

The mourning of relatives of persons disappeared in the Military Dictatorship and the movements of testimony

Chiara Ferreira Fustinoni* 
Angela Caniato 

State University of Maringá, Department of Psychology. Maringá, PR, Brazil

Abstract: Through a bibliographical research, this article aims to understand how the mourning process occurred among relatives of persons who either disappeared or were killed for political reasons during the 1964 Military Dictatorship, which, using the National Security Doctrine, made these militants disappear, causing a traumatic hiatus in the heart of the family, which had to cope with the emptiness left by the disappeared person/disappearance. Knowing that processing the mourning requires objectification of death – identification of the dead body and rites of passage from life to death –, we suppose there is difficulty in this possibility of processing the mourning. Identified with Freud's work *Mourning and Melancholia*, we follow the two paths he presented, with no intention of covering all human complexity regarding the forms of suffering in mourning, namely: mourning and its possibility of reinvestment of libido; and the paths of melancholy, which paralyzes the subject and prevents him from making new drive-related investments. Following in the footsteps of the father of Psychoanalysis, we observed in relatives of persons disappeared for political reasons that melancholy paralyzes the subject in a mortifying state, while in mourning some movement is possible.

Keywords: mourning; trauma; forced disappearance.

Introduction

The feeling of loss follows us constantly, forcing us to react. The mourning demonstrated in Freud (1917/2010) is an example in which the subject, after losing an object of love, such as a loved one, an object, a position, is compelled to gradually disconnect his libido, until he finally sees that the object of love is no longer there; in another possibility, melancholy, the loss is of a more ideal nature, when the subject does not know exactly how to identify what was lost, even often identifying the material object that was lost.

In addressing the issue of mourning among relatives of persons disappeared for political reasons in the 1964 Military Dictatorship, we observed the two possibilities mentioned in Freud's text: mourning and melancholy. When they suffered the loss of the loved one, some relatives, having disposition for a melancholic structure, suffered their loss in a paralyzing way, while others who did not have this mode of structuring were able to resort to another way of mourning, the active participation in social movements of testimony and resistance.

We consider, therefore, that the violence of the 1964 Military Dictatorship served as a fuse for triggering a mode of melancholic suffering; however, in the absence of empirical research that confirmed melancholy in relatives of persons that disappeared for political reasons or that

confirmed that their suffering had been triggered through the military actions of imprisoning, torturing, concealing information and bodies – and, therefore, deaths –, it was decided in this work to highlight the mourning of these relatives while disregarding melancholia, avoiding the risk of committing a wild psychoanalysis and brutal analysis of the subjects in question. Therefore, in this context, the bibliographical analyses concerning mourning will prevail.

In Psychoanalysis, mourning, experienced with each loss suffered by the subject since its most primordial relationships, is configured in Freud (1917/2010) by successive processes of redirection of libido: the invested libido, after the object of investment (of love) is lost, returns to other representations. When disconnection is impossible, due to factors that impair such disinvestment, its non-processing may occur. Here we take as object of study the mourning made difficult in relatives of persons disappeared for political reasons during the 1964 Military Dictatorship.

Justified by the discourse of combating communism, dictatorship was established in Brazil in April 1964, imposing gradual processes of repression on transgressors. Dissidents felt the effect of violent actions intended to “educate” the so-called “subversives.” This “education” sought, above all, to inhibit actions/ideas opposed to the imposed system and, as a consequence of such actions, there were kidnappings, torture, deaths, and concealment/disappearance of persons.

The aim of this research was to seek understanding about the mourning of relatives of persons disappeared

* Corresponding address: chiaraferreira@hotmail.com



in this context. We sought to understand how mourners disinvest – if so they do – of the missing person, since these relatives were denied the procedures necessary for objectification of death, namely: the news of death, the encounter with the dead body, the funeral, the burial of the loved one, and the possibility of gradual disinvestment, through the certainty of the non-return.

Ariès (2014), in an enlightening work on the history of death, reports that it was only after the eighteenth century that the bodies of the deceased became the responsibility of the relatives. Until then, the most common practice was to abandon the bodies of the dead at the church; however, even at that moment there was always concern about the location of the body; the first responsible for the grave was the church; subsequently, the family.

