

## **Female ageing, consumption and self-expression. It's the (voice of) Granny!**

### **Envelhecimento feminino, consumo e protagonismo. É a (voz da) Vovozinha!**

### **Envejecimiento femenino, consumo y protagonismo. Es la (voz de la) Abuelita!**

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**Abstract** *This article discusses the new representations of female ageing in Brazilian audio-visual productions, taking as an example the TV series *É a vovozinha!* (This is Granny!). The choice of this TV series is based on the fact that it mixes reality and fiction and creates another kind of representation where there are no talks about or for the Other, but where aged people talk about themselves, their lives and their relations with consumption and self-expression.*

**Keywords:** Ageing; Consumption; Self-expression; Audiovisual

**Resumo** *Este artigo trata das novas possibilidades de representações do envelhecimento feminino no audiovisual brasileiro contemporâneo, a partir da série televisiva *É a Vovozinha!* A escolha dessa produção se deu pelo fato de que – num misto de ficção e realidade – cria um tipo de representação que, ao invés de dar voz ou falar sobre o outro, proporciona que este outro, a idosa, fale sobre si, sua vida e sua relação com aspectos importantes da vida, como o consumo e o protagonismo.*

**Palavras-chave:** Envelhecimento; Consumo; Protagonismo; Audiovisual

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**Resumen** *Este artículo trata de las representaciones del envejecimiento femenino en el audiovisual brasileño contemporáneo, a partir de la serie de televisión *É a Vovozinha!* (Es la abuelita!). La elección de esta producción se justifica por el hecho de que –en una mezcla de ficción y realidad– crea una especie de representación que en vez de dar una voz o hablar sobre el otro, permite que este otro hable de sí mismo, de su vida y sus relaciones con el consumo y con el protagonismo.*

**Palabras-clave:** *Envejecimiento; Consumo; Protagonista; Audiovisual*

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## Old ages and ageing

A large part of the studies, which have been carried out in Brazil on female ageing, concentrate on the domains of demography, health and elderly people's care (LITVOC; BRITO, 2004; CARVALHO; GARCIA, 2003)<sup>3</sup>. However, from the field of the audio-visual representations new approaches emerge, which point to the existence of differentiated old ages and one of the differentiation forms occurs on the basis of the gender (MENDONÇA, 2012a, 2012b, 2013).

The perspective we adopt in this article is to seek to understand the process of ageing on the basis of another viewpoint, that of the representations which are propagated in the means of communication that avoid the most recognised/known stereotypes since they understand that the representations of ageing are fundamental for the construction of images concerning this process, for the non-older persons as well as for the images the persons who are in this life stage construct about themselves.

Researchers of different fields of knowledge (GOLDENBERG, 2010; DEBERT, 2005; MENDONÇA, 2008; 2012; 2013) inform us that in a society in which the new/young converted itself into a value in itself, little visibility is given to non-young individuals. Since even Brazil denominates itself as a "young country" (and that, by analogy, the citizens must also be young)), we experience a culture which honours youth and the young as virtues in themselves; ageing seems to be in the opposite direction to the mediatic and aesthetic appeals; the relation between representation and construction of a positive self-image may be much more difficult for a woman.

When the means of communication refer to non-young women, they do it in a predominantly discriminating and stereotyped way by showing that the processes of ageing, especially the female one, is shown as something to be avoided or delayed the most possible on the basis of the utilisation of a wide range of cosmetic techniques and surgeries which are destined to remove the marks of the passing of time on the faces and

<sup>3</sup> Many of the articles of the *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* [Reports in Public Health] – publication of the Faculdade de Saúde Pública da Universidade de São Paulo [Public Health School of the University of São Paulo] deal with the topic of ageing.

on the bodies. It is the “privatisation of old age”, that is to say, the responsabilisation of each individual for his/her own health and appearance. This devaluation of all that which is no more young/new has a negative impact on the subjectivities and causes the process of ageing to be experienced as a moment to be avoided or even denied.

Thus to understand the discourses implies to critically relate them to the socio-cultural and historical context which permitted their present configuration. This kind of reasoning permits to think in a specific way or in specific ways of representing “the images of female ageing”, the “appropriate and well accepted ways of ageing”, the instituted ways of ageing, of representing this life stage as well as the new ways of representing them, re-thinking them and experiencing them.

And in Brazil, in a large part of the discourses the media propagate, which are destined to the broader audience as well as to the specific female audience, those who are supposedly over 50 are underrepresented, and, when they are represented, the stereotyped views prevail and/or they are represented as individuals who compose a market niche to be exploited by determined products and services that are exactly destined to rejuvenation and to the retarding of old age.

