, but repeatedly symbolizes a character that causes astonishment or terror.

As a result, they identify elderly women and old age in a cruel and inhuman way. It is noted that the derogatory notion of the physiognomy of an elderly woman is transmitted and, as a result, it persists, for example, in the social imaginary that beauty and old age are irreconcilable. In these stories, there are reports of children and adolescents who were imprisoned or who suffered harm and / or corporal punishment because of an action that was carried out by an elderly woman indicating that she was an "old woman".

It is noted that in parts of the history of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs present the queen dressed as an elderly woman to approach the main character. The narrative mentions that a boastful queen, disguised as an "old woman", tried several times to approach to kill the protagonist, however, she was unable to complete her attempt.

It appears in the text that when she became an old woman, she aroused feelings in Snow White and one of them was to consider the "old woman" honest and that she would not hurt anyone. However, during the plot, the queen metamorphosed into an elderly woman is treated as an "old woman" who does not have an appropriate procedure. One of the characteristics of this elderly woman is the absence of beauty and this is the cause of envy by Branca de Neve, since this attribute is intended only for the protagonist of the children's tale.

At other times, the following interlocutions are explained:

- "It made a poisonous potion, which he put into an apple, and became a ragged old lady. Shortly after, the ragged old woman came near the kitchen window". In the section following these events he says that "[…] Snow White reached out and took half the poisoned apple and when she took a bite, she fell

dead on the floor. The queen gave a cruel look, a terrible laugh". This information suggests the malignancy of an elderly woman. This tends to induce the reader to constitute a distorted view of old age as subjects that promote acts that are illegitimate and merciless.

At the same time, it is apparent that beauty is not a constituent of those who grow old. The implicit idea is that old age is at odds with youth when it transcribes the physical aspects of younger characters. The formation of the identity of an aged person goes through some conditions, among them, the physical appearance as a powerful element.

With this, it is observed that the body of the elderly woman, in this children's story, is absent from beauty that can be admired, and this condition reaches its identity to the point of desiring the beauty of Snow White. For D'Alencar (2017) the body has been one of the greatest human concerns and that even though it belongs to the individual, society is the one who determines the way to present it, to take care of it. It is verified how the body signifies, textualizes and is loaded with distinct signifiers (ORLANDI, 2017). Thus, the body is seen as a discourse since it has social representativeness.

In the story of João and Maria there are some conversations that are:

- "[...] the door of the little house opened, and a very ugly old woman came out, limping, supported by a crutch. João and Maria were startled, but the old woman smiled, showing her toothless mouth".

- "The old woman pretended to be particularly good, but in fact she was a very bad witch, who attracted children; for that she had built the little gingerbread house. And when a child fell into her hands, she would kill him/her, cook and eat him/her".

In this excerpt, there is the representation related to the elderly. There are references to her face, her body described with a disability and unable to walk

freely. Therefore, she transcribes the figure of a macabre person and associated with negligible attitudes.

In this way, old age is drawn with dark notions that are fixed in memory. Therefore, when thinking about aging these aspects will be remembered. In view of this, Orlandi (2017) considers that for there to be memory, it is necessary that the event, or the set of registered knowledge, comes out of indifference, that it leaves the domain of insignificance. In this perspective, the memory resumes the references that were learned about what an elderly person is and, in the same way, about what old age represents. The tales in question end up shaping aging and endowment with meaning.

In view of this, old age is markedly distinguished by the physical decay that is well outlined in the story in question. The social representation of old age is linked to the repulsive aspects related to the physical aging process that is part of a common path for human beings. It has been harassed because it does not contain youthful freshness and, thus, in advancing age, body changes, physical fragility - contrary to virility, felxiblity and dexterity of youth - "justify" negative images regarding the elderly.

The following research refers to Rapunzel's tale that tells the story of a young woman imprisoned in a tower by an "old woman" who, to go to the top of the tower, asked Rapunzel to throw her braids that were used as a means of transport. This imprisonment caused suffering to a young woman, as she had no contact with anyone other than the elderly woman. In this, there is the misfortune experienced by a girl who was caused by an "old" woman. In one part of the story, she is saved by a prince. During this rescue, there is a conversation that expresses:

- "He," said the young woman: "You are a thousand times preferable to the "old" lady.

