

Grief about Aging - Psychoanalytic search of the movie 'Miss Granny'-

Chang-Un Cho^{1*}, Hyun-Sim Lee², Chang-don Lee³

Seoul Venture University

노령화에 대한 애도 - 영화 '수상한 그녀'의 정신분석학적 탐색-

조창운^{1*}, 이현심², 이창돈³

서울벤처대학원대학교

Abstract This study analyzed the process of mourning for aging in the film 'Miss Granny' in a convergent method. In exploring the contents of the movie repeatedly and interpreting the feeling of loss of old age in aging process as mourning process, I explored them in a psychoanalytic way. In other words, in a psychoanalytic method, I analyzed the aging process as a process of reinterpreting life and the change in developmental attitude toward the future life as a psychological world of mourning. The results of the study show that the process of mourning follows 'loss and deficiency', 'escape and regression', 'disidentification and decentralization', and 'adaptation to the new reality'. Based on these results, this research suggests that the counselor should not only focus on creating a psychological mood environment so that the client's mourning work will be smooth, but also should be able to use a complex counseling technique to improve the mental ability of the client.

• Key Words : Miss Granny, Process of grief, Complex analysis, Psychoanalytic approach, Grief environment construction

요약 본 연구는 영화 '수상한 그녀'에서 노령화에 대한 애도의 과정을 융·복합적으로 분석하였다. 영화의 내용을 반복적으로 탐색하면서 주인공이 노화과정에서 나타난 노년의 상실감을 애도의 과정으로 해석하면서 정신분석학적으로 탐색하였다. 즉 노화 과정을 인생의 재해석 과정과 향후 삶에 대한 발달적 태도 변화를 애도의 심리세계로 정신분석학적으로 분석하였다. 연구결과의 애도과정은 '상실과 결핍' → '도피와 퇴행' → '탈동일시와 탈집중' → '새로운 현실 적응'으로 나타났다. 이와 같은 결과에 의하여 상담자는 내담자의 애도작업이 원만하게 이루어지도록 심리적 애도환경 조성에 주력해야 할 뿐 아니라, 내담자의 애도능력 향상을 위한 복합적 상담기법을 구사할 수 있어야 함을 제언하였다.

• 주제어 : 수상한 그녀, 애도의 과정, 융·복합적 분석, 정신분석학적 접근, 애도환경 조성

*Corresponding Author : 조창운(sogaricho@naver.com)

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1. Instruction

According to Lacan psychoanalysis, man is a being of deficiency. He says that is why many people try to fill the emptiness of their life for the rest of their lives and then die in vain[1]. But where did the human deficiencies come from? In this regard, Freud believes that the first experience of satisfaction of a person in relationship with his mother is remembered in his brain, and that he came to have the 'wish' to reproduce the same perceptual experience as that memory[2].

Defining deficiency as a human desire, redefining Freud, and s establishing his own desire theory that strongly criticizes theories of self-psychology and object relations, he constructed Lacanian psychoanalysis. He claims that human nature is deficiency and desire. More specifically, the primitive subject of a human being in a very weak state is forced to live as an existence who lacks the existence because he should walk the way of other's or the way of division because of the anxiety of survival as soon as he is born in the world. So, the process of wandering to overcome the lack of existence is life. Therefore, through the analysis of desire, is recommended to discover the path of sublimation (pleasure of existence) beyond pleasure that realizes the desire of the subject beyond simple adaptation (self-psychology) to survive and relationship extension (object relation theory). It is advised to be the subject of desire that cannot be done even if one dies. However, that road is the one of grief, and road only possible through grief[3].

Oh Mal Soon, the heroine of the movie 'Miss Granny', endured all kinds of adversity and difficulties and lived a life devoted to her only son born as an heir. Her son, who became a university professor, was the pride of her life. However, the aged heroine (Oh Mal Soon) was no longer needed by her son and her daughter-in-law. She became not only alienated from family power but also had to cope with the aging pains. This film tells the process in which the protagonist experiences the sense of loss in old age, how she reinterprets the life that has passed through a dream in

which she becomes young again (her imagination), and how her attitude toward the future life changes.

At the same time, this film can be said to ask the audience how to prepare for the aging life and to reflect on themselves.

One can say that the old age is a time to unify life and prepare for death. Loss, separation, and hurt that are inevitable in life do not necessarily become stones. You can use them as a stepping stone. As human beings live in the duality of the existential desire of fusion (symbiosis) and independence they can love deficiency and make biological death the completion of grief[4].

After analyzing the psychological world of the grief of the heroine of 'Miss Granny' by applying the 'fusion and complex grief theory', this study presents at the conclusion part the psychoanalytic theory and counseling technique for the improvement of grief ability.

