

Crazy Lady is an early old woman and needs care

Dona Doida está envelhecendo e precisa de cuidados

Crazy Lady es una anciana y necesita cuidados

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ABSTRACT: “*Old Age is a way of feeling cold that assaults me/ and a certain acidity*”: that’s the beginning of a poem of Adélia Prado, in which she deals with the thematic of aging, old age and the care that is necessary in this phase of life. In opposition to the initial impression that these stanzas transmit to us, the perspective of Adélia Prado on this entire poem and on the other poems that we’ll discuss in this article, is the concern for the elderly, for instrumental practices of care, and for the bio-political, humanitarian and democratic conditions that may optimize the elderly life in our society. Adélia Prado has an *illusio* about the inexorable of old age and we will discuss this *illusio*. We will also discuss dispositions towards care that are evoked in her poems. These care practices may alleviate the “natural” physical, psychosocial deconstructions that old age might bring to all of us. In this work we deal with conceptual elements from Simone de Beauvoir, Leonardo Boff, Pierre Bourdieu and others.

Keywords: Adélia Prado; Old Age; Care.

RESUMEN: *"Old Age es una forma de sentimiento frío que assaults me / and a cierto accidencia": que es el comienzo de la poem de Adelia Prado, en cuyo caso, con el temblor del enveje, la edad y el cuidado que es necesario en Esta fase de la vida. En contraste con la impresión inicial que estas transcripciones transmiten, la perspectiva de Adelinia Prado en este pozo y sobre los demás poemas que vamos a discutir en este artículo, es el referente a los ancianos, a las prácticas instrumentales, Para la biopolítica, las reglas y las condiciones establecidas para optimizar la vida de la vida en nuestra sociedad. Adélia Prado ha an ilusio sobre el inexorable de edad antigua y nosotros vamos a discutir esta ilusión. También se discutirán las disposiciones de cuidado que se evocan en los poemas. Las costosas costumbres pueden aligerar el "natural" físico, psicocial deconstrucciones que la edad actúe para todos. En este trabajo se trata de conceptos conceptuales de Simone de Beauvoir, Leonardo Boff, Pierre Bourdieu y otros.*

Palabras clave: *Adélia Prado; Old Age; Care.*

RESUMO: *"A velhice é uma forma de sentir frio que me assalta/ e uma certa acidez": esse é o começo de um poema de Adélia Prado, no qual se trata da temática do envelhecimento, da velhice e do cuidado que é necessário nessa fase da vida. Em oposição à impressão inicial que essas estrofes nos transmitem, a perspectiva de Adélia Prado, neste poema inteiro, e sobre os outros poemas que abordaremos neste artigo, é a preocupação com a pessoa idosa, as práticas instrumentais de cuidado, as condições biopolíticas humanitárias e democráticas que podem otimizar a vida de idosos em nossa sociedade. Adélia Prado está inserida na illusio sobre a inexorabilidade da velhice e trataremos disso. Discutiremos também os dispositivos de cuidados que são evocados em seus poemas. Essas práticas de cuidado podem aliviar as desconstruções físicas e psicossociais "naturais" que a velhice pode trazer a todos nós. Neste estudo, trabalharemos com elementos conceituais de Simone de Beauvoir, Leonardo Boff, Pierre Bourdieu e outros.*

Palavras-chave: *Adélia Prado; Velhice; Cuidado.*

Introduction

The Brazilian poet Adélia Prado, born in the state of Minas Gerais, has produced, and still does, a vast and disturbing poetic work, in the form of poems, short stories and, recursively, poetic prose. Her aesthetic is also known for a theme that gives emphasis to the taken-for-granted everyday of our lives, in its everyday situations. These situations are represented and expressed by filigreed observation and create singular literary contexts for the realities facing our family relationships, for the experience of religious values, for the women condition, for the insertion and / or recovering of the human to our nature, for the various influences of time in the course of life, among other topics.

In this article we follow an aesthetic and pragmatic perspective in respect to the aging process and old age in their dimension of possible care strategies. We are interested in our subjectified universes, in the existential universes that surround us and how we care to maintain the integrity and systemic functionality of such universes that, in spite the inclemency of the time perspective seen as a phenomenon for its incessant flow, disrupts and undermines our powers of action and reaction.