Thus, the nineteenth century brought a new expression to death; seen as a rupture, the relatives began to need to reflect on it: its consequences, financial implications, feelings involving the relationship between the deceased and the mourner and their separation, among other issues. Being indifferent to the event of death was no longer possible. After these changes, on the contrary, death began to be stirred by emotion. Death is latent in all human existence; according to Kovács (1992), since “Neanderthal man graves are given to the dead” (p. 28). This is due to the human need for protection as to the dead and to give them guidance as to their destiny. According to Morin (as cited in Kovács, 1992), those who “died poorly,” who were deprived of their grave, “roam, terrorizing the living.” (p. 30). According to Kovács (1992),

A series of rituals constitute the elements of protection against these beings, such as putting salt, turning a mirror, lighting candles. That is why the dead have to be cared for, flattered, so they do not get angry. They can be feared much more than death itself. All these rituals, in their particularity, are conducted and manifested in order to collaborate with the symbolic world in its work of processing death. (p. 30)

The fear of death, which is common to all mankind, can be better placated in more primitive or more gregarious societies, due to the collective parting rituals and the better warmth in the interpersonal relationships surrounding the mourner.

According to Cassorla (as cited in Kovács, 1992),

During the mourning work, human beings must take back their libido, their destructive fantasies... that were directed to the object, which is now lost. In the Freudian conception this ‘energy’ turns to the ego itself, to the dead figure now introjected. According to Klein, the unconscious fantasies resulting from this loss reactivate previous fantasies, and the introjected object starts to function in a pattern resulting from those fantasies added to the

particular situation with this or other objects lost in the past. (p. 102)

Mourning refers to the feeling that seeks to endure the loss of the beloved object; it is the mechanism that the psychic apparatus uses to cope with the great emotions involved. According to Kovács (1992), mourning occurs proportionally to the affective importance of the libidinal object that was lost. The author explains, furthermore, based on the ideas of John Bowlby, that the pain caused by separation occurs due to the tenacity of frustration as to the satisfaction of the desires invested in this object, leading to a feeling of intense disappointment for not having the desires satisfied and, moreover, the most important, for not even finding the object that would be the source of satisfactions.

1964 Military Dictatorship

The denomination contributes to the comprehension of the time, therefore, based on the pertinent literature and analysis of the facts, we first decided to define this period as Civil-military Dictatorship, because we understand that there was participation of civil society; however, we do not interpret civil and military responsibilities as having equal importance.

The enlightening discussion of Fico (2014) accommodated our reflections, still loose, in this context. The author clarifies the difference between Military Dictatorship and Civil-Military Coup, highlighting that, undoubtedly, there was a great civil influence for the coup. This had the support of entrepreneurs and those who, taken by the media massification, collaborated for its development. However, what occurred after this coup, that is, the dictatorship itself, was in charge of the military. Thus, the violent action in this period, despite being civil-military ideologically, had military execution. For partaking this opinion, we opted for the denomination Military Dictatorship.

We demonstrate the process. In April 1964, the then President João Goulart, legitimately elected, was deposed and, thereafter, the military practice was initiated, which comprised kidnapping, imprisonment, torture, disappearances and deaths. These were conducts that marked the history of this period, justified by the National Security Doctrine¹, according to which it was necessary to exterminate at any cost, with or without suffering, those who put the State at “risk,” by opposing it. Therefore, the execution of those who dissented from the military Regime was legitimated, transforming them

¹ Its origins, roughly, conceived by the Higher School of War (ESG), were determined in Geopolitical Theories that ensured the understanding of geographic relations with the States, through the posture of Total Warfare with the use of limitless resources to achieve their goals. Such doctrine, according to Cassol (2008), postulates 28 elements, such as: independence, democracy, social peace, preservation of moral and spiritual values and defense of private property, determining their “national goals” with characteristics of the capitalist system.

into enemies. Therefore, the Military Dictatorship, with weapons aimed at its own homeland brothers, left a dark legacy, whose effect can be understood as enduring, which does not let violence, suffering and pain be processed. This pain recurs in the trauma caused by the torture, the deaths, the concealment of the corpses of militants, considered missing by the military and that we understand as disappeared-dead, because they never returned.

According to Endo (as cited in Arantes & Ferraz, 2016), making individuals disappear by their concealment – one of the violent aspects of the dictatorship – situates family members in an active situation before death, leaving as their responsibility, through their processing, the definition of the missing person as living or dead.