The “middle-aged” man is attributed values which are disconnected from his physical image, such as maturity, charm, power, financial success. On the contrary, the woman is expected to be always young, beautiful and seducing.

Nevertheless, there are some recent alterations in the media scenario. Some interview programmes, some advertising campaigns (Dove, for example) tent to deconstruct the myth of eternal youth and to put more “real” women on stage taking their physical shape and age into consideration. Productions of the Brazilian contemporary cinema, such as for example, the fiction long-length films *Casa de Areia* [*The House of Sand*] (Andrucha Waddington, 2005) and *Chega de saudade* [*The Ballroom*] (Laís Bodanzky, 2008) and also the short-length film *Olhos de Ressaca* [*Undertow Eyes*] (Petra Costa, 2009), among others, disclose new glances and new narratives on old age and ageing, which depict new forms of specialities and of socialisation, in which aged bodies create different

relationships of affection and sexual liberation, which subvert the stereotypes regarding old age as synonymous of loneliness and dependence.

Although minoritarian, these initiatives point to another direction and must be considered as signals of change, mainly if we ascertain that the number of elderly people in the Brazilian population is increasing (IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas [Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics], 2010), and that a process (still slow) of recognition of the purchasing power of old men and women is beginning.

It is in this context that the investigation we propose here is situated: the analysis of the propositions of the television programme *É a Vovozinha!* [*It's Granny!*] (launched in 2011 and re-presented in the following year). Exclusively destined to approach questions relative to the female universe which is composed of women around 60, this production lasted half an hour, it was exhibited every week on Mondays at 8:00 p.m., on the *Canal Brasil*, a public television network.

Short fictional narratives, interviews with people in the streets and the participation of specialists compose the structure of the programme *É a Vovozinha!* [*It's Granny!*]; and if we consider the discursive and imagetic elements as complementary in methodological terms, we can stress that the topics that are treated and the way in which they are presented in the television series reveal the anxieties and pleasures of elderly women, their problems, their everyday life, their worldviews, their expectations.

As far as the images are concerned, the focus, which is on the characters and interviewees in common situations, points to an attempt to problematise the correspondence between the women who are being shown and the conformity to the instituted beauty patterns, to fashion, to the physical aspect of the dominant representations; it is linked to the search for new forms of approaching this aspect of the female universe of such age group.

### **Longevity in data and images**

The IBGE statistics and data inform us about the increase in longevity in Brazil, a growth which can be credited to two complementary

factors: diminution of the birth rate and increase of life expectancy, thanks to the progress of science and to the improvement of living conditions. Nevertheless, this longevity has a different impact on men than on women.

A study, which was carried out by the demographer Elza Berquó points to the existence of a numerical disequilibrium between men and women which tends to increase with the advance of old age. According to the author, the situation results from a male over mortality and a diminution of female mortality which is related to pregnancy and parturition (BERQUÓ, 1986). This demographic difference seems to have a direct impact on the affective relationships and on the possibilities of constructing a stable matrimonial life. Not without justification, the author calls the graphic with the composition of the age groups in Brazil “pyramid of loneliness”.

Here we will approach the questions relative to affections and loneliness, their importance would require another work in which they would be the main focuses, although one can note that these aspects are a constant in the dominant representations about old age and ageing.

What we propose here is to observe more plural and complex approaches. Such as, for example, the works we quoted above, which deal with the non-hegemonic perspective of old age and ageing in recent cinematographic productions.

This production incorporates a still minor set of audio-visual representations which exploit and emphasise the new and different exercises of femininity in maturity and old age. Nevertheless they have a great subjective value, since one can reaffirm here that

In order to begin thinking about propositional actions, there remains as an earlier stage the necessity to transforming signifiers and incorporating them in the discursive formation in which the representations are not discriminating and not so dislocated from experienced reality. On the basis of the changes in the social perception of this population group there must be the possibility of proposing new forms of perceiving the female gender and female ageing as something absolutely ineluctable and natural (MENDONÇA, 2012a, p. 77).

In a similar way there are also questions about the documentary or televisual practice: how can we represent this “generational alterity”? How can we present their actuation in an efficient way, as subjects of their speeches and attitudes?