Cultural texts such as poems are insightful qualitative research material with a long tradition in humanities. It “widens communities of understanding by dialoguing with the voices of others” (Plummer, 2005, p. 363). Poetry contextualizes personal experiences within institutional settings and historical moments where the authors find themselves, helping to make sense from apparently simple daily moments (Finley, 2005). In using poetry as our source of understanding of ideal care strategies we recreate the great function of poetry: “to give us back the situations of our dreams.” (Gaston Bachelard, *apud* Brady, 2005, p. 979).

Taking from the pragmatic sense of the dynamics of caring, of being-for-itself and of being-for-the-other, we follow here how the poetic of the writer also progress to that sphere in which care strategies are put in order to rethink the social field of ageing as well as their structuring *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1996), in order to insert in such field the potential of an aesthetic paradigm and of a triadic ecology (in its mental, social and environmental dimension).

Gerontology and Geriatrics have a long tradition, of different perspectives, in working towards the improvement of the quality of life of the aged demographic group. This is a group that suffers from the social issue of ageism.

Ageism is the prejudice towards the aged (Palmore, 1999). The aged is considered less productive, energetic, socially engaged, and aesthetically interesting than their younger counterparts. Our contemporary society puts too much value on youth. Nested in this prejudice there is a distorted social image of the aged and of the aging process. There is also one of the hardest consequences of ageism – the invisibility of the aged.

The search for quality of life for the aged comes from several fields of knowledge. Biomedical sciences are centered on the mechanisms of aging, chronic diseases, the nutritional perspective; Economy sciences are centered in financial and social security, employment, income and public services for the aged; Technology sciences are focused on information, prosthesis, transport, home-adapted programs; finally, Social Sciences deal with questions on lifestyles, social conditions, the roles of the aged in society, social service conditions, and education (Johnson, 2005).

Care is an issue that is transversal to many of these issues. Care is in the base of social relations and at the same time is a value that must drive social service and social security. Care is in the center of technology discussions because technology without human attention cannot do much good for the aged. Gerontology and Geriatrics systematize discussions and pragmatic projects towards the aged, creating principles, values, technologies, procedures and actions to take care of life when the temporality of the biopsychic-sociologic crisis arises, “naturally” and socio-historically on our horizons.

We begin to realize an early example of the need for various care in her well-known poem *Dona Doida* (Prado¹, 1991):

Once, when I was a girl, it rained thick
with thunder and flashes, just like it rains now.
When I could open the windows,
puddles quivered with the last drops.
My mother, as one who knows that will write a poem,
decided, inspired: brand new chayote, polenta, egg sauce.
I went to pick the chayote and I am back now,
thirty years later. I didn't find my mother.
The woman who opened the door to me, laughed at such an old lady,
with a childish umbrella and the thighs to be seen.
My children disowned me ashamed,
my husband was sad to death,
I went mad in pursuit.
I only get better when it rains.

(Prado, 1991, p. 108).

¹ All the poems of Adélia Prado present in this article were translated into English by the authors from its original language – the Portuguese.

Using a poetic language that borders the a-signification (Deleuze, and Guattari, 1995), we have this picture of a family development where daughter and mother are put in front of a time disposition in which opportunity and crisis are installed. The crisis arises because the traditional family habits were broken by a departure capable of generating great care needs. The daughter leaves the home and remains for years away from the family intimacy. When she returns home she didn't find the mother, and the order of previous times had been completely changed. The daughter was immersed in the flow of impossibility for welfare in one of the most basic social fields - the family. She is immersed in a time that ages her, in a secondary normativity (Papaléo-Netto, 2012)² that demands an apparatuses of systematic care that will be built in the contact with a network of social agents placed, unusually, in front of her.

“The woman who opened the door to me, laughed at such an old lady / with a childish umbrella and the thighs to be seen / My children disowned me ashamed / my husband was sad to death / I went mad in pursuit / I only get better when it rains.” (Prado, 1991, p. 108). How do we deal with the aging processes around us? Are we interested in understanding our attention relations to these processes? Are we unselfishly open to realize and understand the ontology of practices of care as inherent to our constitution as human beings?