Later, and because she was deceived, the "old woman" punishes Rapunzel:

- "In his fury, he grabbed Rapunzel by the hair and slapped her. Then, with his other hand, he took scissors and tec, tec! he cut the beautiful braids, dropping them on the floor. The fact that he had cut the braids prevented the prince from reaching the tower. Not happy, the wicked took the poor girl to a desert and abandoned her there, so that she would suffer and endure all kinds of deprivation.".

Once again, it is confirmed that the elderly woman is being labeled as a person who causes suffering and unhappiness. Or rather, the behavior exerted by the aged woman is not adequate, but inappropriate and atrocious. This language not only points out the characteristics of a character's personality, but is impregnated with meanings about the elderly woman, after all, language as a discourse is not impartial, it is not innocuous, but it manifests ideologies (BRANDÃO, 2012).

On this route, a dispute arises because of the beauty with the young Rapunzel. For Wolf (2020), older women fear young women and vice versa and the beauty myth cripples the course of life. With that, one can perceive the repulsion of his own body and as a result he subordinated another woman to isolation. In this case, the fact that the young woman has the attention of a young prince, strong, beautiful, and willing to love, is aggravated.

D'Alencar (2017, p. 168) considers that "[…] the body is emancipated as a point of reference in space and time, transforming itself into essence, substrate of identity and, by extension, of personality". Thus, there are the multiple views on old age that guide children's literature and each time these impressions and speeches are passed on and perpetuated in history, affecting the image that each elderly person has of herself.

In the story entitled The Six Servants, by the same authors, an elderly queen is identified who practices violent acts against the suitors of her young and beautiful daughter. The character makes it difficult for aspirants to get close and

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get married and marry her daughter. In a fragment of the text the queen is described: "[...] the "old" queen was only concerned with attracting men to harm them. Or "[...] every suitor who appeared, she informed him that, if he wanted to marry her daughter, he must first decipher a divination; if he didn't succeed, he would have to die".

During the narrative, he is faced with this character imposing obstacles so that the interested young man is not able to marry. The actions carried out by the "old" queen were a source of misfortune for the couple. In tales, there is always an association between the "old woman" and bad actions in contrast to the good practices of the younger ones. Thus, the effects of this type of discourse alluding to old age, in different situations, may have repetitions that were exposed in other discursive materialities like this. Indursky (2011, p. 69) warns that: "[...] it is also about the resumption of knowledge already said in another discourse, in another place and whose echo resonates in the subject's discourse".

In this way, the figure of evil, sadness, and the inability to love as attributes of the aging process is displayed. In this, it is demonstrated that in old age it is common to find undesirable and inappropriate ways in discrepancy with a young man - a prince - who is described as a character of saving and exemplary practices, specified in the stories of Rapunzel and The Six Created.

Likewise, the girls identified as princesses' contrast with the physical personification of the elderly woman who refers to ugliness, amorphous, ragged and physically disabled. "In this sense, in addition to physical capital, the body is also symbolic capital, economic capital and social capital" (GOLDENBERG, 2015). The bodily aspects become an expressive mark of the female profile stipulated by society that has its parameters defined and guided around beauty and physical perfection.

These are examples that reveal how the elderly woman is portrayed in these children's stories and the stigmas of old age are developed and, consequently, they

spread and produce harmful concepts, distortions and manipulations regarding the natural process of human aging passed through generations. Pêcheux (2015, p.56) indicates the potential of the speeches when he says:

Esses são exemplos revelam como a mulher idosa é retratada nessas histórias infantis e os estigmas da velhice são desenvolvidos e, consequentemente, vão se disseminando e produzindo conceituações nefastas, distorções e manipulações quanto ao processo natural de envelhecimento humano perpassada entre gerações. Pêcheux (2015, p.56) indica a potencialidade dos discursos quando afirma:

> [...] every discourse is the potential index of an agitation in the socio-historical affiliations of identification, insofar as it constitutes both an effect of these affiliations and a work (conscious, deliberate, constructed or not, but completely crossed by the unconscious determinations) of displacement of its space.