2. Theoretical background

One can say that the core of grief ability is to feel the sadness enough, let the object of loss leave from the heart, and create a new reality. Therefore, improvement of grief ability may be considered as a developmental solution of all psychological problems[5]. It is because one should be able to leave at any time in order to be always renewed. grief can be said to kill the object twice. In fact, grief is to get rid of the lost object once again from the memory the mind. Thus, loss corresponds to the real world, while grief corresponds to the symbolic world[6]. For example, the Sinking of MV Sewol is a representative example of a collective loss that still cannot be mourned. In short, grief ability is very important for the development of individuals and society[7].

'Grief' in English comes from Latin, which means 'burden', and it is a strong sorrow expressed by the death of a loved one. In Korean, grief, grief, and sadness are used mixed[8]. In literature, grief is

expressed as ‘the pain that no one else has told, cannot compare with any of the bitterness, overwhelms an individual’s whole life, but the soul grows through the process’[9].

The ability to mourn can be said to be the ability to separate (individualize) the negative self, which is attached to true self, such as wounds, anger, weakness, and preoccupation, through the process of pain and sorrow[10]. Therefore, life is a process of constant grief. Life is like a traveler who is heading for the new world.

Grief, the mental process of recovering the calmness of mind following the loss of meaningful affection, is known to be related mainly to the death of a loved one[11], but in fact it refers to the normal response to all meaningful loss[12]. William Worden talks about the four missions of grief. First, to accept the reality of the loss. Second, to work through the pain of grief. Third, to adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing. Fourth, to find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life[13]. According to Stroebe, the grief process does not proceed with a single shipment, but with duality and shaking[14]. In other words, it is to go back and forth between two phases: ① preoccupation with loss and emotion, and ② adaptation to reality without loss. Due to the duality of the grief task, the grief ability is demonstrated through the reworking, repetition, and irregular work of grief.

Grief is the process of adapting to a new reality after loss. If one does not mourn, he/she will not only become obsessed with the wound of loss, but also be depressed for a long time. Through grief, we escape from the trauma of loss, reorganize ourselves, and dream of a new future. Grief revives also the positive internal abilities that were concealed. The ego after grief is different from the ego before grief. The grief not only heals but reconstructs the whole self into a new form.

Grief promises a new departure and transformation of development and creation. It is

because you cannot feel hurt and feel sad that you do not develop. So, we should be sad and painful about the life of hatred rather than comforting each other. We should mourn life that is only for oneself. The point of the problem is that we are not grieving properly even though there is a huge loss. Without grief, no healing occurs, no newness is born. It is possible for us to go to the next stage after the grief, but we are tied up in the past and cannot make a true newness because we do not mourn.

There are many stories of loss and grief in our life and in the stories of life (literature). In our history, the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War are typical historical traumatic events. In the Bible, man has lost trust with God, and Israel has lost its country. Sometimes justice was lost (prophet era) and hope was lost (apocalyptic literature era). The cross is a symbol of the loss of the Jesus’ people[15].

Aging has the characteristics of annihilating and dissolving all the past years. But it should be the time of integrating and completing at the same time. The biggest challenge of old age is to understand the duality of aging grief work and to mourn properly.

3. Analysis method

In this research, I repeatedly explored the film ‘Miss Granny’ and analyzed the process of experiencing the sense of loss of old age in the aging process as a process of mourning.

In other words, I analyzed the aging process as a process of reinterpreting life and the change in developmental attitude toward the future life as a psychological world of mourning. In the conclusion part, I presented a psychoanalytic theory for the improvement of mourning ability and a counseling technique for the adaptation to the reality.

4. Analysis result

Grief is the process that takes place after loss [16], and life itself is a process of grief. Because life does not result in as we intended, and there always takes place loss. It is because the vision, effort, and sacrifice that we had are not always returning to satisfaction and reward. Therefore, it can be said that it is a wise attitude of life to realize that the outcome of life may be different from what was expected, to improve grief capacity and to develop the ability to cope with the new reality.

4.1 Loss and deprivation

Loss and deprivation are different concepts in a strict sense. 'Loss' refers to things that disappear from reality and no longer exist. The husband of the protagonist is a being that has disappeared from reality, is no longer existent, and is forgotten. But the memories and souvenirs of her husband did not disappear completely. It can be said that the remnants of grief for the object of loss remain, and if it is at the level of the residue, it does not matter much to the mental health. Because there were many difficulties such as the pain of survival, she was able to fill the deficiency with strong attachment to her only son, a posthumous child. Therefore, deficiency can be said to be the empty space of mind. In a figurative sense, if the place where the library's book is to be inserted is empty, it is a deficiency. If there is no empty space and place and all the books are in place, it is a full life, but that life is only a momentary and cannot last forever. Moreover, the average person will not be able to escape from the feeling of deprivation as he/she becomes older. The stronger the attachment to life and youth, the greater the lack of old age. At the old age of the protagonist who has invested all her libido on her only son during all life, her psychological world was far from fullness. It was embarrassing alienation, and not a glorious retreat was waiting. The protagonist could not cope wisely with the unwanted conflict with her daughter-in-law, nor actively take control of the situation in which she must go to the nursing home. It

was a great shock to her. It can be diagnosed to be a problem of too much narcissistic identification and attachment to the son, but for the heroine of the movie, it came with great sadness about aging.