The disappearance

Cláudio Guerra, marshal of the Dops in Vitória, in an interview with Dines (as cited in Arantes & Ferraz, 2016), made clear his deliberate idea of making the bodies of the so-called “subversives” or “rebels” disappear: “The order was to make the bodies disappear, it was my idea to burn the corpses in the oven of a sugar mill in the Campos region. The corpses were not identified, but I found out who everyone was.” (p. 38).

In an ordinary manner, in an almost heroic tone, the marshal shows us the concealment as a standard procedure, remaining as a result, to relatives and descendants, the trauma. However, as Verissimo (1985) would say, disappearing a body is not an easy thing, something remains in this dead body, the family member remains, the one who mourns for their loss and who, by insistent complaint for the missing and neglected bodies, makes explicit the crime committed there, making it eternal.

With the discourse of disappearance, the military government denies its guilt and responsibility for the vanishing of those who were concealed, of those who, for having been killed during torture or manhunt, went missing. Thus, disappearance was an instrument of apology, a way that the military government found to not recognize their crimes, a burning of live archive. This procedure was supported by the official discourse that these disappeared persons went missing out of their own volition; because there was no body that effectively proved their death, the authorities were free from responsibility, after all, as they say: “If there is no body, there is no crime.” Thus, there was the creation of a field for impunity.

At times such as that of the discovery of illegal graves, as in the case of the Perus Cemetery, several bones of political prisoners were found, buried as indigent, without identification, leaving traces of political concealment and little evidence for the alleged intentional disappearances.

We may say, then, that the concept of *disappeared person* was developed as an artifice for the military government to say it did not do what it actually did, that is, for not assuming the blame for the murders it committed. Persons disappeared for political reasons

were byproducts of the Military Dictatorship, those which were left of it, as explained by Agamben (2008), those which remained as a gap, a hiatus, a rift in society and in the collective memory.

According to Gatti (2008), the missing person is in a kind of permanent limbo: neither exists nor ceases to exist, it is a new state of being. The issue of disappearance splits the subject. According to the author, the “imprisoned-disappeared person is a split individual, a body separated from the name, a consciousness severed from its physical support; a name isolated from its history; an entity devoid of its civic credentials, its documents of citizenship” (Gatti, 2008, p. 47, our translation).

The enigma as to the fate of those who disappeared is something that affects those around them; their figure has no meaning, it is an emptiness at the heart of the family: “Neither alive nor dead, neither present nor absent” – being, therefore, in the world of the undead.

When a family is struck by a traumatic event, such as the concealment of one of its members, its entire constitution is affected, causing disorganization. According to Benghozi (as cited in Silva & Féres-Carneiro, 2012), “These traumatic events are like a rupture in the fabric of the family and community group, a catastrophic implosion of the very community identity.” (p. 2).

The suffering caused to families violates time. United, present, past, and future were and are still perceived, in unresolved cases, in an unsurmountable anguish. The pain that was immediately manifested in the aforementioned period, motivated by the concealment of the family member, endures through the conditions of their concealment, denial and misinformation, because it does not allow any certainty and, consequently, any mourning, any truce. This suffering, therefore, did not occur only with the passing of time, time without answers, which inevitably indicated that the beloved family member would not return; it also occurred with the lack of information and knowledge about the fate of the disappeared person and, beyond it, with the enduring suffering, amid an unsurpassed penumbra of inconceivable, untranslatable feelings.

Maladjustment is a possible fate for those who have had a family member disappear; this flaw is composed of the anomia of the phenomenon, of identity, of language, which has no possibility of reaching such an empty concept of meaning, with such lack of representation, as is that of the disappearance.

Traumatic mourning

The basic principle for processing the mourning is that it is unimpeded, free to be lived through funeral and death confirmation rituals; to be more enlightening: the news of death and its concrete evidence.

This process, of which mourning is one of the steps, begins with the investment of libido in an object of love. On the occasion this object is lost, either by death or

by separation, it is expected that the person who invested their libido is able seek new places of investment, since the lost object can no longer return that libido.

According to Freud (1917/2010), mourning, in order to be processed, requires the test of reality; while death evidences a problem: having never undergone this experience in reality, the subject represents/concretizes it through the presence of the dead body, providing materiality to the situation, thus providing its representation. Seeking support, like the funeral ritual, is the mechanism that the psychic apparatus found to cope with the great emotions involved in this loss.