Associated with this, the figure of the elderly woman faces challenges, because the themes that involve old age are permeated by the already said and the interdiscourse that are remembered and associated with the aging process and, thus, several meanings on the theme echo at different times. In this way, it is understood that every time the stigmas linked to old age are listed and transcribed, there is a resumption / regualization of meanings that will constitute a memory that is social (INDURSKY, 2011).

The statements about the elderly woman materialized in the tales reflect the social construction of old age that moves among the diverse plots. Pêcheux (2018) assesses that the essential is not only about the nature of the words used, but also and, above all, the constructions in which they combine. Therefore, when addressing the theme of elderly women, all the fundamentals around old age are remembered in whatever context.

Brandão (2012, p. 95) asserts that "[...] it is the discursive memory that makes it possible for all discursive formation to circulate previous formulations,

already stated". So, there is no discourse displaced from a social context and this is absorbed by social memory whenever this theme - old age - is being appreciated.

The innumerable notions about old age are crossed by the components that give meaning to it. That is, in the social perspective, old age is often understood through definitions related to its negation. It is associated with the death of productivity and this period of life has been announced as being necessary to search for efficiency, for rejuvenation, for autonomy, because, in this way, it will be associated with youth and, then, it will be praised. Old age will be interpreted based on the meanings that are present in the social imagination. As a result,

> [...] it follows that the interpretation is necessarily regulated in its possibilities, in its conditions. It is not a mere gesture of decoding, of apprehending the meaning. Interpretation is not free from determinations: it is not just any one and is unevenly distributed in social formation (ORLANDI, 2015, p.45).

In this panorama presented, it appears that symbolic violence is present in old age and in heterogeneous discourses about the elderly woman that are repeated historically as in the evaluated stories and, at the same time, can go unnoticed when identifying the elderly woman, dementia, uselessness, to a person who has no autonomy, for example. Often, the aggressive and humiliating speeches are not noticed by the elderly women who live with such conditions.

Most of the time, they do not distinguish the violence suffered, as they are assimilated socially and become almost imperceptible. Neri (2003) points to the fact that the elderly find the forms of discriminatory treatment to which they are subjected in different situations, such as at work, in advertising or in health services, common and come to find explanations for such circumstances. Women, in some way, suffer symbolic violence during their existence. Since childhood humiliation, bullying suffered in adolescence that extends into old age, in a veiled way or not.

Over time, some definitions disappear, others remain related to the perception of old age. However, it is contradictory how society faces this phase, as it is seen only as the end of life, it is marked as a static event, but it is, in fact, an extension of a process (BEAUVOIR, 2018). However, women, in old age, continue to have rights, duties and require dignified treatment as a person at any age.

Thus, symbolic violence is defined, at first, as covert violence, which, by the way, gives it particular powers and specific effectiveness. This is noted in the children's stories studied, when realizing how the elderly woman was identified through negative references regarding the female body. This violence, then, is classified as masked, invisible, and forgotten physical violence and has the effect of establishing the legitimacy of a Bourdieu agent's or institution's discourse (1989, p.7-8) defines it:

> [...] symbolic violence, soft, insensitive violence, invisible to its own victims, which is essentially exercised through the purely symbolic ways of communication and knowledge, or, more precisely, of ignorance, recognition or, ultimately, of feeling.

Debret (2011) states that the denial of old age prevents the social creation of an aesthetic of old age itself. Often, the elderly are the ones who suffer the most with pejorative nicknames, with embarrassing "jokes" about their beauty, their white hair, their wrinkles, their natural slowness of the aged body, their distraction, their inability when it comes to specific tasks. Conversely, the elderly person's image is more tolerable. Men are further removed from the frailties of being old, because the pattern of masculinity is full of dominance, produced socially. It is enough to note that in no investigated children's story does he show an elderly person as the perverse character.

About women and, contrary to the male standard, there is a clear demonstration of the various easements to which women are subjected during their existence. Mill (2006) asks: what is the desire for control? It is wanting to exercise it mainly on those who are closest to them, with whom they spend their

lives, with whom they have the most common interest, and in whom, independence from their authority most commonly can interfere with their individual preferences. In one way or another the division between the sexes seems to be in the "order of things" and works very well, as it is incorporated into daily habits, thoughts and actions (BOURDIEU, 2012).

