


ROJAS-BERMÚDEZ'S NUCLEUS OF THE EGO THEORY AND ITS CORRELATION WITH IMAGODRAMA

Leonídia Alfredo Guimarães^{1,*} 

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present a theoretical reading of the nucleus of the ego, closer to the theory of the identity matrix by J. L. Moreno, deeply developing the Rojas-Bermúdez's concept of incipient ego. I associate this egoic experience with the relationships established between the baby and its family nucleus, right after recognizing a minimally stable ego, in neuropsychological conditions to link itself to the maternal, paternal and fraternal images. According to this reading, the nucleus of the ego completes its structuring at the age of four, following the Rojas-Bermúdez School, after carrying out the process of synthesis of this nuclear matrix, from which the natural ego emerges and, later, the social ego, as a product of the triangulation and circularization of roles. The image construction technique is the method that supports the theory in question.

KEYWORDS: Psychodrama; Neuroscience; Personality Development; Imagodrama.

TEORIA DO NÚCLEO DO EU DE ROJAS-BERMÚDEZ E SUA CORRELAÇÃO COM O IMAGODRAMA

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar uma leitura teórica do Núcleo do Eu, mais próxima à teoria da Matriz de Identidade de J. L. Moreno, desenvolvendo com maior profundidade o conceito de *Eu incipiente* de Rojas-Bermúdez. Associa essa vivência egoica às relações estabelecidas entre o bebê e seu núcleo familiar, logo após o reconhecimento de um Eu minimamente estável, em condições neuropsicológicas para vincular-se às imagens materna, paterna e fraterna. De acordo com essa leitura, o Núcleo do Eu completa sua estruturação aos 4 anos de idade, em conformidade com a Escola Rojas-Bermúdez, após realizar-se o processo de síntese dessa matriz nuclear, de onde emerge o Eu Natural e posteriormente, o Eu Social, como produto da triangulação e circularização de papéis. A técnica de construção de imagens é o método que fundamenta a teoria em questão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Psicodrama; Neurociência; Desenvolvimento da Personalidade; Imagodrama.

LA TEORÍA DEL NÚCLEO DEL YO DE ROJAS-BERMÚDEZ Y SU CORRELACIÓN CON IMAGODRAMA

RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es presentar una lectura teórica del Núcleo do Eu, más cercana a la teoría de la Matriz de Identidad de J. L. Moreno, desarrollando con mayor profundidad el concepto Rojas-Bermúdez del yo incipiente. Asocio esta experiencia egoica con las relaciones que se establecen entre el bebé y su núcleo familiar, justo después del reconocimiento de un Yo mínimamente estable, en condiciones neuropsicológicas para vincularse a las imágenes materna, paterna y fraterna. Según esta lectura, el Núcleo del Yo completa su estructuración a los 4 años, de acuerdo con la Escuela Rojas-Bermúdez, luego de realizar el proceso de síntesis de esta matriz nuclear, de la cual emerge el Yo Natural y posteriormente el Yo Social, como producto de la triangulación y circularización de roles. La técnica de construcción de imágenes es el método que sustenta la teoría en cuestión.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: Psicodrama; Neurociencia; Desarrollo de personalidad; Imagodrama.

1. Associação Baiana de Psicodrama e Psicoterapia de Grupo – Salvador (BA), Brazil.

*Corresponding author: leoguimas05@gmail.com

Section Editor: Marcia Almeida Batista

Received: 03 Jun 2021 | Accepted: 25 Jul 2021

INTRODUCTION

Although my goal in this article is to deepen Rojas-Bermúdez's theory and update it as faithfully as possible to the basic concepts established by the author, throughout the text, I will make references to other clinical approaches (Bustos, 2005; Fonseca, 2018), seeking to align common points to make the reading more understandable to a broader audience.

The theory of the nucleus of the ego–functional model of the personality also called the *Emergentist Theory of Personality* (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1998), dwells on some basic concepts of the constitution of the ego—psychosomatic role-playing, psychodramatic and social roles, situating the natural ego as emerging from the core of the ego, which comes at birth as a basic sense of existing, represented by the physiological ego (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1978).