Care: Interests, Detachments and the Joint Construction of *Habitus*

Of all the poems of Adélia Prado, perhaps the one that most reveals aging frame and old age is the Easter poem. The first verse alludes to old age and its course can function as a diagnosis and prognosis of the situation of the subjective self through poetic language:

Old age is a way of feeling cold that assails me
and a certain acidity.
The way a dog curls up,
when the house lights go out and people lie.
I divide the day in three parts:
the first to look at pictures.
The second to look mirrors,
the latest and greatest of them, to cry.
I, who was wild and lyrical,
I'm not pictorial.

² Papaleo Netto, p. 11. For this geronto-geriatric, aging and old age are phenomena of life that must be observed in a standardized, phylogenetic and universal character - the primary normativity. The secondary normativity results from the interaction between internal and external influences (e.g.: geographical and cultural factors).

I ask God,
 to the aid of my weakness,
 to abbreviate these days and give me a face
 of old tired mother, or good grandmother,
 I do not care. I do aspire
 with impatience and pain.
 Because there are always those who say
 in the middle of my joy:
 "Put the sweater"
 "Have you the courage?"
 "Why not with your glasses?"
 Although a dry rose with powder scent,
 I want what is thus sweet from this world,
 what in me says: it is so.
 So I stop trembling and pose for a portrait,
 win a poem on parchment.

(Prado, 1991, p. 45).

The diagnostic condition points us to a certain stage of poetic subjectivity that sees aging pathways. Probably her being is still in the production phase valued positively by her social relations. However, there is a sense of anxiety and distress caused by the passage of time that, in the chronological modality of time, indicates psychophysical natural and historical degenerations. The cold and the acidity of certain normative aging already gets her face to face, causing her to take a passive position, expressed in the actions of looking at pictures, mirrors and cry.

An optimistic prognosis regarding the future is born from the situation. A time built on the process of aging; an age that is desired by her, even on a paradoxical mix of impatience and pain. This courage in facing time, in its sense of deconstructive flow and that causes a huge range of fatal malfunctions, is sustained by her belief in the care she'll receive, whether in systematic or unsystematic way, believing that someone will say, "put the sweater"/ "have you the courage?"/ "Why not with your glasses?"

In the poem, old age is assumed and desired in its entirety. It does not question, however, the various sufferings that this phase can cause, when not supported by a complex and heterogeneous network of care. In this case, such a network is assumed in its existence and punctuality, as if there would be support in her needs. However, if the poem is a hopeful prognosis in the sense that the subject imagines her adaptation to the new condition, it is not what happens recurrently in our factual lives. However we optimize the process of aging and the old age installed, variables escape our control and we may find us despised and turning invisible the process and the product (of ageing).

The transformation of aging and old age in an anthropological taboo is reflected vigorously by de Beauvoir (1996). For her, if we still do not have values, technologies, behaviors and actions to elaborate hopeful predictions about our future as old people, at least must we have the honesty to make this theme come to the surface of our daily lives. For de Beauvoir (1996) we must:

[...] stop cheating: the whole meaning of our life is in question in the future that is waiting for us. If we do not know what we are going to be, we cannot know what we are. Let us recognize ourselves in this old man or in that old woman. It must be done if we are to take upon ourselves the entirety of our human state. And when it is done we will no longer acquiesce in the misery of the last age; we will no longer be indifferent, because we shall feel concerned, as indeed we are. This misery vehemently indicts the system of exploitation in which is live. The old person who can no longer provide for himself is always a burden (p. 5).

As if answering to the reflection of Simone de Beauvoir, Adélia Prado joins the acceptance of the unhappiness of the future age to the belief that, if aware and prepared for the future we are, at least we will try to assemble engineering to make such a future age tolerant, as that attitude of old dog that can find strength to curl up in himself to endure the rigors of the cold night. If there is something that does not exist in her position, expressed in that poem, is indifference regarding the process and a passive stance towards the installed condition. Her sensibility believes in the real possibilities of “otherness care” that also constitutes her as aged subjectivity. Even with this emphatic belief such intrapersonal and interpersonal care are actually implemented? Are we prepared to take care of ourselves and take care of people, animals and other beings that make up our reality?

