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Research of drives and defenses in a couple's interaction with their baby, using the David Liberman algorithm (DLA)

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I. Aims: to study desires and defenses, as well as their changes, in inter-individual links in a family group with a firstborn child during the first six months of the baby's life.

II. Sample: unique case (n = 1). Selection of the sample resorting to the snowball technique. Inter-judge triangulation of the selection of the sample.

III. Method: 1) Recollection of the material: monthly filming of the family triad. 2) Analysis of the material: the David Liberman algorithm (DLA), which detects drives and defenses as well as their state in verbal and non verbal manifestations.

IV. Procedure: A) Fragmentation of the sample taking into account the functional changes of their members in the course of the time. B) Detection of wishes and defenses and their states, in the verbal and non verbal manifestations 1) in each member of the triad and 2) among the members of the family, C) Inference of the prevailing type of link (stylistic complementarity, reciprocal trapping), D) Study of the positive or negative changes in each member and in the link among them.

V. Analysis

V. 1. Functional changes in the course of the time: In the course of the six first months it is possible to differentiate two stages.

First stage (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> month): the baby shows behaviors of searching for nipple/bottle and suction to feed himself, he also alternates in his cycle of awake state-sleeping. The progenitors' activities correspond to a functional unit: everything is at the baby's service. The parents work as a team and cooperate to satisfy the baby's daily needs (bathing and breastfeeding). The father usually displays the role of assistant or collaborator of his wife, passing her objects, holding or lifting the baby to make his wife easier to manipulate the baby in the feeding and changing bathing moments. The parental activities are accompanied by paraverbal components of cheerful tone and festive humor toward the baby.

Second stage (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> month): it is possible to differentiate three moments: 1) The baby develops higher motor autonomy, tries to seize objects, etc. The mother starts to show her anger and her reproaches towards the baby and utters a "no" with which she tries to inhibit some of the baby's actions. In her paraverbal level it appear some accelerations, catartic increases of the voice level, irritated and impatient tone. 2) The father intervenes regulating the mother-son link resorting to the disapproval of the mother's reactions and to the attempt to correct it. It appears a "no" as mechanism of inhibition of the mother's inhibiting action towards the baby. 3) Partial reestablishment of the harmony, which culminates in the feeding sequence of the mother to the son. Then the father goes back to his function of accompanying and spectator. He has contributed to neutralizing the maternal outbreaks over the baby and to reconduct the link under the supremacy of the cluster's aesthetic harmony. A series of several "no" as expressions of the tendency to dominate and to oppositionism, have been established: from the child to the objects, from the mother to the baby and from the father to the mother.

## V.2. Detection of the drives and defenses and their state

First stage:

Drives and defenses in the baby: 1) IL (intrasomatic investment at the service of surviving: feeding and alternation of the cycle of awake state-sleeping, 2) O2 (affective dependence), 3) A1 (helplessness and motor passivity). Prevalence: IL accompanied by the successful defense in accordance with the goal.

Drives and defenses in the parents: GPH (aesthetic harmony, expressed in the paraverbal components: cheerful tone and festive humor towards the baby), A2 (motor function at the service of dominating the object and creating order and cleanliness). Prevalence: A2 is at the service of GPH combined with the defense in accordance with the goal and creativity, both successful.

	Drive	Defense	Dominant
Baby	IL	In accordance with the goal	IL accompanied by the successful defense in accordance with the goal
	O2	In accordance with the goal	
	A1	In accordance with the goal	
Parents	GPH	Creativity	GPH and successful creativity
	A2	In accordance with the goal	

Second stage:

Drives and defenses in the baby: 1) A1 (domination of the own motor function by imitating the parents' activity), 2) A2 (autonomous motor development and control of the object). Prevalence: A1 and the successful defense in accordance with the goal.

Drives and defenses in the parents: I) in the mother in the first moment: 1) IL (catharsis), 2) O2 (complaints and reproaches towards the baby), 3) A1 (anger), 4) A2 (motor function at the service of dominating the object), 5) GPH (disorganization of the tendency to achieve aesthetic configuration). Prevalence: O2 and failed disavowal. II) In the father in the second moment: 1) O2 (complaints and reproaches towards his wife and search for the maintenance of an empathic relationship with his son), 2) A2 (tendency to moderate and correct his wife's attitude). Prevalence: A2 and the successful defense in accordance with the goal. III) in both parents in the third moment: 1) A2 (cleaning and manipulation of the baby), 2) GPH (to sing softly accompanying the baby's feeding). Prevalence: GPH and the successful creativity.

	Drive	Defense	Dominant
Baby	A1	In accordance with the goal, successful	A1 and the successful defense in accordance with the goal
	A2	In accordance with the goal, successful	
Mother moment I	IL	Failed foreclosure of the affect	O2 and failed disavowal
	O2	Failed disavowal	
	A1	In accordance with the goal, failed	
	A2	In accordance with the goal,	

		failed	
	GPH	Failed creativity	
Father moment II	O2	In accordance with the goal, succesful	A2 and the successful defense in accordance with the goal
	A2	In accordance with the goal, succesful	
Both parents moment III	A2	In accordance with the goal, succesful	GPH and the successful creativity
	GPH	Successful creativity	

## VI. Discussion and conclusions

The analyzed sequence consists of an initial moment of aesthetic equilibrium (first four months), broken as a consequence of the display and arise of the child's autonomy and oppositionism (A1 with successful defense in accordance with the goal). This change in the baby awakes in the mother an alteration state (IL), complaints (O2), anger (A1), and the attempt to dominate the son (A2), with a predominance of O2 and the failed disavowal. At the same time, the father responds to this scene with an attempt to moderate and regulate the maternal states (A2 and the defense in accordance with the goal). The final effect is the recovery of the aesthetic harmony (GPH and the defense in accordance with the goal).

In the moment of initial equilibrium the complementarity between the members of the group prevails, leaded by the mother. In the moment in which the unbalanced state appears, a risk of transitory reciprocal trapping between the mother and the baby takes part, in which both foster interference and increasing pathologic acceleration in the link. The relationship between the mother and the father, which takes part in the next moment, corresponds to a new stylistic complementarity in the couple, which allows finally reestablishing the complementarity between the three members of the group, again leaded by the mother.