

Widowhood: The representation of death through of the vision male and female¹

Viuvez: A representação da morte através da visão masculina e feminina

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ABSTRACT: The article presents the understanding of the widowhood from the experience after death of the spouse, what changes to the widower over 65 years of age and for the widow over 65 years of age. The psychic conflicts in identity of the old-aged and the consequences that bring on to them. The widowhood of the man brings as a consequence the end of the personal care provided by the woman; on the other hand, the widow woman changes her life with the absence of the authority from man, but at the same time, she acquires the experience of freedom. By understanding the phenomenon of widowhood we can start taking in consideration its uniqueness and human subjectivity, but rescuing the gender difference.

Keywords: Old-Aged; Mourning; Male Widowhood; Female Widowhood.

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RESUMO: *O artigo apresenta o entendimento da viuvez, a partir da vivência pós-morte do cônjuge, o que muda para o viúvo acima de 65 anos e para a viúva acima de 65 anos. Os conflitos psíquicos na identidade do idoso e as consequências que acarretam. A viuvez do homem tem como consequência o fim dos cuidados pessoais oferecidos pela mulher. Para a mulher viúva, sua vida muda com o fim daquele que lhe proporciona a autoridade, mas ao mesmo tempo o ganho da liberdade. Ao entender o fenômeno da viuvez leva-se em consideração a singularidade e subjetividade humana, mas resgatando a diferença de gênero.*

Palavras-chave: *Idoso; Luto; Viuvez Masculina; Viuvez Feminina.*

Introduction

Mourning can be understood, according to Bromberg (2000), as a set of reactions to a significant loss. The bereavement is the conformation process of this loss.

We understand that there is a need get rid of the clothes of the deceased, usually as a stimulus, told by Didion (2006) as part of the things that are always done after death. This make part of the ritual, is a sort of duty to be fulfilled. We try to keep the dead alive, to keep them with us. There is the moment when we must abandon the dead, let them go, keep them dead. We cannot let them become a photograph on the table, a name in the inventory accounts.

Mourning is a psychosocial process where there is transfer of attachment in relation to a lost object, given the irresponsibility of its physical disappearance. *Rebello* (2005) confirms that there is an emotional disorder in mourning.

Mourning is understood as a constellation of conscious and unconscious psychic reactions. *Domingos* (2003) says that there is a significant loss; the mourning is a complex experience that transcends the individual ambit. Mourning is only solved when the deceased person is internalized instead of forgotten and when the person that suffered the loss adapt to reality.

The fact of each person have the experience of the loss from different forms intensifies the reverence by uniqueness of the Human. Fukumitsu (2004) says that dealing with losses is a process that may or may not end. The mourning does not need to be finished, completed, necessarily. It is rather than a process which needs to be experienced as part of our development.

The black vestment has two meanings: the somber character of death, which develops with the macabre iconography, but mostly the ritualization oldest of mourning; the mourning is expressed by black clothes that dispense the gesticulation most personal and dramatic, says Ariès (1989).

The pain of death is put in relation, not with the true sufferings of agony, but with the sadness of a broken friendship. *Ariès* says that the pain of the longing of loved one can stay in the heart of the survivor. *G. Gorer* distinguishes three categories of people in mourning: one who can hide his pain completely, one that manages to hide his pain from others, saving it for him, and one who lets his pain appears freely. In the first case, the person in mourning obligate himself to proceed as if nothing had happened, continuing his normal life without any interruption. In the second case, almost nothing transpires externally and the mourning subsists in particular. It is undoubtedly, most approved attitude by common sense, who admits to be necessary to tolerate a little bit relief, while it remains in secret.

In the latter case, the obstinate mourner is ruthlessly deleted like a crazy.

The survivors have difficulty accepting the death of another. The mourning is the pain by excellence whose manifestation is legitimate and necessary. *Ariès* (1997) speaks that the death's pain of someone close is the most expression violent of the spontaneous feelings.

It is important to mention the significance of the loss of the companion and the changes that bring the widowhood, a tragic or natural event of the life, which brings transformations. Tôrres (2006) defines the widowhood, *Vidua* in Latin, like "to be deprived of something". In the life of a widowed person one acquires a new social identity, arise a new marital status. There are changes of questions historical, social, cultural and religious.