### **Representing alterity: trajectories**

The images and the languages do not only name the world, they institute it (SODRÉ, 2003, p. 7) and reality is also an effect of discourse, of representations. And these are not neutral; they imply choices which involve that which will be represented and the way in which it will be represented. Although we cannot affirm that there is no precise limit between image and representation we must admit the emotional and affective force of the image which influences the constitution of identifications and even of subjectivities.

According to Woodward (2000, p. 17), “the representation discourses and systems construct the places from where the individuals can adopt the position on the basis of which they can speak. For example the narratives of the *telenovelas* [soap operas] and the semiotics of advertising help to construct gender identities”.

Like in the *telenovelas* [soap operas] and in the advertising the author mentions, this comprehension can cover the cinema and the audio-visual productions in a broader sense. With regard to cinema, Bernardet (2003, p. 9) argues that “the cinematographic images of a people cannot be considered its expression, but the manifestation of the relationship which is established in the films between the filmmakers and the people. This relationship does not only actuate in the thematics, but also in language”. Thus films and other representation modalities must also be considered as spaces of conflicts, of negotiations.

Nevertheless this understanding of the audio-visual production as a construction, as the result of the relationships between the one who films and the one who is filmed is a recent narrative in the Brazilian cinema.

In the 1960s the fictional cinema and the documentary reveal the political tendencies and discourses of that historical moment, in which

the perspective of “speaking in the other’s name” or “speaking for those who do not have a voice”, starts to be “giving the other a voice” in the 1970s and 1980s.

This change configures itself according to that which Ramos (2008) stresses as the result of the appearance of the direct/truth cinema, on the basis of which a more participative dimension is being introduced by means of the interview and the testimony in the documentary. However Teixeira (2004) alerts us that a more profound reflection is necessary as far as this change of position is concerned.

The other is neither a non-being nor a transparency, but a challenge which is put and re-put in the middle of the heterogeneity and of the ambivalences of the wordplays, just to remain in the sphere of intercommunication. Therefore to pass from the “to speak for those who do not have a voice” to “to give the other a voice” is no sign of a great change, but only of an immersion which, at some moment, makes one’s own fiction the other’s truth, so that, in a second moment, one makes one’s own truth the other’s fiction truth. Doubly invasive, such proceeding only exposes the identity game “I=I” when facing the impossibility of receiving the “I is other” (TEIXEIRA, 2004, p. 64).

Although the power to construct the narrative remains in the hands of the one who directs, we must stress that in the television programme *É a Vovozinha!* [*It’s Grammy*] the choice falls to young men and women and to anonymous older people; by emphasising the individuals’ views instead of those of the institutions, this production bets on the narrative ability of these people and this way they make the interview into the place of a dialogue, a moment in which they become responsible for their representation, in which they are able to create their own narratives, or that which Comolli (2008) denominates *self-mise-en-scène*.

This *self-mise-en-scène* is always present. It is more or less manifest. In general, the filmmaker’s gesture ends up, consciously or not, impeding it, masking, effacing and annihilating it. In some rarer times, the gesture of the *mise-en-scène* ends up effacing itself to bring the character’s *self-mise-en-scène* into the light. It is an aesthetic retreat. Of a dance in pairs. The most decided *mise-en-scène* (that which supposedly comes from the filmmaker) gives way to the other, favours his/her development, gives



him/her time and field so that he/she can define himself/herself, manifest himself/herself. Thus filming becomes a conjugation, a relation in which the question is to intertwine oneself with the other – even in the form (COMOLLI, 2008, p. 85).

This *mise-en-scène* perspective is complemented by that of a device Lins, based upon Comolli (LINS, 2007), understands to be

above all, relational, a machine, which provokes and permits to film meetings. Relationships which occur within spatial, temporal, technological lines which it puts into action each time in which it comes near to a social universe. The spatial dimension of this device – the filming in unique places – is the most important. According to Coutinho, the subject matter or the idea does not matter much if they are not traversed by a device, which is neither the “form” of a film, nor its aesthetics, but imposes determined lines of capturing the material (LINS, 2007, p. 47).

And this device is used to bring common people to stage so that, on the basis of their reports, they show their ageing experiences as the thread so that ordinary, common beings, contrary to the fictions which stage characters that are constructed and scripted are able to express themselves. Comolli (2004, p. 50) still affirms that “these common men (or women) are characters in the making, but characters in whom one needs not believe immediately, because we know that they exist, that they are provided with existence and reality<sup>47</sup>”.

The programme *É a vovozinha!* [*It's Granny!*] deals with the experience of that which, from the viewpoint of the audio-visual as spectacle, can seem insignificant, but which fills the people's life with meaning, a meaning which their speeches and experiences share with the possible spectators.