4.2 Escape and regression

The heroine entered in the process of grief her only son, the object of a strong attachment. She was in a situation that she had to withdraw the libido she put into her son. He is a living son, but she could no longer deny the reality of leaving him out of her mind. But she could not withdraw the attachment to her son immediately. It was because she invested too many years of youth and libido to exert psychological flexibility. So, the main character denies the reality and flees to the world of dream (imagination). She escaped to the world of dreams because she could not stand the reality of being separated from her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. In the dream world, the main character in a young body of her twenties, but with the granny's mind, made a spiritual journey to experience and reinterpret the reality differently.

In his book "The Interpretation of Dreams", Freud said that the motive for dreams is hope and the content of dreams are fulfillment of the hope. In her dream (imagination), the protagonist experiences enough that the depressed desire of youth is satisfied. In her dreams she becomes young singer, and she enjoys great popularity among PD of broadcasting station and her grandson Ban Ji Ha who did not know her identity, and old Mr. Park.

4.3 Disidentification and decentralization

The protagonist cannot stay in the world of dream (imagination) forever. Because if it is the case, she becomes a schizophrenic patient who cannot distinguish between external reality and internal psychological reality. The protagonist realizes that a de-centering strategy with her son is needed to change the way of handling reality (= paradigm of thinking,

relationship, action). She realized that even if she was born again she would have to accept and love the present reality. However, she accepts the fact that she needs to get away from the excessive identification with her son and form a more objective relationship. It is a very healthy reaction. Her son, whom she grew up with struggling, now grown up straight, a good daughter-in-law who never came the acid to her but suffered from heartache, a pretty grandson and granddaughter who are the apples of her eye, and the past servant Park, who really loves her, are all the subjects of love and emotional neighbors with whom she can share intimacy. At the end of the movie, the scene in which she hangs on the back of Park who has become young and is driving a motorcycle is a sign of concentration from her son. It shows the main character accepting reality and refocusing on it.

4.4 New reality adaptation

Through the process of grief, the protagonist has adapted to the reality based on the renewed relationship with her daughter-in-law and with her grandchildren. The most noticeable thing in the film is that the daughter-in-law, who refrained from speaking, was born again as a speaking person. And the final scene suggests that the protagonist is willing to mourn his son and chose servant Park as a substitute for attachment. It can be said that everything has been changed through the grief process.

In the film, economic problem, problem of health, problem of proper work, and death anxiety, which are the pain of the elderly, were not shown in detail, but the relationship, especially in family relations and development process were concentrated. The older one become, the higher the psychological alienation and isolation. Therefore, we need people to talk with more.

5. Conclusion

Being in grief means that everything is tangled. It means that the sensory function has been reduced to

such a degree that one is confused about the self and the world that he/she cannot keep the balance. All psychotherapy can be said to be a growth process in which we re-born through grief. From that point of view, there is no one who does not need grief and does not need psychotherapy. In particular, an aging generation is in a period in which one has the final task of life; to integrate life and prepare for well-dying. Because the old age is a period where money, honor, health, work, and life must be mourned. Humans live in the duality of existential desire of fusion(symbiosis) and independence(individualization), so we should be able to love the life of deficiency and make biological death the completion of grief. The counselor should not only focus on creating a psychological grief environment so that the client 's Grief Work can be carried out smoothly, but also should be able to use complex counseling techniques to improve the grief ability of the client.

5.1 Holding

The client in grief is usually suffering greatly from mental trauma or suppressing trauma. The counselor should form a psychologically symbiotic environment so that the client can speak easily the anger and guilt due to the loss of the object. The concept of 'holding' was used by Winnicott to describe the experience of support provided by the counselor and the counseling environment [17].

The counselor responds promptly and accurately to the client's drive, and when the client does not want, he or she withdraws, providing a comfortable psychological space. Regular interviews, coming and going greetings, deep sympathy, consistent voices, and objects in the counseling room, and continuity of the spatial atmosphere are all metaphorical holding elements for the collapse that occurs during therapy time. The counselor should be able to fulfill the role of the client's psychological mirror, to endure the aggressiveness of the client, and to provide himself / herself to the client's use.