Funeral rituals seem to have here an important psychological significance in the mourners and, even while varying according to culture and religion, they are generally a way of sharing the passage from life to death, socializing pain and initiating the process of mourning. In fact, they favor the healthy resolution of mourning by providing psychological security to the mourners, which provides a direction to the mourning process through specific places and moments for the expression of pain and grief. (Esteves & Roque, 2009, p. 629).

Death without a body and without rites of passage is fertile ground for emotional complications and impediment to the experience of mourning. In the case studied here – that of the relatives of missing persons – we assume that a way of repairing this impediment caused by withholding information and concealing the dead body, the public reparation, would allow the families to perform the representation and, therefore, it would facilitate the processing of mourning, after all, “any group, even the most primitive, do not abandon their dead” (Kovácz, 1992, p. 28).

The government’s failed repair makes the denial prevail, which puts to the test the discernment between fantasy and reality. Did the family member die? Do they live somewhere? Did they lose their memory? Questions that render the family member unable to deinvest their libido so they can effectuate the work of mourning. On the contrary, there is a continuing quantum of investment that does not receive return, which does not offer reinvestment, hindering the experience of mourning.

Cassorla (1992) points out the factors that hinder the processing of death: “Denial of death, the terror that it inspires, the lack of rituals that help in its processing.” (p. 103). According to Kovács (1992), when there is no clarity about death, the elucidation of its truth is compromised, and this prevents the processing of the loss.

According to Silva & Féres-Carneiro (2012), the impossibility of processing the mourning, in this case, occurs as the “secret of State” does not allow disclosure as to the fate of the disappeared ones, leaving in the family member a memory without answers, crushed by open questioning, “which can only be repaired by the temporal

inscription of the events, through the ritualization of mourning and knowledge of the circumstances of the death of their loved ones, ending an unfinished cycle.” (p. 66).

Thus, the disappearances that occurred in the 1964 dictatorship are open, without representation, unnamable, being, therefore, characterized as traumatic events in the heart of the family, which cannot represent such loss nor establish in itself the possibility of mourning, much less its processing. The past, as mentioned earlier, cannot stay in the past; it continues to act, in the now and in the future; it is therefore eternalized.

In the case of families of disappeared ones, putting the past in the past and processing the mourning will only be enabled psychically through the *ritualization of the symbolic* [our emphasis], that is, of that which can be named, since the body’s absence permeates the unconscious as a cycle that is unfinished, ergo unbearable. For the families of those that disappeared, the unsaid also appears as a defensive mechanism, considering the peculiarity that surrounds the issue. (Silva & Féres-Carneiro, 2012, p. 71, emphasis added).

According to Endo (2013), the experience of trauma, in its conjuncture of irrepresentable and, therefore, unprocessable, remains installed in the subject, in society, in culture. The way to open possibilities of naming this unnamable trauma is carried out in the attempt to provide figure (form), representation (meaning) and comprehension (understanding) to this traumatic experience, all aiming to relieve the subject of the suffering caused by that which is unrepresented. This thing that weighs on the subject, unnamed and meaningless, continues to require recognition.

This petrified characteristic, without meaning, was named “crypt” by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (as cited in Antunes, 2003), being conceived as the “installation, within the psyche of a subject, of a new psychic configuration represented by the internal or by the conservation of an unspeakable experience.” (p. 15).

This unspeakable, traumatic experience of the doubt as to the militant’s death, as well as their concealment, causes a traumatic event, thus occurring the incorporation of the *trauma*. Here an explanation should be added, because it is necessary to better understand about introjection and incorporation.

As introjection, we have the following related process: at birth, the baby is a being undifferentiated from the external environment. On the occasion of their first separation between the “I” and the external world, they are performing their first “projective operation,” named by Ferenczi (as cited in Mendlowicz, 2000) as “primitive projection.” However, a part of the external world does not renounce, on the contrary, it imposes itself on the I, which assimilates it, constituting the first introjection, the primitive introjection, an act that enriches the I.

The Ferenczian conception of introjection implies a valuation of this concept as something structuring [our emphasis], constituting the ego, fundamental to development... introjection is a process of enlarging the ego, of including the unconscious libido, which, invested in the object, allows the egoic expansion. (Mendlowicz, 2000, p. 7).