The contemporary thinker Leonardo Boff (2008)³ deals with the issue of care accurately. For him, rather than technologies acquired and used for the maintenance of conditions of integrity, care is part of the ontology of the subject.

³ Boff (2008, p. 87-99). In this broad and deep study on the practice of care, Leonardo Boff holds long on the acting power of humanity that, for him, it is sustained by the dimension work-mode-of-being and care-mode-of-being, assuming the first implies human intervention in nature and in society in order to obtain financial and political capital; while the second method implies the basic moral condition of the relations of cooperatives production and maintenance of beings, situations and capitals of complex, heterogeneous and multiple nature.

It is therefore inherent condition to the subjectivities in any state of individuation. There is no being or situation without the ontological productive quality of care. The existence of life supposes the relationship of being-for-itself and of being-for-the-other in the dynamics of self-care and care for otherness, of any nature it may be.

In the temporality marked by opportunities to maintain and take care of experiential equilibrium states of old age, we see that Adélia Prado also shows appreciation determined by the understanding of the processes that involve her in this phase, as noted in poem *Exhausted* (Prado, 1991):

I want a license to sleep,
 Forgiveness to rest for hours,
 Without even dreaming
 The light straw of a little dream.
 I want that which before life
 Was the deep sleep of the species,
 The grace of a state.
 Seed.
 Much more than roots.

(Prado, 1991, p. 27).

The expression of certain self-care is expressed by the concordance with the natural return to an inorganic state, common to all of us, humans, and other beings. The metaphor of sleep without dreams points to the outcome of old age, which is the finitude of being: the deep sleep of the species. The root as a symbol of experiential maturity seems to give rise to the semantic field of the seed, which refers to the emergence of other possibilities for life, both from the animistic view or from institutionalized religions, as seems to be in this poet case.

Another poem, of a similar theme, is *The Successive Deaths* (Prado, 1991). In it, we see that the subject of the poetic enunciation tells of several deaths on her family. It does not make clear if they were deaths from old age; but, probably, due to the aging process. First it was her sister, for which she cries a lot, but promptly console. Then her mother dies, for whom she mourns for more time. Lastly, her father dies, but she could not engage in a complete mourning. Forever she would remember his figure, not accepting what she considers the most profound loss of his life. She looks for old portraits and known relatives to alleviate her pain; without, however, be satisfied. Let's look at the complete poem to appreciate both its aesthetic plasticity and its thematic developments:

When my sister died I cried a lot
And comforted me fastly. I had a new dress
And bushes in the yard where I would be.
When my mother died
I comforted slower.
I had a newfound disturbance:
My breasts conformed two little mounts
And I was profoundly naked,
Crossing my arms over them I cried.
When my father died
I comforted no more.
Seeking ancient portraits, searching acquaintances,
Relatives, whoever remind me of his speech,
His way of tightening the lips and be sure.
I reproduced the shrinking of his body
In his final sleep and repeat the words
That he said when I touched his feet:
"Leave, it's fine that way."
Who will comfort me from this memory?
My breasts have fulfilled
And the bushes where I exist
They are pure briar ardent with memory.

(Prado, 1991, p. 131).

The touch in her father's feet on the edge of death is one of the synonyms for the healthy care practice. The father, even entering the state of inorganic stillness that we all paradoxically aspire, responds to the positive affection and says it's okay. In an apparent Oedipal framework, the relationship of possible balance maintenance runs its course, maintained by the interest of interpersonal phenomenon. Without this interest the aged lives that fatally found finitude ahead would not receive the respectful and caring attention that makes reality more bearable.

Care action emerges from the interest or disinterest of the social agent in the sensory emotional and intellectual field. We take care (but might be careless) of who concern us. We maintain a certain order because we believe that it is part of an experiential game in which we operate, and we believe in their values, formative contexts and rules that keep it functioning.

