Researching the defensive functioning in a patient suffering from a medial bilateral temporal damage

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## I.      Introduction

The psychoanalytic studies about the psychic organization of patients with severe neurological deficits are not very frequent. However, what predominate are the cognitive deficit investigations. So has occurred with patients with bilateral temporary damage, one of whom, H. M., has been widely researched during more than 50 years. Since the pioneer paper carried out by Scoville and Milner (1957) these researches allowed us to determine the hippocampus' function in the process of consolidation of memory (Corkin 2002, Squire 2009). The patient that we intend to study in this opportunity has very similar hippocampus damage to that of H. M. (Corkin et al. 1997) and has already been evaluated from the perspective of her cognitive deficits. The patient has had encephalitis that caused her in first place, right medial temporal damage, and that latter evolved to a bilateral temporal damage. On our behalf, we expect to investigate the psychic organization of the case from the psychoanalytic perspective, mostly the defenses (as well as their state).

## II.      Sample

### II.      1. First videotaped interview, carried out in Tandil, in the interviewer's office (with the presence of Rosa's daughter)

The patient began saying that she lived in Llavallol but her daughter corrected her, they lived in Lincoln. Rosa affirmed that she was fine but, as she had been operated from a fibroma, sometimes her menstruation didn't come down and she had headaches. The patient said she was 52 years old and added that there were days in which she had good memory and days in which she had not. In the meanwhile, Rosa had placed herself to a side, didn't look directly at the interviewer, but she directed her eyes to a big window in her left side. She was aware of the fact that there were things she used to do well and now she couldn't do them in the same way. Rosa lived in the country side and she did lots of things, such as raising animals, farming, cleaning, cooking, and helping her husband. She had lived in the country side since she was born, always in the same area. She had a younger brother and two older sisters. She claimed to have 3 children in total: Ana was the one with her that day, the eldest one was Mirta, and then there was Luciano. She immediately laughed surprised, and tried to correct herself, stating that he was her brother, and that her younger son was called Carlitos, and was between 12 and 14 years old, but

she wasn't sure.  One of her grand-daughters was living with them because she was afraid of being alone (mostly at night, not knowing why), she always had grand-children living with her and she had 9 grand-children in total. Rosa was afraid to travel, she was scared of the fact that they might crush or brake the car. She was also afraid of illnesses and death (her voice tone diminished a lot while she said this). Almost immediately she asked how much she had to pay while she threatened to leave. The interviewer asked why she wanted to leave and Rosa said that men (her husband and son in law) were going to get bad. She sighed and moved in the chair, restless. This attempt to interrupt the interview and leave was repeated several times later. The interviewer requested her to stay a little more and asked her what she liked doing. In response, Rosa listed her obligations and said that she did what she could. Then she asked the interviewer if she was from there, from Tandil (this was another question that she repeated several times during the interview). Immediately, in a new attempt to drop up the interview, her daughter came in and the interviewer convinced her to wait until her husband arrived. Rosa added that she was always worried, due to the fact that her husband had a pressure problem (which is now controlled). The interviewer requested her to look at the TRO cards and to tell stories. At the first moment Rosa said that she had not her glasses, someone had stolen them she believed, but they were inside her purse. When finally she put the glasses on, she was only able to see some shadows, a damaged matrix, two persons, a chair, a light table. Rosa asked her daughter for help but the interviewer explained that only she had to complete the test (this situation was also repeated). Emphasizing the money, the interviewer asked Rosa if the economic situation worried her and the interviewee said they had lots of expenses. The interviewer asked what she meant by "doing fine" and Rosa answered that it meant that her menstruation came down all right and that they had money to live well. She added that they had 125 acres, there was no much production and that the cows were dying. She commented that during the night there was a fire in the fields, when she woke up she saw the smoke and that a shed almost got burnt. Automatically repeated that she wanted to leave and she was feeling bad, nervous thinking that her husband would raise pressure, because even when he was a very good person, he would feel bad when he had to wait or when something didn't come out the way he wanted. The interviewer asked about her husband's health and she told that she had to take care of what he ate, she couldn't cook with much salt and he had to take a pill (her daughter clarified that she had to control Rosa because she usually forgot about the diet). The interviewee intended to leave again; she stood up and looked straight through the window, then she added that she couldn't just be sitting for a long time because it made her feel nervous, that she only sat to eat and she didn't like to be doing nothing. After that, Rosa asked the interviewer if she was a relative of her and if she came from her same town. The questioned answered negatively, and explained that she was from Tandil, and that was when Rosa adverted that they were in that city. At once she repeated that she was leaving and this time she asked what medication she had to take, so the interviewer told her she didn't have to take anything. Rosa added that when she "was doing very bad" (when she had a lot of her menstruation coming down, when she had stomachaches) she took Evanol. She had been operated from a fibroma 10 years ago and she recovered very well, after saying this she tried to pay and leave some times more. The interviewer requested her to stay and