The relevance which is given to these diverse voices is so great that they are also part of the visual identity of the presentation of the programme, which is constructed with audio passages and some keywords the interviewees say.

<sup>47</sup>The author's free translation.

Thus by investigating this specific series, we attempt to identify who are these women who are considered “mature/old”, because they are the ones who speak, who expose their anxieties. How are they seen and shown by the means of communication? Do they identify themselves with these images? How do they experience the relationship with their family, with their friends, with affections, with sex? What is their relation to consumption? These are pertinent questions concerning the universe of that which is conventionally called “maturity”, a euphemism for the process of ageing.

These are some questions which worry researchers who deal with mass means of communication and who, to a certain extent, intend to advance somehow with respect to this universe which is so near and so distant at the same time.

In order to approach some of these different questions, we chose the series and, within it, three episodes that approach different perspectives of the situation of invisibility which still prevails with regard to mature and elderly women, either in the world of fashion or in the media.

### **Fashion and the mature woman: *Which clothes will I wear to go out?***

Although the “market” has already perceived that elderly people represent a consumer niche which starts to be exploited, there are still areas in which traditional divisions between generations are evident and demonstrate a quite conservative viewpoint. One of these examples is that of fashion. Although in various areas of behaviour (or lifestyle) one can already perceive a certain extinguishing of the generational differences, fashion – or that which the mature woman can wear – it is a motive for amazement.

“Which clothes will I wear to go out? If you are a woman you know what I’m talking about. For almost all women, clothes are a topic of greatest importance. And what shall we say about the fashion for mature women? Does it exist? Is it easy to get, accessible and pretty? Or are we still speaking of a mysterious and unknown universe that fashion design-

ers and clothing manufacturers forget to take into consideration?

These questions which are put in an off narration and pictures of women choosing clothes constitute the initial sequences of this episode the focus of which is fashion for mature women

And they are exactly the ones who, from the streets, speak, answer these questions, express their viewpoint but also speak about themselves, tell their experiences. They identify themselves with the thematics and some of the interviewees feel so at ease that they parade, smile at the camera.

The fictional framework of this episode depicts two characters, Inês and Zuzu. The first has been sewing a skirt for more than 20 days, not because of the difficulty of the task in itself, but because she does not know how to define the appropriate length of the piece of clothing, since it is for her, a woman over 60. Her cousin (Zuzu) also reports on a situation which is similar to that of another mature woman who experiences the dilemma of not knowing which clothes to wear.

The participation of specialists in the programme composes diversified glances at fashion, such as the fashion researcher Denise Pollini who points out the large number of changes in clothing, such as, for example, the use of trousers was important to augment the women's corporal movements.

Besides this, the researcher still stresses the fashion designer Coco Chanel's transgressing proposal, who in the 1920s thought and created a fashion for women who sought to be the mistresses of their own destiny; she also contextualises the 1960s, which, with the creation of the mini-skirt, consolidated youth as a universal aesthetic parameter.

By attempting to question this pattern, the characters we already mentioned, together with other grannies, leave the fiction and invade the streets, with the purpose to demand a fashion for them and that way they problematise the dictatorship of the eternal youth.

In an irreverent way, the actress Lilian Blanc appears wearing young clothes, which are inappropriate to her age, to her physical type, to her demand for comfort. And the people, who talk to this group of women, notice that there is something wrong with the actress' look and they

make comments on it; others point to the limitations of fashion and they also affirm that they do not fit in with the types between being a granny or a sexy forty-aged woman.

This dialogue between fiction and reality seems to reinforce the difficulties in choosing one's clothes and in constructing one's style, but it also points to the importance of the narrative capacity of clothing, which is able to tell various stories.

Thus the piece of clothing [...] is the means through which a person sends a message to another one. It is by means of clothing that a person intends to communicate his/her messages to another one. Hence the message is the person's intention and it is this which is transmitted by clothing in the process of communication. The message is also, of course, that which is received by the receiver. That which is more important in this description of communication is the sender's intention, the effectiveness of the transmission process and the effect on the receiver (BARNARD, 2003, p. 52).

The psychoanalyst Mirian Chnaiderman, who was interviewed in the programme, elucidates the inexistence of a fashion which follows the corporal changes deriving from maturity; the journalist Hildegard Angel and the actress Imara Reis point to the lack of interest (and of viewpoint) of the fashion market, which has slimness as norm, even though large size products are looked for.