In this way, the first phase of the total identity matrix (Moreno, 1978), which corresponds to the chaotic and undifferentiated psychism, is taken from the moment of gestation until birth, since at five months of uterine life, the baby already has a wholly Central Nervous System (CNS) formed. The first catharsis of integration corresponds to the act of birth.

The physiological ego is represented by an empty circle and will initiate the structuring of the nucleus of the ego through the three nonautomated psychosomatic roles at birth. The first psychosomatic role to the structure is that of ingestor, at three months of extrauterine life—second phase of the total differentiated identity matrix. It psychologically corresponds to the smile or gestalt signal response (Spitz, 1965), which establishes the infant oral surrounding as representative of the human figure.

Through this first perception of the human figure, the baby fixes its attention on what Rojas-Bermúdez names the *oral surrounding*, which at the same time is external to the physiological mouth-to-mouth experience, but psychologically is perceived as the ego.

It is essential to point out that children who are blind from birth are also able to create a visual perception of this oral surrounding (the mother) through other sense organs:

Visual images are produced by the sensory system in connection with the neocortex through several specific receptor organs for touch, sight, hearing. These send signals to the CNS in the manner of a code [...] we saw that people blind from birth could build an imagistic world and produce mental images, not from sight, but touch and other senses such as smell, taste and hearing [...] this phenomenon is called “blind vision” by neuroscientists (Guimarães, 2012, p. 17, our translation).

This neuropsychologically based nucleus of the ego begins to constitute itself in the incredible complexity of the CNS and develops according to the primary and secondary path of cerebral myelination, until the emergence of an incipient ego, bringing as its historical record the consciousness of ego (ego and non-ego), through the differentiation of the three psychological areas that constitute the conduct or personality models.

When this phenomenon happens, the baby has already passed through the fourth phase of the identity matrix, has established control of the anal sphincter (defecator role) and the urethral sphincter (urinator role) and has delimited the three areas of the psychism (Environment, Mind, Body).

However, about two more years will be needed to synthesize the three psychosomatic roles and the three psychological areas, a process that the establishment of bonds will facilitate with parental and sibling figures, developing, from there, the bunches of roles (Bustos, 2005). In this phase, in which J. L. Moreno names the gap between reality and fantasy (fifth phase), the psychodramatic roles will be developed.

At this point, given the bifurcation of the brain hemispheres into distinct functions (Deutsch & Springer, 1998), the Mind area will correspond to the functions of the left hemisphere (LH). It is the world of symbolic thought, language, words, signs, cognition, and logic. The Body area corresponds to the right hemisphere (RH). From it stems the production of images, sensations and feelings, intuitions, and nonverbal language.

The connection of these areas makes it possible for the RH to produce images and for the LH to interpret them. The two hemispheres, although having different functions, usually work together. The Environment area, which corresponds to

our executive brain (Goldenberg, 2002) and the reptilian brain, will be responsible for motor execution and action planning mediated by the frontal lobes. All these brain structures are connected to the nucleus of the ego.

The *incipient ego*, by bridging the gap between fantasy and reality, will engage in the second child universe (social matrix), will leave behind its shadows (syncretic possessions), and these will be projected onto the natural ego (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1997).

The theoretical research I present in more detail below is updates of Rojas-Bermúdez (1997) theory, mainly regarding the structural, biological and cultural coupling (Maturana & Varela, 2010) between the natural ego and the social ego, as brain subsystems that complement each other and enrich our practice of the image construction technique as a clinical model.

I only add some personal notes that relate the nucleus of the ego to Moreno's identity matrix and the knowledge of neuropsychology, elaborating the synthesis process of the incipient ego more explicitly as an egoic instance strengthened by family relations, which projects its imaginary experiences onto the natural ego and social ego, with hidden contents that can be accessed during the construction of images and the representation of psychodramatic roles.