asked her about her duties in the fields. Rosa repeated her previous answer (helping her husband, cooking, taking care of the cattle), and added that everyone collaborated: her husband, brother in law, brother and son in law. Rosa sat down again and commented that they had only 38 cows, that there wasn't much space for them and that feeding the animals was too expensive. She requested to leave again adducing that they must be waiting for her. Making an effort to stop Rosa, the interviewer asked her what she would like to do and Rosa answered that she liked knitting, sewing, but sometimes if she had her hand closed for a long time she would have cramps. While Rosa kept on asking for permission to leave, the interviewer requested some information to Ana, then she asked Rosa her birth date and her daughter's birthday and she answered correctly; the interviewee added that some days she had good memory but others she didn't. Rosa said good bye again and finally left.

II.    2. Second videotaped interview, carried out in one of Rosa's daughter's house, in Lincoln

Rosa started the interview with a smile and changing immediately to a frown to say that she was feeling sad and without mood. Sometimes when she felt sad she would sit down and think, and then she would keep on working. She was worried about her grand-children (she sighed) even when they were good, and her health, her husband's, her mother's and her grand-children's health also worried her. To the question of what she liked doing, Rosa answered that she did whatever came to her, not minding whether she liked it or not, she did what she could and what she had to do. In that moment she found out about the camera, looked at it and asked the interviewer if she was being filmed. The aforesaid told her no to worry, that she would look good in the film. Rosa claimed laughing that she didn't know why they would want a film of her, and then added, with a lower and serious tone, that this day she was "very buggered". She had hemorrhoids and her menstruation came down a lot, she repeated that she was doing bad and asked (looking at the camera and smiling) if what she said was being filmed. She added that she had every time more problems and, on top of that, now she lost her wedding ring, concern that she repeated several times during the interview, with which there were interferences in the exchange about other topics. Regarding the ring, she thought she might have taken it away or maybe her grand children did. Finally, her husband gave it to Rosa and explained her that she had taken it away because she used to have a plaster in her arm, due to the fact that she had fallen down and hit. Rosa added that her grand son was a bit "buggered", that he wasn't doing well, but that she didn't remember quite well what he had but they would have to take care of him and cure him and that she hoped everything would get better. She commented that her grand son is named Jorge and that maybe the interviewer knew him, but this one answered negatively. Rosa told they had been to Miramar and she didn't remember whether they came back from there or from Mar del Sur, because they had been to both beaches. She added that her husband liked the sea, that they went for a ride there only the two of them, that they had relatives there, one of whose house they stayed in. Rosa added that these relatives used to live in Lincoln and asked the interviewer if she knew them. The interviewer answered that she didn't know them, that this was her

