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Text additional to answer to first question

I would like now to use the time that is left to illustrate these ideas clinically by discussing briefly 3 dreams of a patient. I will use these dreams also to show how the interpretable aspects of the dream shift as a consequence of the interpretations given to the patient.

This material comes from a paper recently written with my wife Elizabeth L. Rocha Barros, but here I am adopting a new perspective.

The patient was a sixty-year-old man who emigrated several times as a child and later on as an adult too, always due to political circumstances. His mother was a Holocaust survivor. The rest of the family including a brother died in a concentration camp.

The first two dreams came just after he received the diagnosis of a malignant prostate tumor and from that moment on he fell into a deep depression. He stopped working, no longer talked, stopped eating and no longer left his bedroom where he took refuge in the dark. He underwent successful surgery but his recovery was very difficult. He became incontinent for a time, sexually uninterested and impotent, believing that these conditions were permanent, although the physicians said the contrary. He interrupted his analysis for some months and then he returned bringing to his analyst the two dreams.

D-1 *He was piloting an airplane that suddenly had a damaged piston, and had to make an emergency landing. But no airport allowed it to land because it was registered in Burundi, considered a wild country. Everyone (he says) was contemptuous of this country of poor, uncivilized blacks. The airplane crashed but he survived although blind and severely injured.* Since the dream had been told at the end of the session, the analyst did not discuss it.

At the next session he told another dream:

D-2 *The Israeli air force was bombing the Teheran nuclear power station. He was one of the pilots. His plane was hit, he was losing fuel and engine power, and was going to have to make an emergency landing. Again, as in the previous dream, there were no airports available since all those in the region were located in territory that belonged to the enemies of Israel.*

When associating, he said that the sky over Teheran was *gray* and, since the planes were *yellow*, they were easy targets.

Looking at both dreams, he said he did not have many associations, except the obvious ones: the yellow color of the airplanes was taken from the yellow *Stars of David* which the Jews were obliged to

wear during the Nazi period. Burundi was an insignificant country, destroyed by war, and was possibly a reference to the way he himself felt.

The analyst pointed out to him that perhaps the dreams really had something to do with the way he felt at this time, in a very difficult situation, helpless, humiliated, discriminated against and impotent, afraid that he might not survive. This reminded him of his past as a child and adolescent, when he felt the same way and this connection reinforced all of his current fears.

The analyst then suggested that the damaged piston was the analog representation of his prostate and penis, which he felt had been definitively damaged, resulting in a disastrous landing after surgery. In other words, when he got down to earth he touched what appeared to him a catastrophic reality, against which the only protection would be to become blind to his feelings.

Mr. C. reacted with apparent indifference to these interpretations although afterwards during the session he did not seem distant or cold.

I will now present a new dream from a session several months later. This dream and/ or the interpretation of it led him to *rethink* the two previous dreams I mentioned above, and we could *expand* the understanding of what was going on in *his analysis* and the changes that took place in his mental architecture. I think that these changes *illustrate* what I have suggested theoretically in answer to the questions posed to me and also *show* how changes take place in dreams' symbolisms. I will comment in some detail these changes.

The dream took place when he was already much better from his depression and shortly after a close childhood friend died. He told the analyst that this death seemed to have aroused him from a long sleep.

D-3 Shortly after, he dreamed that *he was playing with toy airplanes. He was a child. This friend, then a boy, was also with him. They were competing with their paper airplanes and when C. was almost losing the competition his friend's plane fell into a puddle. His friend cried a lot. C pretended (sic) to be upset, but deep down, he told the analyst that during the dream he felt great pleasure because the other's airplane had been destroyed. Somehow there were babies in the dream.*

He said that he was shocked and ashamed at his feelings when he woke up. During the session he remembered that the dream had a second part. **D-3** *The friend's mother was crying and saying that now the family would have to move. Everything took place in a devastated, desolate part of the city called "yellow zone". The city recalled a film where bombed-out Warsaw (victim of the Nazis) appeared, but it could have been Berlin (the result of revenge).*

The patient repeated with emphasis that he had woken up feeling very anxious, sweating, unhappy, *ashamed* and angry at himself for his immoral attitude towards his friend. He felt shocked because this dream had occurred immediately after his death. The session was heavy and somber, and the patient found it very difficult to think about the dream. Our (Elias and Elizabeth's) hypothesis was that these feelings of cruelty, guilt and shame came from related sources: that is, from a competitive and cruel split-off part and from the self that was traumatized, and frail with fear of loneliness and isolation. We think that for the first time in his life he felt and looked at his loneliness related to his cruelty and guilt from an adult perspective and these feelings were the trigger for beginning a process of mourning. Tabbia (2008) suggests that in the internal world mourning is the passport to cross borders between split parts. (p. 6). We might say that from this moment the split-off parts began to cohabit the same emotional universe although still kept apart by some kind of obstruction and **this was a first step towards integration through establishing the beginning of intimacy between divided aspects of the self**. The static splits then become dynamic.

Psychic work was active in the sessions we presented, but the capacity to *work through* as we can observe it in the privileged space of dreams and its associative context was paralyzed. The patient is emotionally competent to produce a symbology that can *present*, but only in the sense of *showing denotatively* the situation he is experiencing with very limited capacity to grasp the expressive aspects of what these emotional situations compacted into images are *exemplifying*.

The analyst then said that this distant-C. who simply watched, represented a part of him that could not feel responsible for having produced the devastation, that remained indifferent to the objective catastrophe, and that believed it could only possibly be aroused from this torpor by sadistic and recriminatory interpretive comments by the analyst. The reason for avoiding responsibility for this destruction was related to the fear of humiliation and shame if he accepted that he had something to do with his present state of mind.