According to Endo (2013), when talking about introjection,

we are talking about this excellent psychic work, which makes repairs and instructs the psychic apparatus towards its own enlargement and expansion; which allows the psyche – which once allowed itself to possess and be possessed by the object, in a second painful time, after the loss of the object – to introject the drives disconnected from the object and that, in doing so, the I restores itself and expands becoming again able to ally to new and unprecedented experiences of amorous and libidinal investment. (p. 45)

In counterpoint, the incorporation, according to Mendlowicz (2000), has as characteristic the operation for compensation of an object loss; it is a “phantasmatic mechanism” that acts with the loss of the object, an attempt to deny the loss. Therefore, there is a fixation, which freezes the object within the subject. “The ego tries to keep the imaginary object alive even at the cost of suffering, in the hope that someday its desires can be fulfilled and pays for it with the disease of mourning.” (p. 9).

According to Mendlowicz (2000),

The object, as we have already observed, remains fixed, frozen, within the ego. From this perspective, the authors recover the introjection as a mechanism that enriches and expands the interests of the ego, giving it a fundamental importance in the process of mourning, resuming the original formulation made by Ferenczi... They added that the losses that are destined for incorporation are those that cannot be consciously admitted. Such losses have as consequence an unspeakable mourning, installing in the subject a secret ‘crypt.’ (p. 8)

According to Endo (2013),

There where thought itself would attest its uselessness would reside the mechanism... of incorporation, because it is about the body, or the projection of the surface of the body that we know as I (ego), in short, the recomposition of the lost object, of “my dead,” which becomes reincorporated as crypt to oneself and dragged by the psyche. The crypt within the I would be a strange – tumoral – miscegenation of a composition without dynamics, exposed to

an intromission that does not admit questioning. An almost physical recomposition – or corporeal, in which the I must walk as if henceforth carried a dead man in the back –, its dead that, paradoxically, would be safe from death precisely there where there is a juxtaposition between the dead-I and its dead. The “dead I am” and that at the same time “I keep in me and for myself,” safe, more than ever of a new loss, greed or desire of another, it is “my dead” and the “dead-I” – guarded and safe from being, once again, ripped from the I that owns them. (p. 45)

Thus, as all indicates, while introjection is at the service of the life drive, incorporation serves the death drive.

The lack of knowledge about the fate of militants during the 1964 Military Dictatorship and the ignorance about the events related to their disappearance allow the petrified burial of these subjects, that is, the absence of meanings, of symbolization, of representation, enters the family nucleus as a trauma.

Ferenczi (1933/1992) assists us in understanding this process by means of the concept of *denial*, whereby that which occurred to the subject is considered a misconception, little important or, also, not occurred; in this case, it is the denial that we had people tortured, killed and disappeared in the Military Dictatorship.

According to Antunes (2003), disqualification and denial are types of psychic violation that, operating in a traumatic way, engender a cleavage within the psyche. “On the occasion of this cleavage, the meaning, the traumatic event, is frozen, so that its remembrance is no longer accessible . . . except in the form of guilt and inculpatory aggression arising from the ‘identification with the aggressor’” (p. 26).

Resistance movements of relatives of persons disappeared for political reasons – memory and testimony in the processing of mourning

In some cases in which mourning was possible even when faced with the impossibilities imposed by the external reality, configured in the absence of a dead body that proves and objectifies death, we see relatives of those disappeared for political reasons who could represent the atrocities committed against their family. The representation given was configured by the groups of denunciation and resistance, by movements here considered as testimony and/or social movements. These movements are considered substitute rituals for the funeral rites/symbols (funeral, parting, burial, grave).

Testimony movements are characterized by relatives’ reports that render the traumatic event present. These traumas, when shared by others who suffer with the same feeling, gain new meaning for those who give their account; they begin to have value of truth, allowing relatives to process the traumatic mourning.