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1996) explains us more about the notion of interest, which derives from the term *illusio*. Even though the *illusio* connotation has been somewhat forgotten in its etymology, it belongs to the semantic field of the word interest. For him:

The *illusio* is being stuck to the game, stuck in the game, believe that the game is worth it or, to put it more simply, it is worth playing. In fact, in the first sense, the word interest precisely have the meaning attributed to the notion of *illusio*, that is, to give importance to a social game, realize that what happens there is important for those involved, to those who are in it . Interest is "be" part, admit, therefore, that the game deserves to be played and that the targets engendered in and by the fact of playing deserve to be persecuted; It is to recognize the game and recognize targets (Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 139-140).

We know that the location of the psychosocial conditions for the formation of habits is located besides the interest. Be it sensations and affections of conscious order or those shaped by various discursive enunciations of which the social worker is not aware, but that drives him into action due to interest and will. Pierre Bourdieu also calls our attention to the fact that utilitarianism, which can serve as the basis of interest, despite its great historical determination, can lose its potency.

Our actions and our reason can thus minimize the alienated production character of our desires and also be molded by the social fields in which our actions aim at integrative and cooperative targets such as the field of arts, the historical dialogical languages, and even the financial field. The sensitivity to participate in the care game shows at least the healthy curiosity to understand the principles, modalities of care that our society enables, and the care strategies we receive from our archives, formed by conservative traditions and invented traditions, whose systems we can displace and reinvent.

Adélia Prado seems to have pragmatic and poetic awareness of the game of interests and the establishment of habits that frame the picture of care practices. Her perception moves her to human, but also non-human, contacts, in her immediate diuturnities. Within these daily habits humans are wrapped in percussive metaphors of time passage, in its character of crisis and opportunities. One example of this can be seen in the *Circle* (Prado, 1991) in which the writer describe her trip to a city of pilgrimage, and her ordinary stay in a hostel in this city:

[...]
 in the city of Forgiveness, which was not pretty.
 All is plausible.
 The hours fitting the day,
 The cabinet, crystals
 - Reminders to this memory -
 without one excessive word.
 It was when I said and understood:
 The spoon fit in the pot.
 If one day I can,
 I won't write a book.

(Prado, 1991, p. 16).

The work-way-of-being is resized in relation to the passing hours and in an attempt to avoid the limitations of fixed phases of a psychosocial-genesis that reduces human life to phases based on the productivity character endorsed by social consensus, in numerous historical periods. The hours fit in the day and memory is mounted through the remains of the place and the fruition of the things that inhabit there.

The game of care is established in the care-way-of-being, in which the multiple range of interests sit well with the necessity of connection between the constituents of the poeticized situation. The utilitarian interest is moved to the field of the possible, to the care that apparently does not expect any immediate gain.

The measurement is made of people and things in the context of typical simplicities of this poet who remembers, even in times of critical temporality, a spoon that fits in the pot, to prepare the necessary patience and the solitaire understanding for maintaining circular conditions of existence.

More than circular, these movements are spiral, for the time, above its protocol of chronological marking, is circular when it nestles around itself, but it is spiral when it changes positions, moving from traditional social data to what can be created innovatively, consciously and critically by social agents (Benjamim, 1987).⁴

Reasonable Action: Necessity and Empathy in Front of Age Difference

The human being that is conscious of himself as "the dwelling of future age" is more prepared to take care of himself and others when old age is definitely installed.

⁴ The philosopher reflects on time dispositions for modern societies, in which the production processes involve solely the temporal teleology, not allowing social workers to understand time as a constructed reality and the possibilities of change in modes of production aimed at organicity between producer, production and product.

This fact seems to arise from universal wisdom, both in its systematic and unsystematic knowledge, but we forget it with fearsome frequency. And when the time of death of those we love comes, our energy expenditure is so bulky that can leave us stuck in a demanding and endless mourning work.