In this way, I establish a theoretical distinction between the past experiences covered up in the unconscious by the nucleus of the ego. The egoic experiences that are projected onto the ego after the mirror phase and that remain as shadows, mixing fantasy and reality, through the symbolic system, verbal learning, naming things, people, and objects, listening to stories and fairy tales, and the apprehension of characters and affective climates apprehended through prosody, during family interactions (Guimarães, 2010).

It is also important to point out that this systemic vision added to the nucleus of the ego—functional model of the personality theory was already in germ since the original conception of the nucleus of the ego, since Rojas-Bermúdez (1970) had already presented the functional model of the personality from his research with chronic psychotics and severe neurotics at the Hospital T. Borda of Buenos Aires, by discovering the psychodynamic function (identification of the human figure) of the intermediate object, exerted by puppets, masks, robes and hood. Unfortunately, the theories on the constitution of personality and the techniques derived from them are not born ready-made but need further study.

For working with chronic psychotics and severe neurotics in T. Borda (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1984), the author added to the original Morenian method the puppet theater—which consists of the free representation of roles behind a screen, leaving only the puppets in view—a technique of successive approximations between the ego-auxiliaries and the patients, until connections and interlocations of the patients with the puppets and the spontaneous play of complementary roles are established.

This technique consists of the representation of complementary roles using the puppets as an extension of one's own body, being carried out in several successive stages of approximation, very similar to the stages of the identity matrix; and of the structuring of the nucleus of the ego—functional model of the personality, since the author developed his whole theory and methodology of image construction as a result of his work at T. Borda, in the year 1965, after ten years of field research and theoretical studies were carried out.

The objectives of each stage of the intermediate object use are (1) focus the patients' attention on the puppet theater and their interest in interacting with the ego-auxiliaries; (2) performance of complementary roles through the puppets directed to each patient until the puppet and patient interaction is achieved; (3) cover the entire body of the ego-auxiliaries with hoods and robes, so as not to provoke alarm states; (4) remove the screen to allow more closeness; (5) establish a face to face communication using the puppets as an intermediary object; (6) performance of complementary roles in an open scene without using robes and hood, just wielding puppets in hands; (7) and finally reestablishing the patient's ability to communicate, regardless of the use of intermediate objects. Further work consisted of using aesthetic and creative expression techniques, such as drawing, pottery, mask making, psychomusic and psychodance.

STRUCTURING THE NUCLEUS OF THE EGO

As we know, the three psychosomatic roles related to the three areas of the psychism are responsible for supplying the emotional, physiological and social survival needs of the child and function as vectors for the identification of his coenesthetic sensations and perception of the interoceptive stimuli, coming from the bodily sensations; of the exteroceptive

stimuli, external sensations such as cold, heat, ambiance, and emotional climates; and of proprioceptive stimuli that mark the spatial perception of proximity–distance–depth–weight and vision.

All the recognition of these specific sensitivities is modulated by the thalamus, from integrating the CNS to the limbic system—home of the nucleus of the ego—and is orchestrated by the temporal lobe, which regulates all motor, sensitive, and sensory phenomena. These brain structures' gradual and progressive myelination focuses the infant's spontaneous attention on these specific processes. Gradually, the repetition of the psychosomatic roles forms mnemonic marks (MM) that correspond to the performance of the psychosomatic roles, as shown below.

The role of ingestor (RI) is the first organizer of the psychism, constituted from the MM of complementarity between the internal and external programmed genetic structures (IPGS and EPGS) and corresponded to the double phase. In this second phase, the interoceptive system is predominant, with massive and generalized responses attracted by visceral phenomena.

With the structuring of the psychosomatic role of defecator (RD), at around 6–8 months, a progressive adaptation of the child to exteroceptive stimuli is enabled by intestinal peristalsis and reduced stimulus filtering and psychomotor development. This allows discrimination of what occurs inside and outside the organism, finalizing the delimitation of the Environment area, which represents the inner world of the child and influences its behavior in the senses of exploring the external world and recognizing itself as separate from experience.

