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Two inter-judge reliability tests of the applications of the David Liberman algorithm (DLA)

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1. Goal: to test the inter-judge reliability of two applications of the David Liberman algorithm (DLA).

2. Procedures: The David Liberman algorithm (DLA) allows to detect drives and defenses as well as their state in the narrated and enacted scenes during the sessions. The two investigations consist of: 1) an “old fashion” interjudge reliability test (drives and defenses) of two studies of Ms Smithfield first interview, 2) a systematic interjudge reliability test (defenses) of four pairs of scorers of a second sample (a patient with episodes of violence).

3. First interjudge reliability test: on Ms Smithfield first interview

3. 1. Sample (*Psychotherapy Research, 1994,4*). The patient is a 23-year-old divorced woman who is a recent college graduate. She presently sells flowers on a streetcorner in Boston. She described a large number of recent traumas, but related them in a flat, emotionless manner and described her experiences and her reasons for seeking treatment with extreme vagueness. The traumas she described included a serious car accident and five rapes. The car accident left her with a memory loss, but she is confused as to whether the memory loss was due to physical or psychological factors; that is one reason for her seeking treatment After college she moved to Africa where she married an African man. However, he mysteriously disappeared and never returned, constituting another trauma; she subsequently divorced him. The patient was an only child of

parents who were described as successful and well-educated and pushed her to achieve academically. Her parents were also described as having been emotionally neglectful-lacking in empathy, attentiveness, and emotional support. She described her mother as manipulative and untrusting of others and described herself as similarly lacking in trust and expecting Disappointment. On the other hand, she described her father more positively. Since he had been abandoned by his first wife, she sees him as similar to herself. She also recalls having been ostracized, scapegoated, and victimized by her peers in school, causing her to feel like an isolated outsider. It was hypothesized that, as a result of her experiences at home and at school, she has a very poorly integrated sense of self and a diffuse identity. The identity difusión would explain her lack of clarity in describing her feelings, needs, beliefs, and wishes. It would also explain why she seems so readily to accept what other people tell her about herself and her traumas. In the rapes she seems to have been extremely passive, assuming the masochistic position of a victim and feeling like the victim of other people's exploitive, abusive actions. This masochistic style may help her maintain a feeling of attachment and love. However, she seems confused as to whether she is simply a victim or whether she has contributed in some way to the rapes. Her defenses include intellectualization and isolation of affect, and her flatness of affect resembles the numbing seen in a post-traumatic stress disorder.

3. 2. Procedures: 1) To summarize the first application of the DLA to the sample, 2) to compare it with the second application (produced by a team of 6 members, under the coordination of L. Alvarez) of the DLA to the sample. The sample was first studied in a qualitative way by 7 authors (1994). The recent investigations with the DLA were also qualitative studies.

3. 3. Outcomes of the first research using the DLA

The patient's non pathogenic organization seemed to be based in the predominance of the defense in accordance with the goal, which led her to consult, to obtain her master, to recover from her crisis after the return from Africa and after the car accident. Regarding the pathogenic sector, three

sectors are relevant: 1) repression plus hysterical and phobic characterologic traits, which ones led to a phenomonic presentation, 2) disavowal that generated “passionate” characterologic traits, centered in sacrifice, self-reproach and report of the abuse suffered, and 3) disavowal that leads her to be unaware of concrete risk situations in favour of abstract thoughts, combined with foreclosure of the affect, which led her to suffer an organic alteration as a way of solving the conflict. This third group of defenses contains a mixture between eschizoid characterologic traits and different types of somatic perturbations (deseases, pregnancy-abortion, drug consumption, accident). Even though the patient preferred to define herself according to the second fragment (the “passionate” one), the nuclear and effective was the permanent return of the failures in the defensive system corresponding to the third fragment (Table I).

Table I: The patient’s psychic structure according to DLA

Pathogenic Psychic Currents
Currents

Non Pathogenic Psychic

Character Neuroses	GPH	Repression + hystrionic and seductive traits
	UPH	Repression + avoiding and ambitious traits
Narcissistic organization with which she created the links	A1	Disavowal
	O2	Disavowal
Nuclear Organization	O1	Disavowal
	LI	Foreclosure of the affect

A2	According to the goal
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3. 4. Comparison with the outcomes of the L. Alvarez’s team

This Table summarizes the research in two levels of analysis (narrations and enacted scenes). In both levels, the research focuses on sectors that can be gathered in different issues (family, violations, etc., for the narrations, and answers to the therapist's attempt of tune in with the patient, or the therapist's attempt of establishing causal links, etc). The comparison between the two outcomes also includes the classifications of the issues, together with the analysis of drives and defenses as well as their state.