Attempting to help two mature women (Raimunda and Anair) to "write" their own stories by means of their clothes, the television programme accompanies them to a meeting with Olívia, a fashion consultant, who gives some advice on that which could be the most indicated for each of them, according to their physical type.

These relations refer to the importance of social recognition, also to the motive for the concerns of the character Inês, not exactly about the size of her skirt, but about the others' critical opinion. Such doubts also belong to the everyday life of several other mature women, as the anthropologist Miriam Goldenberg points out:

Many women over forty say that the market ignores them. Besides feeling invisible, because they are no more looked at or complimented as it was

the case when they were younger, they say that they do not find clothes that are appropriate to their age. [...]

The doubt is how to adapt yourself to your age without giving up pretty clothes. The market is directed at the young and slim women and it excludes those who do not fit into this pattern. A 56-year-old architect affirmed: “I always used bikini and miniskirts. Now I cannot do this anymore? I loved it when, after having been called ‘ugly old woman’ because she wore a bikini at the age of 72, Betty Faria said: ‘Do they want me to go to the beach wearing a burka, to be ashamed to have grown old?’ (GOLDENBERG, 2013, s/p).

In the second part of the episode, the contributions of others/the specialists indicate discretion and common sense as aspects which can help to choose the clothing or to elaborate a style which is appropriate to mature women. Some advances (although small ones) are also mentioned, such as the possibility of showing one’s arms or of wearing a short skirt, something which was absolutely forbidden some years ago, as the fashion editor Lilian Pacce stresses it; she still mentions the changes which, influenced by the media, started to appear in the world of fashion, such as, for example, international magazines which began to include the women of 50, 60 and 70 age groups, giving them the right to be vain.

Remembering a statement about fashion and freedom of her mother, the Brazilian fashion designer Zuzu Angel<sup>5</sup>, the journalist Hildegard Angel emphasises: “fashion is freedom; you must have the freedom to be, to choose and to wear what you feel like”.

To make the best of maturity and experience of life in order to be able to wear what you like is one of the indications of the programme, which, by re-signifying fashion and its relation to self-esteem, attempts to question the established patterns and proposes that fashion can become an opportunity to wear, to appropriate and mainly to amuse oneself.

<sup>5</sup> The fashion designer Zuzu Angel became world-renowned for her audacity and creativity. In the 1960s, she created a new fashion perspective associated with freedom and comfort by elaborating productions which used references of the Brazilian culture and differentiated fabrics, such as laces and embroidery.

## Desire for self-expression: The granny in the media

In a mediatic means, as we already said, which privileges the young and the handsome (in hegemonic terms) the space for older actresses and presenters is shrinking.

“The concept that society, the market and the media have about the ageing people is becoming obsolete”, the presenter says. The “roles” are diminishing, so are the possibilities of speech.

As an example, they stage an interview in which the unprepared journalist asks an elderly economist, who is being interviewed to comment on the differences between the present economy and that of “her” time. She replies: “But my time is now, I am alive”. The journalist goes on: “No, I mean the time in which you were an economist”. The lady: “But I am still an economist”. This short example, with slight (?) slips, shows how the media betray themselves by representing elderly women.

With respect to the advertisements, two interviewees in the programme, the market researcher Cláudio Silveira, the advertiser and director of the casting Vivian Golombek, comment that in an advertisement, in which the family is present, the “granny” is always represented by a character that has white hair, small blue eyes (preferably) and not by a younger grandmother, more dark-skinned, more similar to the Brazilian woman. Even the actress, who is being interviewed for the programme, Tina Rinaldi, informs that she does not dye her white hair exactly in order to attend to the characters advertising creates.

To complete his comment, Cláudio Silveira confirms that “when you turn 50 years of age) it’s all over. I do not exist anymore in the media. Either I become a grandmother in the *novela* or I must be a hot forty-year old woman”. The presenter asks in off: “to disappear from the media or to freeze in time?”