first time in Lincoln because she lived in Tandil. About her trip to Miramar, Rosa told that she went to the beach but she didn't like getting into the sea, so she just got into the swimming pool once or twice; they had gone there for a relative wedding, they had come back on Monday or Tuesday. In the beginning they had awful days, with rain, but then, when the days were better, the others got into the sea but she didn't because the water, which was cold, made her bad. She also commented that when you got to a certain age there were thing that weren't for you any more. The interviewer pointed a picture were Rosa appeared and asked if that was her. Rosa answered that without her glasses she couldn't see much, and then she asked where the interviewer had found the photo and commented that those were her husband, her grand son and her, but she didn't remember where it had been taken. Stressing the fact that Rosa would rub her finger constantly, the interviewer asked her what had happened. Rosa answered that she didn't know, that she had gone to the doctor because that hand would swell up and hurt and that she used to have a plaster on it. She could move it but no so much, and laughing she adduced that when you got to a certain age everything happened to you. She added that she felt tired; it wasn't like when she was younger, now she kept on doing her tasks but slower, and it might take her two or three days to finish cleaning the house. Rosa asked again if the interviewer was from Lincoln and this one answered that she was from Tandil, where she used to go see the doctors. However, Rosa denied this saying, "thank to God", she hadn't had to consult a doctor. Noticing the picture again, the interviewee asked again if that was her. Then she asked where they were and claimed not to be sure if that was her house or her daughter's, and that she felt a bit lost. Changing subject, the interviewer asked Rosa if she liked cooking, and she said that even when she didn't like it she had to do it the same, because she had to feed her children. She numbered her duties one more time. In this moment, another of her daughters came in the room; Rosa commented that she had 3 children, that two and one younger son more, Carlos, who was at school in Lincoln, but she wasn't sure if he was 15 years old. Then she added that she thought she had 6 grand children. Suddenly a noise was heard and Rosa got scared; the interviewer managed to calm her down and asked about her three children again, but this time Rosa told that she had only two daughters. Then the interviewer showed her the TRO sheets but Rosa claimed that she didn't have her glasses and so she couldn't see a thing. So the interviewer handled her some but she said they weren't hers, until her husband convinced her of it. However, she couldn't see anything in the sheets; she asked again if the interviewer was a relative of her and adduced that she usually forgot people. She continued not being able to see anything and arguing it was because of the glasses; she added that she had to go to the ophthalmologist and that maybe those weren't her glasses. Rosa told that, in order to entertain herself, she watched TV, sometimes read, but most of the time made the house tasks. She pointed again at the glasses and asked if they were hers. Then the interviewer asked her again how she felt and Rosa answered that sometimes she felt fine but others not so much, because her chest would hurt. She commented that regarding her head it was not like when she was young but she was fine the same. Looking at the photograph again she asked if it was hers and commented that the problems of life never ended. The interviewer asked what she would like to do that day and Rosa answered "whatever". So the interviewer asked what she liked doing when she was young

and Rosa answered that she would have wanted to be a teacher, but her family didn't have money and she had to work as a maid. She got married at the age of 21 and then she got surprised and worried because she couldn't remember what her present age was. She commented that there were days in which she had better memory than in others and that she felt as if when she came back from Miramar she forgot everything because of the tiredness. Then she asked where her purse was and, due to the increase of her concern, both interviewee and interviewer made their way to the kitchen to look for it. The interview was over.

### III.   Method

The David Liberman algorithm, which allows to detect wishes and defenses (as well as their state) in narrated and enacted episodes. Repertoire of main defenses detected: Foreclosure of the affect, Foreclosure of reality and the ideal, Disavowal, Repression, In accordance with the goal, Creativity, Sublimation. The state of the defenses can be successful, failed or both.

### IV. Procedures

1. Analysis of the patient's narrations (which usually allows inferring the extra-transference conflicts), 2. Analysis of the patient's enacted episodes (which usually facilitates the understanding of intra-session conflicts

### V.   Analysis
V.    1. Analysis of narrative sequences

We have gathered 34 narrative sequences. These narrations are expressions of the defenses and their state:

Table I: Defenses in the narrations

| Defenses | % |
|---|---|
| In accordance with the goal | 50,42 |
| Repression+characterologic traits | 0,54 |
| Foreclosure of the affect | 40,70 |
| Disavowal | 8,35 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

At first sight this result of the analysis of the defenses in the narrations is surprising for it looks like one that could appear in a normal person, maybe with a certain proportion of narcissistic (disavowal) and psychosomatic traits, or of posttraumatic neuroses (foreclosure of the affect). What is clear and evident from the beginning is the poverty in the percentage of defenses related to repression.