In the narration level of analysis, concerning the issues, both teams partially differed on the amount and classification (85% of coincidence). Concerning the drives, defenses as well as their state both outcomes have a 100 % of coincidence.

	Coincidences	
	Drives	Defenses
Narration	100%	100%

In the enacted level of analysis, the coincidences on issues are 77, 78 %. In the verbal enacted level, concerning drives, both teams match on the 75%, in defenses, both teams have a 100 % of coincidence, but they match only on the 75% on the state of the defense. In the paraverbal enacted level, both teams match 100 % on drives and defenses as well as their state.

Enacted scenes	Coincidences	
	Drives	Defenses
Verbal	75%	100%
Paraverbal	100%	100%

3. 5. Discussion and conclusions

1) The amount of coincidences and divergences indicates that the teams need to improve their resources for the analysis of drives in the enacted scenes (verbal level). 2) it is convenient to obtain individual opinions to test the specific capacities and limitations of each rater.

4. Second interjudge reliability test: the systematic comparison among four pairs of scorers studying a sample of a woman with episodes of violence

4. 1. Sample: Saveria is an about 30 years old patient. She is separated from her couple, Alberto, and has two children. Since the separation she is living in her mother's house, in the garage, with both of her child. She works in a nursery, as well as her mother.

The patient begins saying that the reason for consulting is that she suffered a blood pressure attack and needed to be hospitalized, after she beat her former husband with a piece of metal. Then she starts explaining that her problem is that she shouts instead of speaking, and this is the reason why the patient thinks she has a very bad relationship with her family. Saveria tells the therapist about her childhood and adolescence, in which she had several fury outbreaks, due to the fact that her mother did not listen to her.

About the episode in which she beat her former husband, Saveria begins telling that she used to torture him with jealousy, to what he responded beating her. Alberto got tired of this and finally abandoned her and she moved to her mother's house. Soon after the break-up he started a new relationship with another woman. The core of the conflict began when she was at the football pitch and had breathing difficulties, so she had to go to the ER. There Saveria phoned Alberto but he did not answer her. Then there was an episode in which he did not take their daughter to her father-in law's birthday, and did not bring her a pinafore. She decided to go to Alberto's house, and after a discussion she beat him. The day after, she asked her mother to take her to a psychiatric hospital.

In this period a friend initiated her in the “Mayan doctrine”. The patient stressed that this doctrine had changed her way of thinking and had made her understand everything that had happened in her life. During her period of hospitalization, she also applied this knowledge to understand other people. Thanks to this doctrine, she claimed to have stopped worrying about Alberto as well. Regarding her hospitalization, Saveria said she also asked her mother to take her out, because she was not herself inside there, due to the fact that they gave her a lot of drugs and she did not like that.

4. 2. Procedure: 1) To require to 4 scorers to separately analyze the sample (composed by 65 narrative sequences), 2) after the reception of the corresponding outcomes, to send them to the 4 scorers offering the opportunity of changing their own opinions (without a direct exchange among them), 3) after receiving the new versions of the analysis, to repeat step 2 again.

4. 3. Outcomes:

Among the 12 combinations between pairs of judges (6 for Drives and 6 for Defenses), the major coincidences correspond to judges 1-2, and to judges 3-4. The lowest coincidences correspond to judges 3-1 and to judges 4-1.

Ranking	Judges	Drives / Defenses	Kappa Coef Value	Statistical Significance
1°	1-2	Drives	,729	,000
	1-2	Defenses	,667	,000
2°	3-4	Drives	,642	,000
	3-4	Defenses	,572	,000
3°	3-1	Drives	,630	,000
	3-1	Defenses	,391	,000
4°	4-1	Drives	,603	,000
	4-1	Defenses	,459	,000

4. 4. Discussion and conclusions: 1) the amount of coincidences between the 6 pairs of judges on Drives and Defenses can be ranked from the high to the

medium level, 2) the coincidences were higher on the analysis of Drives than on the opinions on Defenses. In consequence, new projects aiming at improving the judge's formation on the research of Defenses are necessary.

5. General conclusions:

The outcomes of both reliability tests showed that the analysis produced by the raters went from the satisfactory to the partially satisfactory degree of coincidence. Besides, the first reliability test (comparing two qualitative investigations focused on narrations and enacted episodes) showed that the raters had more capacity for the research of Narrations than for the analysis of the Enacted episodes. The second reliability test (comparing two quantitative investigations focused on narrations), showed that the raters had more capacity for the research on Drives than for evaluating Defenses.