It is necessary the widower/widow be respected and be worked within your reality. Understanding different thoughts and meanings with possibilities of intervene constructively in the delicate process of adaptations. Tôrres (2006) explains the need to realize what the changes represent. It is necessary have sensitivity and empathy in order to understand what is experienced by the other. It is necessary to know the significance of the loss of the spouse and understand the changes of life, disorganization, missing him, absence and sweetheart memory of the object.

The female widowhood can be understood, for some hers, like freedom. It is the feeling when women are abused by their husbands. For many women the social isolation was given when they married, the widowhood can be a "relief", the woman has more time and can be more independent. Tôrres (2006) says that widows were always been a marginalized group, a threat to morals and good customs. Widow is synonymous with deprivation, reclusion. The woman had lost her status as wife; they were submissive to men and responsible for the care of the home, son and husband.

Method

The exploratory nature research presents the investigation of the representation of death in the vision in male and female from the experiences reported in the elderly patients, widower, of both sexes over 65 years old, from Hospital for State Civil Servants - Francisco Morato de Oliveira.

The questions that guided the interview encompassed the time of married and how it was the relationship and the time of widowhood and how was the reaction to the situation. The participants have no historic of dementia; in the table below are exhibited the information from the interviews. The names are fictitious to preserve the patients

Patient	Age	Interview's place	Interview's date
Homero	94 years old	Geriatric ward	May, 28th 2010
Alberto	82 years old	Geriatric ward	June, 23th 2010
Maria	67 years old	Outpatient Geriatric	August, 25th 2010
Tânia	76 years old	Geriatric ward	September, 21th 2010

Results

Based on the focus of historic union of marriage and reactions given to widowhood, Homero told of his marriage of 65 years and more 12 years of dating. One night, he and his wife were sleeping and the ceiling fell on them. He had injuries and eye sequels; she died. He told that at eve of completing 94 years she was still active, she cooked, passed, washed, she was knitting and she embroidered. He called her "The missus". Widowed there is a year, he says that already in thought himself throw of the window and take pills to die. He says also that lost all his friends, they died. By getting high, he says he doesn't want to leave the hospital, he want die. He says that his daughters guilt him for the accident; since the day the roof fell he had seen a crack and did nothing. Homero says that what he suffers with his children is a punishment, when he lost his wife, lost his family.

Alberto was married for 55 years and had more 4 years courtship. He says that they did not have much leisure, he worked too much and she worked as a housewife, had not much time for sightseeing. She was very jealous. Over the past 15 years, his wife fell ill for a clinical condition which worsened too much. She was getting very depressed, afraid to die. She did a colonoscopy and his intestine was pierced, she had a large hemorrhage which caused a big infection and his death, consequently. Widower for four years says he misses the food from his wife, feels lack of hers, and still suffers a lot. Every Sunday he goes to cemetery with one of his sons. He says he never gave up hers and what all it that he could to do, he did. After two years of widowhood he began a relationship with another woman.

Maria was married for 37 years. Her courtship was very rigorous, with date and time stamped. They dated for 3 years before marriage. She said it was slow to adapt to conjugal life, due the husband's personality. He was a very private person and she never had the company of him. They hadn't much misunderstanding, but they had little interaction or dialogue. After the birth of his sons who approached more and also they began to communicate more. At the beginning of marriage her husband was very serious and cold they even thought of separating, but then improved. Then they faced the problem of his illness, cancer. She says hasn't cried in her husband's death. After 10 years of widowhood, she has clung much in granddaughter, born in the same year of the death of her

husband. She confesses that she feels really miss him, but realizes that it is important to continue living well. She was very dependent on him but, after widowhood she feels more freedom.

Tania had five years of dating more 49 of marriage. She says that her husband has always been very controller, jealous. She could not have friends nor receive visits. Her husband started having heart problems and had surgery where life expectancy was five years old, lived thirteen. She liked to have freedom of her, go out for a stroll and her husband never participated of family outings. Have no dealings. They had many conflicts, they lived discussing. Now with two years of widowhood says everything is optimum, due to the difficult relationship with him. She notes that she doesn't better because she is always sick, and says that now everything is in God's peace. Neither wants to go to the cemetery to pray, says that he did not want to pray, and he wanted just quarrel. She says: he does not deserve it. She concludes that now she has the life that God asked.