However, there is another trait: only a few refer to concrete situations occurred effectively in the moment in which Rosa said they happened; for example, when in the first interview she told that she had cramps in her hands or when in the second interview she narrated that she had a plaster in her arm. Other narrations of Rosa are references to situations occurred long time ago as if they had happened just a few days before the interview; for example, when she comments in the first interview that she had a younger brother when in fact this one had died at the age of 13, several decades ago. Another example is when in the second interview Rosa told that she had to feed her daughters, as if they were little girls. Other narrations express general actions, lacking of specificity, as for example, when the interviewee expresses that when she goes out with her daughters she is quiet (first interview), or that sometimes she is fine and sometimes her chest hurts (second interview).

As the analysis of narrations expects mostly to investigate the speaker's extra-transference relationships it is convenient to discuss first the value of some of Rosa's narrations that don't seem to comply with the facts. If Rosa had only narrated fantasies, or would have referred repeatedly to what she was going to do in the future, as a consequence of a radical change that she was expecting to achieve, or if she had narrated confabulations, then it would have been more difficult for us to count on useful material to research her extra-transference relationships. But Rosa combined narrations that complied with the facts (R) with other more vague and general narrations (RG), and with allusions to situations occurred long time ago as if they were recent (No R). In consequence, all these narrations have they value to study her extra-transference relationships, but illustrate only partially her history, the most important moments of her life and her present situation, which, among other problems, carries a difficulty when we expect to privilege (mostly in the punctuation corresponding to the statistical study of the material) those narrations referred to the interviewee's present state.

However, the result of the analysis of the 34 narrative sequences is presented as if they were all equivalent, meaning that they all allude to her extra-transference life.

This result doesn't seem to harmonize with the reality of the interviews, and can only be understood if we take into account that Rosa's narrations might be analyzed in two levels. On one hand, it is possible to study the defenses and their state in each narrative sequence (as we have already done), and on the other hand, it is possible to study some of her traits, such as the degree of generalization or specificity of the narrations, or the degree of coincidence with the facts that Rosa refers to. While the first type of analysis corresponds strictly to the level of narrations, the second one integrates mostly the level of speech acts.

Table II:

| First interview | N | Second interview | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| NoR | 8 | NoR | 4 |
| RG | 10 | RG | 6 |
| R | 1 | R | 5 |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | 19 | TOTAL | 15 |

Consequently, narrations can not be considered a useful way to access to the study of the patient's defenses in the extra-transference life. Instead, it is possible to resort to the analysis of the enacted episodes during the interviews.

V. 2. Analysis of the enacted episodes

The study of Rosa's enacted scenes during the interviews requires from a criterion for the fragmentation of the material. This one may consist in taking into account the way in which Rosa responds to the change in the interviewer's type of interventions. For example, in some moments the interviewer intends to collect information, in others she tries to tune in with Rosa, in other moments she tries to get Rosa to answer to the sheets of a projective test, in others the interviewer tries to avoid Rosa's attempt to leave the room, in other moments she makes the effort to capture the interviewee's degree of memory loss. In each one of these situations the interviewer formulates a different kind of interventions, and Rosa responds to that also in different ways. Rosa's responses to the interviewer's different types of interventions allow to differentiate more or less extensive fragments of the interviewee's speech acts, in which she displays certain scenes that might be studied in terms of wishes and defenses and their state. This criterion facilitates to divide the first interview in 28 fragments and the second interview in 23 fragments. Each fragment has a different length, fact that was also taken into account while establishing the score. Despite the variety of fragments obtained, the defenses detected are mostly delimited. Among them, the ones that predominate are the defenses in accordance with the goal, foreclosure of the affect, foreclosure of reality and the ideal and disavowal. Sometimes Rosa formulates a reference to a concrete situation, like the fact that she sometimes gets nervous (successful defense in accordance with the goal). She also wonders where she has lost some object and intends to get it back (successful defense in accordance with the goal). Other times Rosa expects to get up and leave in the middle of an anguish attack, which corresponds to the failed foreclosure of the affect. In other moments she declares with conviction that she is taking a medication used for menstrual pains, which corresponds to foreclosure of reality and the ideal. Besides, Rosa says that sometimes she remembers, but not when she is tired, and this corresponds to disavowal. Finally, there are sporadic moments in which Rosa refers to her sadness and apathy (failed disavowal). Next we present a table that synthesizes the results referred to the analysis of the defenses in the scenes displayed in the speech acts, the paraverbal components and the motor developments.

