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## Medea's children and the Parental Alienation Syndrome

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**Abstract:** The Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) refers to a set of symptoms manifested by the child during and after the process of parents divorcing. The syndrome demonstrates the family suffering and the psychic blows suffered by the child when entangled in feelings of revenge, hatred and rejection. The child is disrespected and used as a tool to punish and cause pain in the alienated parent. As in Medea's myth, in which a mother kills her children, in parental alienation, the alienating parents suffocate and kill their children's ability to perceive, feel, and judge freely. The children become an extension of the alienator, prevented from thinking, discriminate and choose for themselves. By adopting Medea's tragedy and the Jungian theoretical framework, this paper analyzes the references to children in the myth and its relation with PAS and presents the consequences of parental alienation to the psychological development of the child.

**Keywords:** mythology, psychology, parental alienation, child.

### Introduction

The legendary stories about gods and their influence on human life are commonly called myths. It is said that these are stories that never happened, but that have always existed. Various cultures have developed myths, and among the various sources, the Greek and Roman mythology are considered part of the Western cultural heritage. These mythologies are considered to influence constantly various areas of knowledge, such as literature, painting, cinema, philosophy, astronomy, and psychology (Mattiuzzi, 2000).

The important relationship between mythology and psychology is described both in Freudian psychoanalysis and Jung's analytical psychology. In the exchange of letters between Freud and Jung, the first one says: "I'm beginning to suspect that the neurosis and the myth have a common essence." (Freud, 1908, as cited by McGuire, 1976). About a year later, Jung states to Freud his certainty that the myths talk of the nuclear complex of neurosis (Jung, 1909, as cited by McGuire, 1976). From the perspective of analytical psychology, the myths are a form of symbolic expression of unconscious universal dramas, and, therefore, reveal the nature of the psyche (Campbell, 1990). To Jung (1971/2000), the mythology is a projection of the collective unconscious, and you can understand it through mythology. Thus, the analysis of myths would serve for the understanding of the uniformity of the psyche and the human potential to think, feel, and act. The similarity between the myths of different peoples and cultures signals that they are expressions of archetypes, pre-existing patterns that influence the behaviors and human relationships (Bolen, 1990).

It can be said that the archetypes are presented in the form of myths, and these are the records of a long psychic collective development. Jung (1971/2000) assumes that the myths have originated in primary states of consciousness. He believes that the archetypal manifestations of individual myths occur today when the individual is in a condition of lowering consciousness. Psychologically, the archetypes are manifested in the individual more intensely, the more restricted and weak awareness is (Jung, 1971/2000).

In order to promote a better understanding of the psyche, this work has a general aim to discuss the implications of Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) for the physical development of the child, from the myth of Medea, within a Jungian understanding, especially in the scope of child psychotherapy. To do this, the myth of Medea is used as a representation of an archetype of the human condition, and PAS as an example of individual manifestation of such archetype in the present day. In this perspective, Jung understands the myth as a representation of the core complex that can be activated when a romantic relationship is disrupted in a conflicting manner. The specific objectives of this article are to examine references made to the children in the myth of Medea, told by Euripides (431 b.C./2007), relating these references and other relevant aspects of the myth to PAS and present the consequences of parental alienation to the physical development of the child, in a Jungian analytical psychology perspective. Throughout the text, the myth is presented briefly, and from it, an analysis of the psyche of the child victim of Medea complex is proposed. Currently, we see the manifestation of the Medea complex in PAS and, in this article, a Jungian understanding of PAS and the psychic development of the child are suggested. We hope that reading this material provides more reflected attitudes from the professionals and the

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family members that accompany the condition of separation of couples with children.