Once the defecator model (RD) is established, the child begins the mirror phase and will continue to experience the period of separation-individuation intensely, from 8 to 24 months, until structuring the psychosomatic role of urinator (control of the urethral sphincter). According to the identity matrix, it is completed in this fourth phase of the identity matrix, recognizing the I-YOU.

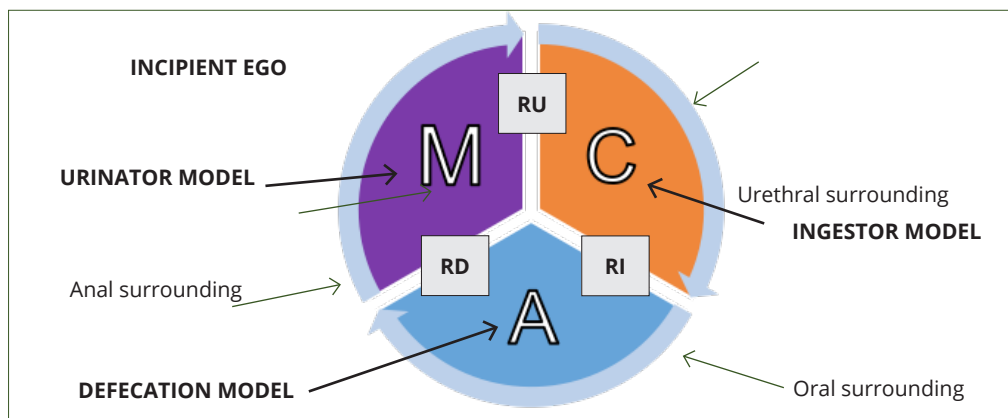


Figure 1. Nucleus of the ego: incipient ego—natural ego

With the structuring of the role of urinator (RU), an incipient ego emerges, which will initiate the synthesis of the nucleus of the ego, with the child already having the perception and experience of the oral, anal and urethral surroundings, as shown in Fig.1.

After the final synthesis of the nucleus of the ego, the child can perceive itself as separate from people, objects, and things around it, and differentiate between the registers related to the different areas of Mind-Body-Environment, and start to play psychodramatic roles, from 2 to 4 years old, until the process of synthesis of the nucleus of the ego is completed. According to Rojas-Bermúdez (1997), all these past experiences are inscribed as mnemonic marks in the CNS and remain throughout life as forms of natural communication, signaling the essential characteristics of this founding core in future events.

Birth, as a metaphor, represents the neurophysiological template for fundamental life changes and all new role initiation processes. The role of ingestor is a neurophysiological model of nutritional dependence and separation of bodily contents

from environmental ones. It is associated with the oral surrounding from the moment the child can form the first image of the human figure. I associate this complementarity between the role of ingestor—oral surrounding to the *Mother Imago*, which symbolizes dependency relationships and takes hold in the developmental period of the incipient ego.

The role of the defecator is the neurophysiological model of internal content deposition of autonomy, movement and exploration of the environment, creativity, and differentiation between the mental and the environmental. It begins to structure itself as the intestinal peristalsis emerges, which opposes resistance to the passage of semisolid feces. This role is associated with the anal surrounding and, in this way, *the incipient ego will constitute the paternal imago that symbolizes the relations of independence and propels into life.*

The role of the urinator is the neurophysiological model of internal content control, of the pleasurable and emotional, of mind-body differentiation, of bodily thoughts and sensations, which is associated with the urethral surrounding. In this way, *the incipient ego constitutes the fraternal imago as a symbol of egalitarian relations.*

INCIPIENT EGO STRUCTURE

The *incipient ego*, to which Rojas-Bermúdez (1978) attributes the function of carrying out the process of synthesis among the six elements of the nucleus of the ego, can be taken as a new psychological (or egoic) instance that will inaugurate the phase of primary narcissism and the pre-inversion of fantasy roles, played as psychodramatic roles. It is more specifically about experiencing the gap phase between fantasy and reality (Moreno, 1978). Moreover, make the transition from the identity matrix to the social matrix—the sixth stage of child development.