Giving an account is an act that merges resistance and denunciation, because when remembering the event, relatives resist it and report it; they also denounces the atrocities against them and their loved one. When the movements led by relatives of persons disappeared for political reasons report, narrate an event, they seek to make the act present, to return to the moment, to seek that the event does not “happen.” Through discourse, they seek to denounce culprits, obtain allies and, above all, affirm the truthfulness of the pain and aggression suffered. All this as if they sought witnesses who denounced the trauma, pain, allowing the condemnation of the tormentors and the certainty that their feelings and their memories are not insanities. According to Teles (2010),

If forgetting extreme experiences is impossible, this is even more difficult when the past remains repressed. Without widespread social mobilization and the rituals and laws that ensure the ‘right to truth,’ the relatives of the dead and disappeared persons oscillate between the search for mourning, the repression, and the desire for restitution of the past. (p. 4)

Giving an account is one of the ways of building the collective memory. Moreover, the need to narrate the facts that occurred is a means of giving authenticity to the disturbing memory of the trauma experienced. When narrating a fact, memory is rebuilt, which enables connections broken by the impact of trauma. Thus, when relatives of the disappeared person narrate what occurred to their loved one, they use words and, therefore, stage the phantasmatic truth. If they have a listener, this listener will become a witness to the story, authenticating their pain and becoming an ally in the pursuit of truth and justice.

The narrator-listener duo constitutes a collective inscription of that which is told. This narrative, built by shared memory and its emotional components, ceases to be a single, singular, and subjective act to become a collective pain, a reason for community “battle”, which, by opposing the silent (anti-narrative) status of the trauma, contributes so such tragedy is at least remembered, so it does not occur again and there are no more victims of such dehumanizing conducts.

On the other hand, narrating the trauma is only narrating, because it does not reach the full complexity of the situations experienced; words are unable to express the whole that involves the feeling and facts precisely as they invaded the individual. In several situations, language cannot express the complete experience; the testimony fails, being impossible to translate the real and signify the trauma. As the memory is the basis when narrating an event, there is the possibility of its symbolization. However, according to Teles (2009), the memory work requires an external third party that constitutes a symbolic field, signifying and naming the traumatic scene.

By narrating the facts, by unravelling them in words, we provide the possibility of repairing the damage and

building memory and remembrance. According to Ramires (2014), this is “a visceral necessity” (p. 6) so discourse does not constitute and affirm the delirium and insanity and, neither, continue within the private sphere, that is, it is a rejection of the imposition of silence in the Dictatorship.

By rendering a given event into story, the psychic marks are reworked, and personal suffering, private and exclusive, is abandoned, becoming social, collective, all for a courageous necessity that the truth implicit in the subject appears, gains life and becomes truth, enabling new psychic inscriptions.

The time of the testimony is, therefore, an other-time that assumes this game of listening and speaking that affects both: those who tell their stories and those who listen to them. All those that are involved in this *reparation process* [our emphasis] are affected and this involvement takes place both in the field of individual recomposition, with break of the silencing of the unsaid, and in the collective field, with recovery of history in its social dimension. (Perrone & Moraes, 2014, p. 24, emphasis added).

The movements of resistance and denunciation seek to give an account what actually occurred in the 1964 Military Dictatorship, trying to unveil the truth and represent, for the symbolic universe, that which was hidden, not said. Thus, several relatives seek the processing of their traumas, such as the prevented mourning, through resistance and denunciation, with them being the witnesses of the “real” and traumatic episode that occurred to their loved ones, called *disappeared*. According to Ramires (2014), when an event is narrated, as is the case of relatives who tell their version of the facts, they convey their impression of the experience, recovering a memory, an archive that is at the same time private and social, opening a possibility of symbolic recomposition and translating, with this, the marks left in the psyche: “[...] By inscribing oneself as a subject, reinscribes the social: there is psychic processing and recovery of collective memory.” (p. 13).

In the literal face of the testimony is the pursuit of the prevention of the anguish that repeats over the years. The ‘work of trauma’ seeks to integrate the traumatic scene – the death under torture or that of the dismembered and disappeared body – in a coordinated, conscious way, leading to the wear of memory. Thus, the testimony is also a form of oblivion, an escape forward toward the word and the liberation from trauma. (Seligmann-Silva as cited in Teles, 2009, p. 155).

Thus, psychic reparation is possible through testimony, because it enables the construction of memory. The Testimony Clinic, support of the Ministry of Justice and the Amnesty Commission, proposes to be this third party, the listener. The project operates in the states of Rio Grande

do Sul, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco, with the objective of providing psychic reparation to those affected by State violence in the period of Dictatorship: “this is a project aimed at providing listening and developing voices for those who had their lives affected by State violence” (Perrone & Moraes, 2014, p. 23).