Table III: Defenses in the first and second interview

| First interview | Defenses | Second interview |
|---|---|---|
| % | | % |
| 17,86 | In accordance with the goal | 43.48 |
| 25 | Disavowal | 34.78 |
| 25 | Foreclosure of reality and the ideal | 4,35 |
| 32,14 | Foreclosure of the affect | 17,39 |

| 100 | TOTAL | 100 |
|-----|-------|-----|

 

The comparison between the results of the analysis of both interviews shows a remarkable difference between percentages of the defenses. While the more pathogenic defenses (mostly foreclosure of the affect and foreclosure of reality and the ideal) constitute more than the 50% in the first interview, in the second one, however, they hardly overcome the 20%. In compensation, the defense in accordance with the goal rises to almost the 45% in the second interview, against something less than 20% in the first one, while disavowal diminishes its weight in a less drastic way in the second interview regarding the first one. In consequence, it is possible to state that the first interview shows a defensive aspect in which the most severe defenses prevail, while the second one puts in evidence the predominance of less severe defenses, mostly the narcissistic characterologic traits combined with functional defenses. Besides, in the first interview we notice the importance of a mechanism complementary to the foreclosure of the affect, which is "flight". This defense is attributed to the primitive reality ego by Freud (1915c) and is regularly present in post-traumatic neuroses, and also in severely addict patients and other pathologies.

## VI. Discussion

If we gather our partial analyses we may have a panorama of the dominant psychic currents in Rosa. One of those currents is functional, in accordance with the goal, while other three correspond to pathogenic sectors of her ego organization: 1) disavowal (inherent to narcissistic non psychotic characterologies), 2) foreclosure of reality and the ideal (inherent to psychoses), 3) foreclosure of the affect (inherent to toxic and traumatic pathologies). While in occasions in which she has a major psychic equilibrium the first pathogenic psychic current would predominate in Rosa, combined with a functional psychic current; in other moments, when such equilibrium is broken, the two pathogenic psychic currents, mentioned in the last term, would prevail. In this moment of major psychic disorganization her degree of regression leads to the predominance of foreclosure of the affect, as it occurred mostly in some moments of the first interview. However, what predominated in the second interview were the preventive measures (in accordance with the goal) to neutralize the risk of being invaded by states like the ones of the preceding interview, combined with her tendency to disavow her cognitive disabilities. The difference between one and other interview regarding defenses seems to depend on two facts: 1) the first one was carried out in another city and in an unknown space, while the second was carried out in a place familiar to Rosa, 2) in the first interview the interviewer was a stranger to Rosa, while in the second she was a bit more familiar. The opposition stranger-familiar, which includes the contexts and the intervening objects, allows investigating the difference between both interviews. In non familiar situations, the failed foreclosure of the

affect prevails in Rosa, while in familiar situations the successful defenses in accordance with the goal predominate, become dominant and are combined with the narcissistic characterologic traits. We may establish a link between the findings referred to one interview and the other: the ones that predominated in the second interview correspond to the measures tending to neutralize the risk of repetition of situations that occurred in the first interview. In fact, in the second interview the tendencies to spatial location ("where") of objects and persons predominated, while in the first one it was Rosa the one that seemed to be suffering from a state of disorientation. The same way in which in the first interview Rosa seemed to be lost, in the second one she made the effort in several occasions to locate objects and persons.