In this phase of egoic narcissism, all of the child's syncretic possessions will be registered, from things to objects and people. It is a period where the child experiences everything as MINE: my mother, my father, my brother, my toys etc.

In this stage of neuropsychological development, the influence of the neocortex (LH) on the child's daily activities grows, and the symbolic system begins to develop through memory, language, sense of laterality and temporality, which allows the child to maintain a permanent relationship with the environment and to start creating fantasy bonds with its syncretic possessions.

Under the increasing intervention of the neocortex, the production of mental images reaches the symbolic and brings the possibility of thinking and reflecting on acts, thoughts, events, and affections, fostering much learning. It is at this point that CNS bifurcates, as described above.

Through this permanent relationship with the environment, the child begins to create the first bonds. One can, then, imagine themselves as if they were a character and play roles with mom, the dog, the prince, or Cinderella as models. Then, it evolves psychologically in the sense of bearing the losses, replacing the limiting universe of "mine", and establishing more realistic relationships, starting from oneself.

Continuing the analysis of this process of the child's attachment to the family and social environment, more structured roles come into play that includes a counter role. To Rojas-Bermúdez (1997), these roles are *potential roles* that support learning social roles in the future by organizing the functional model of the personality.

With the passage to the second childhood universe, the play of complementary roles begins, establishing the links in triangulation. This triangulation process is permeated, according to Rojas-Bermúdez (1997), by the Oedipus complex. However, the author takes this sixth phase of the matrix as triangular relations that will differentiate situations in which the child remains an excluded third party and can only observe from the outside what happens or participate as a supporting actor, not acting as a supporting actor a protagonist. These are situations that develop the observing ego, essential for role inversion.

Moving a little further, the triangulation process initiates interpersonal relationships within and outside the family (circularization phase—seventh phase), by linking the child to the social network, with entry into school and other social groups (neighbors, colleagues, and friends). The child starts to make role reversals until it ultimately realizes its insertion in the social matrix by developing complementary relationships.

From listening to stories and fairy tales, children expand their conception of roles by making use of memory, play, and dramatization (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1970), using their creativity and intuition. For example, when listening to fairy tales, they ask for repetitions until they can practically memorize all the text.

Then, the linguistic comprehension will be absorbed from the prosody and will be broader and more expressive, according to the intonation of voice used by the adult. It is also interesting to note that some research in neolinguistics points out that adult women are also much more sensitive than men to prosodic intonations (Guimarães, 2010).

STRUCTURAL COUPLING

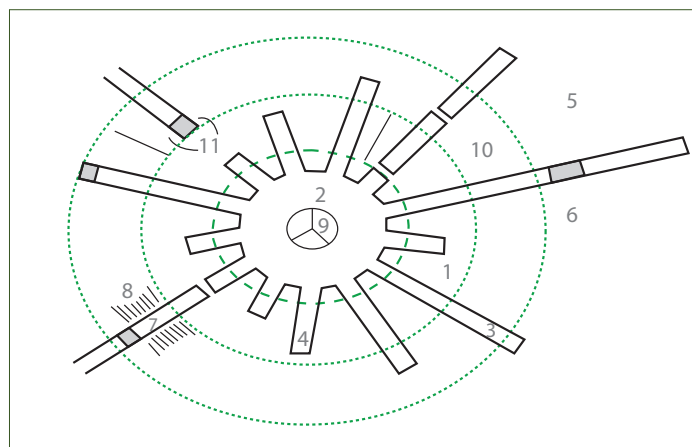
In Rojas-Bermúdez's (1997) theory, the functions of natural and social ego correspond to the brain functions of hemispheric specialization. In terms of hemispheric functions, it is essential to point out that, although neuroscientists have already agreed that the brain works in unison, the two cerebral hemispheres differ in global and specific functions in a parallel and integrative way.