'Holding' originally refers to the maternal provision that creates the facilitating environment that meets the needs of infants. Holding refers to the mother's natural care skills those are good enough. Through this hug, the infant experiences the omnipotence, and Winnicott sees it as a key factor for the healthy development of a child. This gives the infant a feeling of enough safety for a while. By experiencing this sense of safety, an infant will be able to cope with the inevitable empathy failure with his mother. When a mother fails to hold her infant, he/she experiences fury and fear. The holding environment prepares the infant to cope with the inevitable separation experience during the latter stage.

5.2 Container, Contained

In therapy, the silent listening, uninterrupted time, controlled and interested responses etc. perform all container function [18]. This function is often the main activity of counseling for clients in grief. It is most necessary to contain sorrow, anxiety and sorrow of the grief person. The client can project his or her emotions, which are not psychologically digested, to the counselor. Absorbing this, after having gained a meaningful understanding, the counselor can return it to the client at a level that can be digested by the client. This requires very thoughtful action. This concept is similar to Winnicott's 'holding environment' and Kohut's concept of 'self-objects'.

5.3 Capacity to be alone

The grief client must improve the capacity to be alone, in order to let leave the bad inner object relationship that is deeply suppressed inside of himself/herself. But only true self can be alone without the fear of abandonment. False self should be mourned to satisfy the desire of true self [19]. This capacity means 'to exist alone' internally with good enough mother, not through real isolation [20]. It means 'be alone in physical space but be together internally'. It may be similar to the Immanuel concept of Christianity. It is possible for the client to stand alone when the

counselor is by his /her side but does not pay much attention to him/her. Only when we can be alone can we normally mourn. The client can be alone when internalizing the facilitative environment, such as the self-function and holding of the therapist, and can let leave the wound of mind.

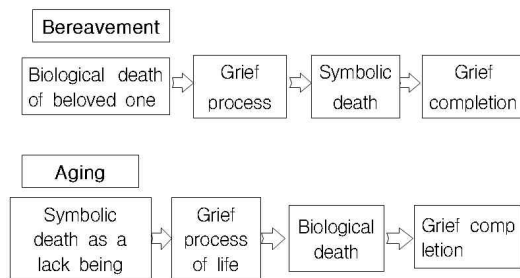
5.4 Symbiotic fusion, separation individuation

Human desire has a dual nature of dependence and individuation. On the one hand, there is a desire to be psychologically secure by relying on others, and on the other hand, there is a desire to be more free and independent. If you are closer to individuation, you will have a longing for fusion. On the contrary, the closer to the symbiotic fusion, the more desire to separate and individualize. Depending on the situation, human desire does the to and fro motion, from symbiotic fusion to separation individuation, from separation individuation to symbiotic fusion [21]. Most mourners experience enough symbiotic fusion with their loved ones during their grief period and then let them leave from their minds. Of course, the remnants of grief remain. However, the process of grief about aging takes the opposite direction. We experience enough this world and mourn simultaneously, and we enter in the transcendental world of fusion. If the expectation of symbiotic fusion with the transcendent world is full, the suffering and anxiety of aging grief will be easier to withstand and overcome.

Human beings are born dead. This is not in the biological dimension, but in the symbolic dimension. It is to say, human being is a talking entity, and it means the symbolic death of the lack of existence due to inability to recognize one's being in language. And the biological death comes later. The grief process of life exists between symbolic death and biological death. So, we can understand why Lacan said that life is to mourn oneself. In short, it can be said that, after the death of a loved one, the process of grief ends with the occurrence of symbolic death following biological death, but the process of grief about one's own life is

completed by biological death, which is the final process of grief work for aging.

Finally, we can say that this study has a meaning in convergence method in the point that it reinterpreted the various psychological mechanisms of the aging process of aged people in a positive way by applying the world of a movie into the real world and suggested a way to adapt to the new reality. Nevertheless, there are some limitations in generalizing the aging process of the protagonist in the movie world as that of whole elderly people in the real world.



[Fig.1] Grief Process of Aging

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저자소개

조 창 운(Chang-Un Cho) [정회원]



- 2006년 2월 : 동국대학교 경영대학원 석사졸업
- 2015년 3월~현재 : 서울벤처대 학원대학교 박사과정
- 2013년~현재:정성요양병원원장

<관심분야> : 상담학, 노인복지, 사회복지

이 현 심(Hyun-Sim Lee) [정회원]



- 2006년 2월 : 연세대학교 대학원 석사 졸업
- 2010년 2월 : 백석대학교 대학원 박사 졸업
- 2012년 3월 ~ 현재 : 서울벤처대학원 대학교 교수

<관심분야> : 노인복지 및 상담, 가족 상담

이 창 돈(Chang-Don Lee,) [정회원]



- 2004년 8월 : 연세대학교 대학원 석사 졸업
- 2013년 3월 ~ 현재 : (사)북한체제 트라우마치유 상담센터 이사
- 2014년 9월 ~ 현재 : 서울벤처대학원대학교 박사과정

<관심분야> : 상담학, 정신분석, 탈북민 상담