Calls the attention the fact that in our analysis almost none value was given to repression as a pathogenic defense. This derives from the fact that such defense expects to maintain smothered in the unconscious certain drive derivatives expressed mostly by preconscious substitutive formations. We think that, even when Rosa still has an effective drive world, this one is not processed by its link with repressed memories that seek for access to the conscious through preconscious derivatives with a symbolic value.

With all, we can not state that Rosa lacks completely from memories. The references to her concern about the fibroma that she suffered years ago, and that she considers a present problem, put in evidence that the interviewee has some memories. However, these memories had the function of replacing a recent traumatic situation by a previous one, maybe a little less unfavorable for the interviewee. So the traumatic memories from the past had a defensive function against the more recent unbearable situations.

## VII. Conclusions

Now we will try to connect the clinical findings about the patient's psychic organization with some recent developments in neuroscience.
The research on Rosa's manifestations allows inferring the coexistence of several psychic currents, as much as various states (successful, failed, etc.) of the defenses integrating those psychic currents. Some of them predominate in a changing way. Also is possible to show in which circumstances some of those currents or some of the states of the defenses go from a subordinated position to prevailing among the others. For example, the transition from failed foreclosure of the affect in the first interview to the development of more functional defenses in the second interview seems to derive from the fact that in the first one Rosa was in a non familiar context, while in the second one she was in her own sphere.

It is possible to question ourselves also about the relationship between these clinical findings and Rosa's neurological disruptions. In this regard, the proposal of the present research is to state that the psychotic mechanism, which has the goal to vanish off a fragment of the unpleasant reality of the patient's thoughts and memories, expects to defend the patient from her perception of the limitations of her memory. In this sense, the foreclosure of reality and the ideal seems to be a defense posterior to the failures in the memory. Such defense seems to align with the disavowal, which has the same goal, i. e., to be unaware of the cognitive limitation. This means that both defenses seem to be at the service of avoiding the recognition of the own

neurological deficits (anodiasophoria), and each one of them reinforces the other.

This consideration might be completed with points of view given by Ramachandran (1998) about the different strategies of coping that correspond to each cerebral hemisphere. The left hemisphere's function is to produce a system of beliefs in a way in which every new experience ought to fit in it. The right hemisphere, on the contrary, takes the role of what Freud would call "reality test". If the inconsistent information reaches a certain threshold, the right hemisphere decides that it is necessary to produce a change in the "paradigm". But if this hemisphere is damaged, the left one has free way to develop a wide range of defenses that maintain a system of fake beliefs about reality and is free to produce any kind of distortions, even of perceptual type. In this way, there seems to be a link between the productions of the most primitive and radical defenses that the psychoanalytic theory describes and the establishment of reality criterion attributed to the right hemisphere.

In our case, when the TRO (Philipson) sheets were presented to Rosa in the first interview, the answers tended to ignore the "signs of reality" (tables, chairs, etc.) present in them, and produced a uniform answer: an ill "matrix". A very ancient fragment (approximately 28 years before) of the patient's life (a fibroma that culminated with a hysterectomy) became present with renewed feeling of currency and much probably at the service of the defense that prevents her from being aware of actual neurological deficits.

Another aspect that requires our attention is to decide patient's diagnosis in terms of psychic currents, in particular which of those predominate over others. What seems to lead is a traumatic neuroses (organized around the foreclosure of the affect), in which sometimes the failure of the defense prevails (and consequently the trauma returns) and sometimes some preventive measures are more successful against such return. As complementary defenses we have disavowal and foreclosure of reality and the ideal, at the service of being unaware of the present neurological deficit (anodiasophoria). Likewise, the research on this patient's discourse may contribute to the study of the defense mechanisms involved in the syndromes produced by the damage in the right hemisphere. Morin et al (2005) investigate the presence of the "uncanny" feeling linked with the opposition familiar/stranger in patients with