The left hemisphere controls the right side of the body and vice versa. It commands verbal skills, maintaining the temporal and sequential sense of facts. It translates logical-analytical perceptions and representations, such as reading, writing, and calculating.

The right hemisphere controls nonverbal abilities and is guided by instinctive, emotional, visuospatial, simultaneous, intuitive, and analogical behavior. It expresses itself through images, dreams, sensations, and metaphors. Performs unitary understanding of complex sets, configurations, and structures, perceiving figures from various angles and perspectives. It focuses on the whole based on its parts and encompasses logical concepts abstractly. It is timeless and uses body language, lacking grammar, syntax, and semantics (Guimarães, 2010).

According to this scientific data, Rojas-Bermúdez (1997) formulated his *emergentist personality theory*, better known as the nucleus of the ego—functional model of the personality, through the thesis of structural coupling of brain subsystems, as follows:

- The natural subsystem is formed by the nucleus of the ego and the incipient ego, called the natural ego, and corresponds to the limbic system (RH). This includes the SMP, which corresponds to the functions of the neurovegetative system. Here, natural communication, proper to the human race, develops, rooted in the biological.
- The social subsystem is represented by the social ego, whose functions correspond to the LH; the social structure, linked on the one hand to the perceptual and motor sense system; and on the other hand to the functional model of the personality, referring more to the temporal, symbolic and associative functions of the neocortex.



Source: Rojas-Bermúdez 2012, p.91.

Figure 2. Structural coupling of the nucleus of the ego—roles scheme

According to Rojas-Bermúdez (1997), these two brain subsystems underlie the structuring of personality, rooted in what Maturana and Varela (2007) call the structural, biological, and cultural coupling, as shown in Fig. 2.

As shown in Fig. 2, all studies concerning role performance are graphically represented by Rojas-Bermúdez (2012). In addition to the nucleus of the ego, at the center (9), the author locates the psychological ego boundary (1); the social ego (2), consisting of well-developed roles (3); poorly developed, in the case of psychotic patients who required the use of the intermediate object (10); the encapsulation of the ego within the physiological ego boundary (4); the complementary role (5) that can be played freely when roles are well developed (6); and the complementary role, that can only be played through the intermediate object (10), given the impossibility of binding; the bond established through complementary roles (6); the pseudo role (7) that is only maintained through solid pressure from the social context (8, slots), because it is disconnected to the natural ego. The same disconnection to the natural ego happens in *the role—SMP* (11) relationships, resulting in fantasy relationships and without reciprocity, which we call psychodrama corridor relationships (Fonseca, 2018).

PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES OF THE NUCLEUS OF THE EGO

The Brazilian current of the nucleus of the ego, which is the most prestigious in Brazil (Dias, 1987), adopts only the psychosomatic roles as a model. However, the general classifications of the typologies corresponding to the neuroses are the same, the final result does not change as a structural formula (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1978) since it is the porosities in these roles determine the pathologies of the nucleus of the ego.

Only the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapeutic management in psychotic structures with chaotic and undifferentiated psychism is lost sight of. Due to the confusion between the three areas (two porous psychosomatic roles), only one can have as a psychosomatic model the role itself. Furthermore that, in this case, it isolates itself from the environment and does not exercise its natural psychological functions. This requires handling the intermediate object, whose function goes far beyond psychodramatic mediation.

For example, if the porosity occurred in the role of ingestor, establishing confusion between the areas Body-Environment (feeling-thinking), to get away from the confusion, the individual resorts to the healthy area Mind and adopts the urinator model; if it is in the role of defecator, one confuses the Environment-Mind (acting-thinking) areas, resorting to the ingestor model; and when porosity occurs in the role of urinator (confusing thinking and feeling), one adopts the environment area as reliable, acting with the defecator model.

These structural defenses remain as personality typologies but are not fixed and can be worked on in psychotherapy. Only in situations of crises and outbreaks will there always be a tendency to function according to these models established by the nucleus of the ego.

Be it a psychotic model from the specific functions of the psychosomatic roles or a neurotic model whose porosity in the psychosomatic role can be compensated by the psychological areas that support them and that generate different typologies or models of conduct according to the porosities established between the mind, body or environment areas.