Discussion

From the results obtained we can understand the speech of Homero a very depressive state with suicidal ideas, only bringing memories with much anguish. Possibly Homero's wife was not only a base for his life, but for his daughters, the whole family as well. She was the owner of the house, "the missus" as he himself appoints. She is the person responsible for the care and services of the house without her all them went without this care.

The image that wife has in her life is the image of companion and servitor. In this family, she occupies the place of maternal zeal, their daughters so also feel, when they don't conform to this structure lost. The lack what she means in the life of this family brings disharmony and family conflicts. Homero cannot offer at his daughters what mother offered to them.

The tragedy, the accident, the unexpected, brought to this patient a depressive and melancholic mood. It's seen an ideal of death, he cause his own death. Be the one that still

survives in the group of friends gives you the uselessness, along with relation of guilt seen by him and the cracks of being accused by his daughters. In his speech, Homero presents suffering with psychological abuse, as in the study in Giraldo (2006) in survey of factors of violence in the elderlies, as one of the problems of aging.

Mourning is a manifestation of defense, the acceptance of this feeling may reaffirm the loss. Oliveira and Lopes (2008) say that can happen that mourning never ends; it is the relation that the mourner keeps with the deceased. Mourning is considered the actual loss, melancholy is unconscious, and the object is lost and does not know what has been lost. In Homero's widowhood, he keeps alive the feelings in relation his wife. Pinho states that women are responsible for household tasks and meal. Homero show that he doesn't being served and it is this representation that he misses.

Freud (1915) in the text "The Instincts and their Vicissitudes" tells us that the instinct is a stimulus, it is a necessity, when it is eliminated brings us satisfaction. Relating that Homero brought many positive facts in your relationship / marriage with his wife; this pulsion of life is interrupted since the time of the absence, of the loss, providing sequence the reactions of the death instincts, when spoken in thoughts of suicide, there is no more interest and therefore no investment in anything else.

Through the wife object / person, Homero had full satisfaction; be loved, served, care was reciprocated in his narcissism, there was investment in your own ego, an investment of libido of passive mode; which now with actual death indeed of the object, that was lost it is not more reciprocated.

Freud (1915) in the text "Mourning and Melancholia," says that the melancholia is a normal affect those who pass through the grieving. The mourning, in the general mode, is the reaction to the loss of a loved one. According to Freud, melancholy is a painful despondency, lack of interest for outside world, decreasing of feelings and of the self-esteem. At the mourning, the disturbance of self-esteem is absent. At the mourning, the world becomes poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself, the actual loss of the object, death.

In Alberto's case it is perceived an independence in the marital functions, They did not had much entertainment together, he used to work very much, symbolizing the financial side of marriage, and she as a housewife, busy in raising children and organizing the daily domestic tasks. He feels no guilt or relief, but a sensation of duty done, within the possibilities of your health state, which presented many complications and reported that what he could do, he did. Going to cemetery, does not make he accept the loss, as he says they never gave up and will not give up keep alive the image and memories he has of her.

The pulsion on satisfaction of Alberto, it is also since the cares, of his food and in the household chores (life pulsion). In the pulsion of the death is felt, but not maintained. Alberto replaced a new object of love. The mourning work is finalized. The "ego" is free again and uninhibited. The "ego" overcame the loss of the object, the mourning by the loss. The normal mourning that overcame the loss of the object met another (companion) that replaces the actual loss of the dead object. Statistically there is a higher proportion of women in longevity, and so consequently higher proportion of widows. Culturally men remarry and with younger women, according to mentioned by Camarano (2003).

With the Mary's narrative, there is a perceived difficulty in adapting the chosen object, her husband. After the birth of sons who finds a pulsion of life, on husband, a family constructed, getting thereby approximation of your chosen object. She thought segregate from him; he not matched with the completeness she expected. After the death of the spouse, initially she did not demonstrate a concussion with loss of that object.