In the following episode, people are interviewed in the street about the presence of elderly people in the media: especially young people affirm that the more mature women are always the grandmothers, belonging to the upper middle class – a young girl even says that there is no poor Granny on TV – and they comment that the grandmothers, who

are represented, are persons with a traditional profile; the “cool” ones do not appear, the older women who work, who “drudge” do not appear. In fact, in a newsstand, where the reporter sought some information, the attendant reaffirms that magazines for people of that age are rare. One appeared which is entitled *Tricô* [Knitting]. Certainly in the collective imaginery all that grandmothers do is to spend the day knitting. Still in the editorial segment, the journalist tells the story of the magazine *Barbara*, which appeared at the end of the 1990s and which is especially dedicated to women over 40. All the articles were directed at them. Successful at the beginning, the magazine was losing space, mainly for two reasons: a supposed shame women felt to buy the magazine at the newsstand – and automatically to declare that they were over forty and another more serious reason, which was the difficulty of putting women on the cover: models, actresses, singers refused to assume their age. Turning forty at that time, in which women grew old with more sobriety than nowadays, the editor says, would be to assume that they are out of the beauty patterns and of the publics’ expectation.

In order to end the episode, the team talked to the responsible people by means of the blog *Plena Mulher* [Complete Woman], which is dedicated to older women and they concluded that today there is much more space than ten or fifteen years ago, when there was nothing else left to the forty-year old woman than to resign herself to being grandmother – at least in the social imaginary – and today they are mothers. A good signal that mentalities are changing, but still in an insufficient way, so that mature women can recognise themselves and identify themselves with that which is in the media.

Still with respect to the desire for self-expression – in the media and in life – the episode *A vovozinha e o feminismo* [The granny and feminism] exposes somewhat of the story of the women’s fights for voice and freedom (among other demands). Therefore they rely on the participation of the political scientist Céli Pinto and of the anthropologist Lia Zanotto, who comment about the waves or phases of feminism, a movement the fundamental premise of which is the comprehension that the personal is political and which declares that it is opposed to gender inequality.

The emphasis on the changes which occurred in the past decades, which derive from this context of fights and demands of the feminist movement is a constant in Maria Lygia Quartim's speeches; she mentions the importance of the group of women, who, besides producing the newspaper *Nós, Mulheres* [*We, Women*], went out in groups to the streets, pubs and other public spaces, what, in the 1960s and 1970s was an affront to the social prerogative according to which a woman had always to be in male company in order to leave her private space; Inês Castilho also reiterates this and says to the series producers and also to the young female spectators: "You cannot imagine very well how it was, we lived in a very limited space for freedom".

Without the intention to deepen our reflection on the feminist fights, which is neither the case nor the focus of this article, we can stress that for many women of the generation, that is about sixty today, it seems that many of the women's victories apparently adapted themselves, as the interviewee Celi Pinto's points it out; with a position that is similar to that of the character of the fictional framework, she answers the young girls, who reject feminism at the present time and reminds them that the conquests they enjoy today, such as sexual freedom, were the result of the feminists' fights 30, 40 years ago.

### **Some inconclusive reflections**

If it is sure that time does not stop and that it passes democratically for all the living beings, it is not true that its effects are similar for all human beings. Ageing is more difficult for women, less *glamorous* and more stereotyped. Without mentioning other over-determinations, such as social class and race, for example. It is true that to age discrimination we can add other forms of experiencing inequalities, such as that of gender we dealt with here.

In this case, we can presuppose that the absences, the silencing about the social existence and the representations of the elderly woman indicate the strangeness it could cause to show her with more plurality, because the faces of ageing are multiple. Therefore it is not possible, at



the moment, to open a magazine and to see somebody with whom you recognise yourself, with whom you identify yourself, in which the ageing woman is provided with new maturities and new challenges.

We suppose that one the greatest challenge is to diminish (at least) the scission between body and mind and to give primacy to the first. We are one: body and mind (and emotions) and we must not wait for the historical division which manifests itself nor for affirmations such as “in my inner self I still consider myself young”. We are not the same to the extent that time passes and marks us indelibly, objectively and subjectively. And, in this case, the change need not necessarily be negative.

And these marks, which are left by time, must be recognised in their whole complexity, through the limitations and difficulties which appear with time passing, but mainly through the memories which gain new meanings each time they are remembered and retold; through the emotions that can be reconstructed or even re-signified; through the experiences we had, the choices we made and the paths we trod, the laughter, the weep, the fights and the learning; all this nourishes the desire and the right to grow old with dignity, to face this “hard and fascinating task of living”, as the ever memorable writer Ariano Suassuna said.

To conclude, we can say that the observation and analysis of these new communicative and cultural practices enable the perception of the emancipation processes, not only from the viewpoint of institutional policies, but on the basis of the importance the daily practices acquire towards a new comprehension of the roles of the different individuals and groups. And that way, sometimes more slowly than we would wish, new spaces are being conquered, new images and new discourses are being conveyed, reports and spaces of speech emerge; new ways of ageing present themselves and become possible.

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