In the urinator model, porosity settles into the role of ingestor, creating confusion between body-environment areas. If the reparatory mechanism belongs to the body area (feeling), the defenses can be schizoid, more related to gestation; hysterical, with difficulties in elaborating sensations, perceptions and feelings; or phobic, if the mechanisms are in the environmental area.

In the ingestor model, the porosity in the role of defecator and the confusion between the mind-environment (thinking and acting) areas. The structured defense is typically acting, psychopathic or sociopathic if the reparatory mechanism is placed in the ambient area. This depends on the cultural circumstances of maturation mediated by home education. One can act only by opposing resistance to prevailing social standards or assuming antisocial behavior. If the reparatory mechanism is in the mind area, depression is produced. In all cases, the body (feeling) area remains healthy, through which the individual will be guided and can obtain good results in psychotherapy.

In the defecator model, porosity occurs in the role of the urinator, creating confusion between mind-body areas (thinking and feeling). When the reparatory mechanisms are placed in the mind (thinking) area, obsessive disorders are produced if they are located in the body area, the compulsions.

According to the urinator, the graphic visualization of personality types, ingestor and defecator models (Rojas-Bermúdez 1978, 1997) can be visualized by placing the reparative mechanisms in the corresponding areas (Fig.1).

In case porosity occurs in two psychosomatic roles, psychoses occur, and the individual acts from the psychosomatic models. In schizophrenias, the porosities are in the roles of ingestor and urinator, with the role of defecator remaining intact. In bipolar disorders, there are porosities in the roles of defecator and urinator, and one acts out of the ingestor role.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION IN PSYCHODRAMATIC PRACTICE

All the image construction techniques are based on the theory of the nucleus of the ego—functional model of the personality (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1970). These techniques are performed with static images to focus the patient's attention, even when using people as ego-auxiliaries. More specifically, it is about accessing a mental image printed in a nonverbal form by the nucleus of the ego (limbic system, RH), which, through an external form, can be dramatized as a projective photo of the mental maps registered by the brain and internalized as an image.

Once the image is built, we move on to the soliloquies in each part of the image, accessing the symbolic system (LH) and thus obtaining the inter-hemispheric connection necessary to work verbally on all the hidden contents.

Therefore, the mental image transformation into a psychodramatic image reproduces exactly the sensations, perceptions, and ideas about a specific event, although the individual is not aware of all the details that involved his choices. The explanation is simply because the image built always corresponds to the mental maps:

The construction of these neural patterns or maps is based on the momentary selection of neurons and circuits mobilized by the interaction. In other words, the bricks of construction exist in the brain, they are available to be manipulated and assembled. The part of the pattern that remains in memory is built on the same principles (Damásio, 1999, p. 406, our translation).

For these images to be built spontaneously as a symbolic representation through a particular form, the patient is guided to follow his or her intuition and give a visual form to the theme brought. It can be anything from a word, phrase or feeling to a symptom, an interpersonal relationship or some unusual situation. Since these images are part of the patient's inner world, just not accessible to consciousness, they emerge without the patient being aware of the details placed in the image.

Through observing the constructed image from a distance, one perceives each detail and its related senses. Then, the soliloquies gradually clarify all the meanings of the dramatized form, producing new meanings.

That is why Rojas-Bermúdez (1997) says, paraphrasing Freud, that mental and psychodramatic images are the royal road of psychotherapeutic work:

When constructing an image, we are doing during waking hours, which occurs naturally during dreaming (oneiric images): the synthesis and awareness of a set of different ideas, experiences, sensations, emotions within a visual scheme. This technique favors objectifying parts of the individual's internal world; at the same time, it gives rise to the phenomenon of reference that triggers new reactions (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1997, p. 13, our translation).