The act of giving an account of a traumatic event removes the experiences from the sphere of fear and humiliation, because it deciphers the event, removing it from the order of the deadly, the horror, the unspeakable, making its effects cease. However, this is only possible if there is a listener. Primo Levy (as cited in Perrone & Moraes, 2014) assures that “there is no testimony, with no one who listens to it.” (p. 23). This encounter between testimony or narration and listening causes the possibility of constructing senses and memory. Without it, cruelty and violence become maddening, with voices that disturb and leave questions in their own speech.

Psychoanalysis’ contribution to the testimony clinic is exactly ensuring that the singularity, the rest that marks the presence of pain, of excess in history and in society, is present in the permanent reconstruction of memory, not just history as simple reflection of the reality of the winners, who do not cease to win, as Benjamin warned. The reality of memory, and its ever-changing constructions, is that which makes it possible to release the fate, separate the repetition of fatality and, thus, the mechanisms of rationalities, which did not cease to produce violence and pain, can finally be interrupted. [...] the subject by recomposing himself in his word, claims to be his own expression, thus returning, to the protagonists of the cruelty, violence, and barbarism, the unquestionable authorship of their actions. By singularizing himself in his testimony [...] the subject breaks with the ‘silence of the traumatized’ or with the ‘impossibility of saying,’ to align memory, affection and representation in current configurations authorized in the acts of thinking, recomposing himself and recreating himself. (Perrone & Moraes, 2014, p. 38-40).

According to Bauer (2012), these relatives’ denunciation, the process of their mourning are demands to be met in search of “memory, justice, and truth,” (p. 115) enabling the unveiling of truth, the punishment of the guilty ones, and the collectivization of memories.

Final considerations

This work aimed to understand the mourning experienced by relatives of persons that disappeared for political reasons. Prevented from having access to the body, they could not have contact with the disappeared/dead person, which precluded the mourning processing from being conducted fully.

The first step to understand the prevention of the mourning of relatives of persons disappeared for political reasons was the investigation/contextualization of the 1964 Military Dictatorship. The militant was identified through the stereotype of marginal, of disorderly. Since they were considered as outlaws, the political conflict between the dictatorial government and the liberation movements was denied. The guilt was attributed to political militants. Also regarding this, we sought to understand and explain how the militants gradually had their image built throughout the dictatorial process and how the alleged family and heritage defense mottos were used to increasingly persuade the population, obtaining allies. Thusly the State justified the processes of torture and concealment/death of persons. The National Security Doctrine discourse was used to legitimize this violent and cruel conduct as taking care of the nation, the “good” people, and the development. Thus, torture and disappearances were legitimated as strategies to save the nation and as political care.

The loss of a loved one requires libidinal disinvestment in the object of love; to do so, death needs to be objectified, felt in the context of the real, and that is only possible with a dead body that validates the ceased existence of the deceased, ending the expectation that there will be a return. When, for some reason, this real does not exist, as in the case of those disappeared during the 1964 Military Dictatorship, the processing of mourning is interrupted. There is, then, a certain difference between the known, factual death and that which has to be presumed.

Obviously, this absence of the real – which is configured by the non-materialization of death (location/presence of the body) – is a traumatic event, which enters the psychic apparatus without it being able to react to such abrupt investment; there are relatives who are identified with the fight of their disappeared persons and who continue the militancy, with Movements of Testimonies that denounce the traumatic actions imposed by the military government to their loved ones, thus constituting the collective memory about the Military Dictatorship, seeking the processing of their mourning.

The narrated testimony favors the representation of the trauma, which by means of words constructs meaning for the traumatic experience. Social movements that promote the listening of narratives of this experience foster the symbolic construction that sets the subject in motion, in search of representation and, therefore, moving toward life.

The National Truth Commission’s final report tries, in an institutional way, to create a new historical and transactional narrative about the troubled period of the military dictatorship in Brazil. Narrating this past is a difficult, but necessary process for the

victims who were silenced and for the Brazilian society, which needs to process this traumatic period to move forward. (Morais, 2015, p. 8).

Morais (2015), in the context of the National Truth Commission, confirms the value of testimony as

a processing measure that sets the subject in motion, antagonizing the traumatic paralyzation.