During a few moments of her poetry Adélia Prado also reflects on how we can find ourselves in such circumstances, in which we come face to face with the passage of time on our lives and on the lives of those we love and to which we are committed to regarding the salutary and necessary care practices. An example can be seen in the *Strange Poem* (Prado, 1991), which despite its quality and extent of prosaic poem, deserves to be followed throughout its length:

My head hurts and I'm thirty-nine years old.
 It is not a habit. It hurts very rarely.
 Nobody is to blame.
 My father, and my mother rested their burdens,
 there are no more
 their eyes upon me.
 Mother, oh mother, oh father, my father. Where are they hidden?
 It's inside of me that they are.
 I didn't built a mausoleum for them, I put them on the floor.
 It grew there, because it wanted, a tree of purple nostalgia,
 that abounds in cemeteries.
 The wind planted, and so the rain water.
 The sun will kill.
 All Souls' day has passed and I was not there, neither birthday.
 What for, if to cry anywhere is good?
 It is for remembering too much that I didn't go.
 Oooo father
 Oooo mother
 Inside of me they aswer
 tenacious and hard
 because the zeal of the spirit has no endearments:
 Ôôôô daughter.

(Prado, 1991, p. 21).

The poem describes a kind of bereavement caused by the left of father and mother and the feeling that one could perhaps act with more pragmatism in the situation of care, when they were still alive. The stages of grief are put forward with the brutal spontaneity of those who believe that life and death are intrinsic reality phenomena. It is assumed that the dead, whatever their deaths, are still alive within us, and precisely because we may feel incapable when we face the impossibilities of care, we will have to constantly deal with guilt.

Before the imponderable and the complexity of life's situations, can we prepare properly for the inevitable that is death? Our self-care strategies and care for the aging / aged other are enough to put our sufferings in a tolerable state?

Sociopolitical variables come into question to find the answers to the many questions we can ask. One of the answers concerns the need to frame care practices into their actual possibilities and limitations, so to look into it intellectually. A great help comes from the aesthetic paradigm we explored in the previous section. Here, we continue to follow the stance of Adélia Prado (1991) on the subject through her poem *Time*:

To me, who since childhood have been coming
as if my destiny
was the exact fate of a star,
appeal amazing things:
paint the nails, discover the neck,
blink the eyes, drink.
I take God's name in vain.
I discovered that in his time
they will weep and forget me.
Twenty years plus twenty is what I have,
a western woman who if man was
would love to be named Eliud Jonathan.
Right now in the July 20
of nineteen hundred and seventy-six
the sky is mist, it's cold, I'm ugly,
I have just received a kiss in the mail.
Forty years: I do not want a knife or cheese.
I want the hunger.

(Prado, 1991, p. 155).

The writer makes up, poetically, the diagnosis of her life. The amazing things in her life are those felt and lived in the simple daily life. She seeks to understand the workings of her body, its needs and the ways to please them. She boasts in the sacred time and in the secularities made by the psychosocial time. She understands that her feminine condition differentiates her from the male condition and its privileged socio-political places. However, she feels the ontological meeting of different genres occurring to her. A woman also has the male characteristics, as in a disjunctive and at the same time conjunctive synthesis.

The chronological temporality does not limit her at the stage of normative aging. In addition, aging leads her to desire that which keep the impulse of life. The hunger of live keeps her as an active subject, capable of accepting herself as the natural house of old age.

Thus, the propensity for self-understanding and the sensibility for self-care enable her to understand people and things. This understanding, as well as its natural and historical requirements, guides her interests, improving the practices of responsibility and intrapersonal and interpersonal zeal.

What remains in the Epitaph?

Know how to live the youth age enables us to build a satisfactory old age. More than just a common phrase, such thought alerts us to the need to pave this route with refined understanding of the accidents that such formative and generational pathways put us forward. To know the variables and invariables of experiential pathways maintenance is the most productive way to keep us stable at critical times in our evolution, whether teleological or a-teleological.

On strategies and practices of care it is worth to remember the insightful reflections of the activist philosopher Leonardo Boff (2008):

According to classical dictionaries of philology, some scholars derive care of the Latin *cura*. This word is a scholar synonym for care, used in the translation of *Being and Time*, by Martin Heidegger. In its earliest form, *cura*, in Latin, was written as *coera* and it was used in the context of relations of love and friendship. It expressed the attitude of caring, concern and inquietude for a loved one or a dear object.