There are three main areas where each member of the couple is related to the other. Feres-Carneiro (1998) presents Dicks (1967) citing as first, the meeting of expectations mutual, conscious. In second, the extent of expectation integrating the married couple to their cultural environment and last, the unconscious complements the roles among themselves. The formation of compromise between the relations of unconscious objects is always in conflict between conscious desires and mutual expectations.

Feres-Carneiro (1998) cites Lemaire (1988) which tells the couple blends their borders and constitute themselves around the ill-defined zones of the "I" of each spouse. The conjugal union is constituted by two individualities. The conjugal identity is created by memory in common. Maria can replace the object by other family member, the

granddaughter. The loss of its object gave him freedom and thus do not need to give satisfaction to the new object chosen, as it was before.

Most women relinquished the personal fulfillment in other areas. Monteiro (2002) speaks of identity and self-esteem of the woman elderly who are lived deeply of dependent from the achievements of the husbands and children. The years of the old age follows with no individual sense. The new generations have no more marriage as a carrier of articulation of love.

The widowhood generates an affective pain that depends on the degree of identification with the partner. Monteiro (2002) says that if there is a break with the past, can bring joy, when the relation was authoritarianism and possession. In the loss there are changes in routine, and often the elderly going to move to their sons' house.

The instinct manifested in Tania is due to his wedding and the construction of a new family. Throughout the living together cannot maintain the harmony of matrimony. The authority of her husband made her does not invest more in it. With cardiac problem of him, slowly he was saying goodbye by the expectation itself that placed him on it and the accompaniment of disease. Since the woman presents for the family and for society her new status, of widowed, like speak Baldin and Fortes (2008), Tania was already preparing.

As for his death drive not occurred in fact, due in the death of her husband, but in the disinvestment of her wedding. According to the speech, the life's pulsion returns with the death of his.

Now she has the freedom that has contested previously. She has independence. The mourning takes place in the wedding process, and not by the death in self. Possas (2008) tells of the condition of widow is connected to deprivation, loneliness, disconsolation, be on helplessness, however in the case of Tania the widowhood is seen as a positive feeling, Nazareth and Soares (2007) explain the emotion of relief and acceptance. The human being only survive because the Other wish him, as observe Py and Trein (2006) that say the sole purpose of existence is the satisfaction of desire.

Old age is marked by multiple losses, including the loss of the partner, which brings consequences. Doll (2002) tells that from there arise forms of recovery and continuation of life after the loss. This situation requires elaboration and readaptation process.

The widowhood has different meanings for women and men. However the function of grief is the gradual loss solution, thus opening the possibility to transfer the libido to a new object. For this elaboration is needed. Doll (2002) tells about the importance of interpretation of the mourning be individual, from the cultural standard in which it insert.

The adjustment can be quickly, after an already expected loss, where the mourning had been anticipated, or with the death of partner can mean the end of a stressful situation, as in the case of Tania.

In elaboration, the person sees himself facing the cutting of ties with the deceased. It is done thus, a construction of a biography of the deceased. Doll (2002) speaks this process of integration of memory of the deceased in his current life.

Conclusion

The widowhood in its objective sense means much more than just the physical loss of a spouse. The widowhood entails in the story of the person who remain the emergence of new feelings. The new civil state creates a new sense to its identity.

According to described in the literature, the reaction against the loss is subjective; However through the reports of two widowers was identified and confirmed that beyond the loss of their object and social role of the spouse, they had the loss of who they received care; also they feel the lack the housework that you were served, offered.

With the speech of two widows, it was also possible to claim that there is a feeling of freedom from the loss of her husband. It was observed that the dependency in this object brought discomfort to her in your marriage's life.

In the aging process, the loss of spouse is a natural process; but it brings consequences that need to be elaborated. Having thus the opportunity of new meanings, the mourning brings the possibility of rewriting the history.

The losses of the spouses described in the discourses contribute to a better understanding of human beings and their relationship with the other. The importance of analyzing the reactions against loss intensifies the uniqueness of the individual and by

another means to comparison of male and female genus, rescuing cultural situations of the aging process.

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