“Under history, memory and oblivion. Under memory and oblivion, life. But writing life is another story. Incompleteness” (Ricoeur, 2007, p. 513 as cited in Morais, 2015, p. 64).

O luto dos familiares de desaparecidos na Ditadura Militar e os movimentos de testemunho

Resumo: Este artigo pretende compreender a forma como o processo de luto ocorreu entre os familiares de desaparecidos-mortos políticos durante a Ditadura Militar de 1964, que, valendo-se da Doutrina de Segurança Nacional, fez desaparecer militantes, ocasionando um hiato traumático no cerne das famílias, que precisaram lidar com o vazio próprio do desaparecido/desaparecimento. Sabendo que, para a elaboração do luto, se requer uma objetivação da morte – a identificação do corpo morto e os ritos de passagem da vida para a morte –, supomos haver dificuldade nessa possibilidade de elaboração do luto. Identificados com o trabalho freudiano *Luto e melancolia*, percorremos os dois caminhos por ele apresentados, sem intenção de abranger toda a complexidade humana no que tange às formas de sofrimento no luto, a saber: o luto e sua possibilidade de reinvestimento de libido; e os caminhos da melancolia, que paralisa o sujeito e impede que este faça novos investimentos pulsionais. Caminhando nos passos do pai da psicanálise, verificamos nos familiares de desaparecidos políticos que a melancolia paralisa o sujeito em um estado mortificante, enquanto no luto é possível algum movimento.

Palavras-chave: luto, trauma, desaparecidos políticos.

Le deuil des proches des personnes disparues sous la dictature militaire et les mouvements de témoignage

Resumé: Cet article a pour but de comprendre la manière par laquelle le processus de deuil a eu lieu parmi les proches des disparus ou défunts politiques pendant la dictature militaire de 1964, qui, à travers la Doctrine de la Sécurité Nationale, a fait disparaître des militants, provoquant un hiatus traumatique au sein des familles, qui ont dû faire face au vide propre de personne disparue/disparition. Sachant que, pour la préparation du deuil il faut une objectivation de la mort – l’identification du cadavre et des rites de passage de la vie à la mort –, nous supposons que cette possibilité présente des difficultés. Identifiées à l’œuvre freudienne *Deuil et mélancolie* (1917/2010), nous couvrons les deux voies qu’il a présentées, sans l’intention de comporter toute la complexité humaine concernant les formes de souffrance en deuil, à savoir: le deuil et sa possibilité de réinvestissement de libido; et les chemins de la mélancolie qui paralyse le sujet et l’empêche de faire de nouveaux investissements impulsifs. En marchant sur les traces du père de la psychanalyse, nous trouvons dans les proches des disparus politiques que la mélancolie paralyse le sujet dans un état de mortification, alors qu’en deuil quelque mouvement est possible.

Mots-clés: chagrin, traumatisme, disparus politiques.

El luto de los familiares de desaparecidos en la Dictadura Militar y los movimientos de testimonio

Resumen: Este artículo pretende comprender la forma como el proceso de luto ocurrió entre los familiares de desaparecidos-muertos políticos durante la Dictadura Militar de 1964, que, valiéndose de la Doctrina de Seguridad Nacional, hizo desaparecer a estos militantes, lo que ocasionó un hiato traumático en el corazón de la familia, que necesitó lidiar con el vacío propio del desaparecido/desaparición. Sabiendo que, para la elaboración del luto, se requiere una objetivación de la muerte – la identificación del cuerpo muerto y los ritos de paso de la vida a la muerte –, suponemos que hay una dificultad en esa posibilidad de elaboración del luto. Con base en la obra *Duelo y Melancolia* (1917/2010) de Freud, recorreremos los dos caminos que se presentan, sin la intención de abarcar toda la complejidad humana en lo que se refiere a las siguientes formas de sufrimiento en el luto: el luto y su posibilidad de reinversión de libido; y los caminos de la melancolía, que paraliza al sujeto y le impide hacer nuevas inversiones pulsionales. Siguiendo los pasos del padre del psicoanálisis, verificamos en los familiares de desaparecidos políticos que la melancolía paraliza al sujeto en un estado mortificante, mientras que en el luto es posible algún movimiento.

Palabras clave: luto; trauma; desaparecidos políticos.

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