RHS (right hemispheric syndrome) by means of their drawings, and conclude that it has an important role in them. Our study also indicates that a second mechanism may have importance as well: foreclosure (verwehrfung) of reality and the ideal. The common thing to disavowal and foreclosure of reality and the ideal is that both oppose to a reality felt as unpleasant. The indication of the maintenance or loss of contact with the rejected reality may be found in what we usually call "substitutive formation", i. e., thought, fantasy, memory, etc., to which the ego resorts to maintain the unawareness of such reality. If this substitutive formations corresponds to a consensual reality, then it is possible to infer that the defense is disavowal; but if this substitutive formation corresponds to an unreal situation (as it could be a delirium or a hallucination), then the defense is foreclosure of reality and the ideal. When the interviewee substitutes the lack of memories by ambiguous and general, non specific answers, we may infer that the defense is disavowal; but when she substitutes a recent memory by one from the past, we infer that the defense is foreclosure of reality and the ideal. Therefore, we can state that in Rosa both mechanisms converge in the

aim of being unaware of the limitations derived from her neurologic disruptions. And so we are in condition to extend our findings to the study of effective mechanisms present in all anodiasophorias.

Ramachandran (1998) y Kaplan-Solms y Solms (2000) believe that manifestations of RHS like anosognosias, anosodiasophorias and so are consequences of the Freudian mechanism of repression. But clinical research shows that disavowal is present in RHS patients and also uncanny feelings (Freud 1919) linked with the opposition familiar/stranger (Morin et al, 2005). Besides the presence of disavowal and foreclosure, the almost complete absence of repression in this patient would lead to the conclusion that in RHS patients primitive defences are more important than repression.

There are similarities and differences shown by our analysis of the scenes displayed during the interviews. In some occasions, Rosa would have a psychic functioning partially in accordance with the circumstances and external exigencies. But even in the most favorable situations, we didn't notice in Rosa mechanisms tending to suffocation of wishes, such as the ones present in transference or character neuroses. Such defenses involve, on one hand, the existence of mnemic marks that represent certain drives rejected by the ego, which ones tend to be expressed through preconscious symbolic derivatives. On the other hand, to reject such drive derivatives mechanisms de-cathexis of certain preconscious formations and of over-cathexis of others that play as counter-cathexis are used. What seems to fail in Rosa is the link between the drive motions and the unconscious mnemic traces, condition for these ones to be linked with preconscious symbolic substitutes. Such situation seems to be similar to what occurs in certain moments of the traumatic neuroses. What occurs mostly in these patients is that this set of primitive defenses is combined with others in which defenses of the type of repression prevail. In those cases what usually happens is an ego split, which implies the coexistence of functional psychic currents, even creativity and sublimation, other neurotic psychic currents and others of narcissistic type, including psychoses. Also, in some moments of bigger ego regression foreclosure of the affect tends to prevail. However, in Rosa we only have these more regressive sectors of her psychic life, not nuanced by the coexistence of other more benign sectors. What occurs then is the coexistence between certain functional sectors and others much more pathogenic. In this patient, regression to severely pathogenic defenses occurs without being able to insert more than a few resources to limit their power and their reachness.

Two different neural networks are implicated in the traumatic neuroses psychic symptoms outburst (Yovell, 2000), like forgetting raumatic memories and overcoming dissociation between these and the affects involved. The hippocampus formation is in charge of the process of consolidation of memories as well as the amygdale does the same concerning the emotional aspect of memory. As a consequence of traumatic events, explicit memories of them become damaged, as the functioning of the hippocampus' networks are deteriorated; on the contrary, as the amygdale is overactivated, emotional memories of the events are heavily stored. The consequence is that the amygdale heavily remembers emotion but without taking notice of the content. In this patient, anterograde amnesia plus hippocampus damage as result of

encephalitis interferes with the formation and consolidation of new memories. Only remains some partial past memories from long, long time ago. But fear associated with the existence of a severe illness persists, like that one she suffered near thirty years ago and which considers the source of such fear. This situation is reflected as a projection phenomenon she experiences watching at TRO plates, when a very old traumatic situation (hysterectomy and subsequent loss of menstruation) is re experienced as an actual one.

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