Others derive care from *cogitare-cogitatus* and of its corruption *coyedar*, *coidar*, *cuidar*. The meaning of *cogitare-cogitatus* is the same of cure: suppose, think, put attention, show interest, reveal an attitude of caring and concern. Care arises only when there is someone of importance to me. So I dedicate myself to him; I participate in his destiny, his pursuits, his sufferings and his successes, ultimately, his life (Boff, 2008, pp. 90-91).

In the poems of Adélia Prado there is concern for the attitude of care towards the personal, the family, and, well beyond the everyday life observed, towards the loving attention and responsible interest.

Self-understanding, in its chronological and kairological⁵ temporal modulations, covers human, animal, plant and thing-related poetic becoming. The complexity of existential universes is disposed on the scene, as if to expand the idea of taking care of what we love. The poet wants to care for the things she loves and for those she understands as segments inherent to her subjectivities processes. So her identity is protean. There is a need for a political, ethical and aesthetic commitment to politics of care to multi-referenced realities.

The scope of such a project of life is reflected in her poem *Brief* (Prado, 1991):

She generated children, grandchildren,
She gave to the house the air of her grace
And she will die of cancer.
The way she presents her face for a portrait
Is that of who, finally, agreed to be dispensable
She waits, with no howling, the grave, the tombstone, the inscription:
1906 - 1970
WE MISS YOU, LEONORA.

(Prado, 1991, p. 15).

Eleonora can represent the mother, the grandmother or even the great-grandmother of the poet. She may represent the masculine or feminine lineage of the **family or other persons who passed through her life and are perpetuated by her poetic apparatus** that slides to multiple and complex existential universes in which the poetic voice resound.

The character is constituted in her subjective and collective life. She experienced the subjectivities of the self-for-myself and of the self-for-others. Physical tragedy limited her life, but she did not allow her co-existentiality circle to stay inconsolable. The interest she demonstrated to others, turned back to her. This gift occurs in a melancholic and nostalgic ambience; however, in the quality of positive and respectful empathy arising from those who are still alive.

Empathy and care for those who surrounds us are not solely individual or family attitudes. The poetry of Adélia Prado bring into light important social and cultural questions.

⁵ The German sociologist Norbert Elias wrote one of the leading contemporary treatises on the categories of time. Among his reflections there is the, at least, dual character of human temporality: the "primitive" time, chronological, in which the civilized man is able to make the spontaneous immersion in his realities; the time of opportunity - something pertaining to the a-chronological time, conventionally linked to Kairós, a Greek god. Humanity is inserted in the chronological time in a physical, social and historical mode. The individual is inserted into an existential and productive linearity without knowing the origin, principles, and reasons for such temporal succession. This chronological perspective is linked to the god Cronus, of the ancient Greek mythology. In the poems of Adélia Prado reviewed here that is a predominance of the kairological time, as we punctuated in our analysis.

Age is a fact of life. The attitude of individuals and institutions towards aging is a social fact of life. Aging demands care practices and these practices must be culturally build as respect and not as a burden, for the family or the Government. It is important to incentive the elderly to pursue its own life and live it fully. That can help. But the conditions for the elderly to live his live are not solely individual (Gullette, 2004). They are micro-social in the sense that families need to know that a life is not solely a biological life and the elderly needs attention, responsibilities, and respect for who he/she is. They are macro-social in the sense that transport must be free for those who need it and cannot pay for it anymore. And they are cultural in the sense that how we look and perceive the elderly affects how the elderly feel.

Finally, care is a paradoxical concept for the elderly. On one side it promotes necessary social relationships that increase the quality of life of the elderly. On the other side it might reinforce the stigma of the aged as the one who is fragile, dependent, or decadent (Friedan, 1993). This apparent paradox must be discussed to be broken. The elderly needs care as much as everyone does. His life, for most of it, can be full, independent, whole. But for some, in a small part of life, care will be fundamental. So care is essential. The image of the elderly in Adélia Prado poetry is not an optimistic one. It must not be. Reason, through decades of studies and publications in Gerontology and Geriatrics has not changed the cultural perception of Aging and Old Age as much as it should. Perhaps we need more from the Arts and its capacity to aesthetically discuss the moral.

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