The images constructed usually carry a metaphor. For example, in a session I conducted with the Imagodrama (Guimarães, 2020), a protagonist placed a figure of Iansã in the image, not realizing that the orisha's eyes are covered, making it impossible for her to see. Observing the image from a distance, he notices this detail and begins to remember so many moments when he used to act blindly that he concludes this is the reason why he always gets into complicated situations.

Relating this episode to the nucleus of the ego theory, I understand that the patient had developed a typology in the urinator model to escape from the internal confusion between the body-environment areas. In this case, psychotherapy with Imagodrama served as mediation to reduce the patient's tendency to act histrionic, caused by a certain "emotional blindness". I can also deduce that all the techniques we use in psychodrama function as psychodramatic mediation, although the resources used to retain their function as auxiliary objects to apply the technique.

I see that puppets in psychotherapy offer a mirror image that will give rise to free projections and symbolic identifications that concretize conflicts covered up by unconscious defenses. Despite not being produced with the director's interference, the construction of these images shows behaviors and emotions that serve to see situations in an unusual way.

The procedure of the image construction techniques, based on the nucleus of the ego (Rojas-Bermúdez, 1998), includes: (1) asking the patient to shape the image he or she has of a given situation; (2) construct the image to describe it in all its details; (3) name each element of the image and what it represents; (4) to perform the soliloquy of each represented element.

When it comes to interpersonal relationships, I call for role reversal. In the case of very abstract images, I ask the protagonist to imagine a story. If the patient cannot access some content that has already crystallized, I resort to the technique of the double. If the image freezes, I ask for the image to be split into before and after, or one of them. Finally, the possibilities of psychodramatic work, through the construction of images, are vast, ranging from individual and group clinics to face-to-face and online contexts.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data will be available upon request.

FUNDING

Not applicable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Not applicable.

REFERENCES

- Bustos, D. (2005). *O Psicodrama: Aplicações da técnica psicodramática*. Ágora
- Damáso, A. (1999). *O mistério da consciência*. Companhia das Letras.
- Fonseca, J. (2018). *Psicoterapia da relação: Essência e personalidade*. Ágora.
- Deutsch, G., & Springer, P. S. (1998). *Cérebro esquerdo, cérebro direito* (3ª ed.). Summus.
- Goldberg, E. (2002). *O cérebro executivo: Lobos freotais e mente civilizada*. Imago.
- Guimarães, L. A. (2010). Percurso da imagem para além das sombras: Um olhar sobre o eu. *Anais do 17º Congresso Brasileiro de Psicodrama e 1º Latino Americano de Processos Grupais*. Febrap.
- Guimarães, L. A. (2012). Percurso neural da imagem para além das sombras. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama*, 20(2),13-29. http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/sielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=50104-539320120002000042&Ing=pt&cnrm=isso&cting=pt
- Guimarães, L. A. (2020). Imagodrama: Uso de bonecos e objetos-auxiliares em psicodrama individual e on-line. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama*, 28(2), 106-117. <http://doi.org/10.15329/2318-0498.20039>
- Maturana R., & Varela, F. (2007). *A árvore do conhecimento: As bases biológicas da compreensão humana* (6ª ed.). Edusp.
- Moreno, J. L. (1978). *Psicodrama*. Cultrix.
- Spitz, R. A. (1965). *O primeiro ano de vida*. Martins Fontes.
- Rojas-Bermúdez, J. G. (1970). *Introdução ao Psicodrama*. Mestre Jou.
- Rojas-Bermúdez, J. G. (1978). *Núcleo do Eu*. Artes Gráficas.
- Rojas-Bermúdez, J. G. (1984). *Titeres y Sicodrama – Puppets and Psychodrama* (2ª ed.). Celcius.
- Rojas-Bermúdez, J. G. (1997). *Teoria y Técnicas Psicodramáticas*. Paidós.
- Rojas-Bermúdez, J. G. (2012). Origen y difusión del concepto de objeto intermediário. In J. G. Rojas-Bermúdez et al. (Org.), *Actualizaciones em Sicodrama – Imagem y Acción em la teoria y la práctica*. Spiralia Ensayo.