During the next session, C. said that he had been intrigued by his dream, and that he also thought about the previous dreams he had had immediately after surgery, which I have mentioned to you. He remembered again that his fighter plane shot down in the dream was *yellow* and that this was associated with a feeling of fear and intense discomfort at anti-Semitism on the occasions that he felt victimized by it and added in a low voice "*and sometimes ashamed for being a Jew*". He also said that this experience was associated with the "*yellow zone*" of the city to which he was to move, adding that the "*yellow zone*" appeared to be the description of a state of mind. He remarked that he

had sometimes felt *ashamed* when he was the victim of discrimination and that *yellow was the color of shame*. None of these feelings had been mentioned at any other time during this analysis.

Closing comments

The death of his friend together with the analyst's interpretations recovered a feeling of lost intimacy between himself and his emotional experiences that produced a significant turnaround in the analysis and resulted in a better integration of the split off bits of his self. This, in our view, favored the dream as part of the working through which until then had encountered obstacles in its capacity to produce broader symbols and the recovery of the expressive/evocative power of the representations. We see this illustrated, for instance, in what happens with the color yellow and the image of the planes over the months of analysis. The yellow color initially was only connected to Judaism as a symbol of Nazi anti-Semitism. It was a symbolism that only worked by analogy, with little power of expression. During the working through process, yellow becomes associated with changes in geographic areas, and particularly in a city (the patient emigrated four times), with devastation (already on a level that has discursive elements), and finally with a state of mind, that, as we shall see, refers both to an emotional state of the mother and of the patient. We can clearly follow here the expansion of the connotative aspects of the yellow. The airplane is no longer only the representative of the affected sexual and emotional potency. It is associated both with the patient's hatred of the depressed state of mind of the mother and with competitiveness (a new affective network or field that opens up) as regards the brother (the shot-down plane now belongs *to the other*), the analyst, among others. The projective identifications to which the images refer us are more numerous and more complex, and begin to show the confusion (generated by conflict) felt by the patient about being the victim or perpetrator of the destructive process. Secondly, it includes a presentational-expressive, with expanded connotative dimension, form (it already evokes emotions and releases new associations), although it has not yet done so at the level of discursive symbolism. That is going to happen after the analyst's interpretations. The patient also added that something very weird had occurred to him, and he felt deeply uneasy at that moment. He remarked that he didn't know whether he had told the analyst (in fact he had not) that his mother had lost a child before him, who had died as a baby. Some years later she told him that she had been devastated (according to him the mother actually used this word) at the time.

This happened in Europe, and he added that although he had never mentioned this, he vividly remembered that when he told the analyst that he had been diagnosed with cancer, he noticed, or suspected that the analyst had felt depressed when he heard about the news of his illness (this perception was in fact right!). These memories become accessible through visual images (presentational symbolism) that virtually have a tendency to turn metaphorical. (We could call this new look at the past, "**Metaphorical seeing**")

He reacted to this perception by feeling intense hatred towards the analyst, although he knew that this reaction was irrational. This hatred had contributed to his interrupting analysis at the time, because he thought "*of what use is an analyst to me if he is as depressed as I am?*" The patient said that the "*yellow zone*" appeared to have something to do also with this state of mind tinted by angry feelings, and that it might well be a reference to his mother's state of depression in the past and his feelings towards her.

The **devastated** city likely represented his mother destroyed by depression, immersed in the "*yellow zone*" (a state of mind) because she had lost her other son with whom she remained symbiotically connected. An unconscious belief had become associated with this perception-intuition, that the only way of getting the mother out of this state of depression would be by cruel pressure to resuscitate her. But this situation also created an internal paradox, since the mother in the internal world that he wanted to reinvigorate and win back, was perceived as emotionally destroyed. A collateral result was a huge feeling of guilt which due to its intensity did not mobilize a desire for reparation, but the need to blind him. In this sense he was a bad pilot of his hatreds, prone to having an accident and getting hurt.

Still on the symbolic level, we would say that the remembrance of the friend and the experiences they lived in childhood did not get stuck to a literal sense but acquired a metaphorical sense producing then the dream situation. During this period the images of the airplane in trouble, the dead brother and the yellow color reappeared, now accompanied by new images, namely, babies, devastated cities, anti-Semitism, references to the need to move from one side to the other of the city. The affective networks evoked and mobilized are now broader and more emotionally colored; in other words, what we call *progression in its formal qualities*.

Although the images are the same, they now have much greater evocative-expressive power, that is, they communicate more feelings to the interlocutors. They not only represent an experience and/or a past situation, now they also capture and communicate something through their expressiveness present in the expansion of their connotative

meanings. This expanded expressiveness is present in the formal qualities of the symbol and from the psychoanalytical perspective we can say that it **will produce a change in the nature of the projective identification used by the patient.** This projective identification was no longer at the service of evacuating feelings. And it thus acquires the possibility of putting these experiences into words carried by the presentational symbolic forms, with its expressiveness. They constitute richer affective pictograms that contain both the non-discursive (intuitive) and the discursive aspects.

It was only when these links were established that depression began to be worked through by mourning and finally to lessen, giving rise to a more reflective state of mind, producing greater emotional closeness with his family, especially with his children. For the first time he genuinely missed his mother. It is moving to note that, ten months later, in a spirit that we could paradoxically call *happy melancholy* he organized a trip with his whole family to Poland, where he had never returned.