Consequently, the figure of the elderly woman is extremely exposed to various kinds of jokes, of contempt, of insignificance, given that this type of violence is assessed as unusual, because it is not necessarily a physical aggression, it is considered subtle, even milder. We live in a culture that is based on the beautiful, the body that must be perfect, youthful, vigorous and, in this dynamic, what fits for old age and, in particular, for the elderly woman, translates into weird, awkward, out of the standard, slow and disposable, inside and outside the family nucleus. In addition, the elderly, in general, constitute a despised category, seen by the decrease and, more than that, as the antechamber of death (NERI, 2003).

It appears that the children's stories analyzed are usually told in the homes even by grandmothers, particularly, broadcast in the domestic sphere, in their own homes. This type of literature is found in schools and is appreciated in moments of leisure, of relaxation. Or rather, there is not the slightest constraint in presenting a destructive profile of elderly women. For Saffioti (1997) it is not only love that is cultivated in the family, but also hatred. This violence is referred to as intrafamily. Cunha (2007) classifies it as one of the usual forms of expression of violence, as it happens in the most intimate relationships between members of the same family nucleus and, currently, it is within the home that it manifests itself.

That said, this type of aggression is evidenced on a daily basis and is subsidized by the imposition of society regarding the elderly woman's lifestyle. That is, old age is a denied right or something that should be kept hidden (SIBILA, 2011). Thus, if this woman is within the social standards that characterize her as

modern, active, and rejuvenated, for example, the manifestation of symbolic violence will not be felt or will not exist. Otherwise, the constraints, insults and the deconstruction of the elderly woman's identity are visible, which causes her discomfort, sadness, anguish and non-conformity. For Beauvoir (2018), society ignores abuses, indecency and dramas that do not upset its balance. As a result, it does not care about abandoned children and the elderly.

These externalizations of symbolic violence are legitimized in the discourse of care and, even, of well-being. In this logic, the elderly women who suffer the aggressions do not verbalize their dissatisfaction and, occasionally, do not even conceive of these demonstrations as harmful, as they end up understanding that there is zeal, dedication and become accustomed to the forms of treatment provided by relatives.

In light of these considerations, it is possible to emphasize that old age for the elderly is crossed by the difficulties of being a woman. Thus, it is possible that subjection, exclusion, discrimination and various forms of violence are destined for them. Allied to this, society tends to ratify male domination (BOURDIEU, 2012).

Therefore, symbolic violence tends to keep the elderly woman under the control of the other, who is in charge of who determines how a woman should be, behave and endure the adversities of old age. In this dynamic, the social death of the elderly woman may be being established and reinforced in the same space where the feminization of old age is instituted. And, during all this, there is little effervescence of public policies to discuss the issue in question, the almost absence of legal oversight by the Public Power, for now, the silence of the Institutions and, still, the lack of actions by family members. in protecting older women.

Final Considerations

With the phenomenon of feminization of old age, Brazil has many elderly women in the urban space and new assignments experienced by them. They live with several challenges at this stage of life. Among them, the symbolic violence that is experienced daily, especially in the family environment. Associated with this, it has been rooted in the social imaginary that being elderly is a tragic destiny, disabled being and, therefore, hinders the full recognition of this social category as being worthy of rights in the full exercise of their duties.

The children's stories verified tend to identify the elderly woman with a violent, unjust and cause of misfortune profile, in addition to negatively qualifying the elderly woman as to her physiognomy. This produces effects, which becomes real and is reproduced. As a result, symbolic violence may become common since language reveals social practices, especially with women.

Sometimes, elderly women are unable to distinguish violent acts, as they internalize these manifestations as habitual and customary. In view of this, it is essential to discuss the forms of life to which women are being conditioned and, at the same time, to perceive the imprisonments of ideologies, of the patterns that have succumbed women, during their lives, to all types of violence. To this end, the reflections exposed may serve for new debates around the theme to seek alternatives to combat the invisibility of the elderly subject and the social ills of aging.

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