## The children of Medea

### *The summarized myth<sup>1</sup>*

On the tragedy by Euripides (431 b. C./2007), Medea is the daughter of King Eétes of Colchis, and in love with Jason, helps him conquer the Golden Fleece and the *status* that he wants. The condition presented to Jason so that he could occupy the throne to which he was entitled by inheritance, in Iolcus in Thessaly, was to conquer the Golden Fleece. Upon arriving in Colchis, where the Golden Fleece was kept, the King Eétes imposed Jason with four events to achieve ownership of that valuable object. These tasks, which are impossible to overcome, could only be carried out with the help of Medea and her spells. After the conquest of the Golden Fleece, Jason and Medea fled from Colchis, taking hostage her brother, whom they killed, butchered and released to the sea to delay King Eétes, who was chasing them. The couple returned to Iolcus and discovered that Pelias had killed Jason's father. For revenge, the couple used the spells of Medea and made the daughters of Pelias to kill him. So, Jason and Medea fled to Corinth, where Creon reigned. In Corinth they had two children: Pheres and Mermerus. The peace ended when King Creon wanted to marry his daughter with Jason. He took the bride and repudiated Medea. Creon kicked Medea from the city, for fearing her spells and her desire for revenge. However, before leaving the town, she took her revenge: she killed Creon and his daughter, set fire to the palace, and murdered her own children. After the tragedy at the palace, Jason went to Medea's home to look for his kids. Upon arrival, he found them dead by the hands of their own mother. Medea fled to Athens in a car pulled by winged serpents, a gift that was given to her by her grandfather, the god Helios, the Sun.

### *The children of Medea in Euripides text*

In Euripides' play, the children expressed themselves only in the moment before their death, running away from the mother and pleading for life: "Woe me! Oh, what shall I do? Where to run from mother? I don't know, dear brother, we're lost. By the gods, save us, we need it. The tip of the sword is already so close!" (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 47).

In this dialog with the Choir, Medea explains her intent to hurt her husband, using the children as tools of revenge: "Chorus: But will you dare killing your offspring, oh woman? Medea: Nothing will bite harder in the heart of my husband." (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 33).

After the filicide, in dialog with Jason, Medea justifies her killing behavior, rendering Jason guilty, and repeats the intention to make him suffer:

Jason: Oh children, that wicked mother has given you fortune! Medea: Oh children, how the parental madness lost you! Jason: It was not however my right hand that killed them. Medea: But your insolence and your new marriage. Jason: And because of the thalamus you decided to give them death? Medea: Do you think that's small calamity for a woman? Jason: If she's sensible; but for you it is all evil. Medea: They no longer exist. That is what shall stab you. Jason: They exist, alas, as geniuses of the revenge over your head. Medea: The gods know who initiated the calamities. Jason: They know without a doubt how your mind is execrated. Medea: You hate me. I also detest the bitterness of your voice. Jason: And I, of yours. (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 52).

At other times, the characters refer to the feelings that children evoke, to their naivety, vulnerability, and innocence. In Table 1 we present excerpts from the tragedy of Euripides in which important characters refer to children, the nurse, Medea and the chorus of Corinthian women. Excerpts with direct reference to the children were selected, although the drama that surrounds them is understood elsewhere in the play.

In the tragedy by Euripides the excerpts presented in Table 1 allow for the assessment of the following:

- a) Medea complains of having suffered in the task of parenting, but had a relationship of affection, care and ownership with the children. She demonstrated ambivalence about the desire to kill her children;
- b) The children knew little or nothing about the grievances of their parents; but many characters knew the conflict, the intention of Medea to kill her kids and revenge herself;
- c) The nurse tried to warn and advise their children to stay away from the mother, but neither she nor Jason, or anyone else tried to truly protect them,
- d) The lines indicate now to the altruistic filicide, in which Medea refers to a desire to protect their children from evils caused by others, then to the filicide for revenge in response to feelings of anger and revolt against Jason.

Notice that in the myth narrated by Euripides, a lot of emphasis is given to feelings from Medea and her great suffering, so that her psychology dominates the drama. When it was written, there was probably an interest from Euripides in putting in evidence and reporting to the society the humiliations to which the feminine was submitted. For example:

<sup>1</sup> To see the complete play: Euripides, (341 b.C./2007). Medea. São Paulo: Odysseus. Retrieved on June 25, 2014, at <<http://www.lendo.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/medeia.pdf>>

Table 1. Sons in the Euripides text\*

<i>Atores</i>	<i>Text</i>
Tutor	<p>Oh, children, my heart is so sore, I'm afraid you will come to some harm. (...) Mas eis que os filhos, acabadas as corridas, se aproximam, sem nada saber da desgraça da mãe; é que a mente juvenil não gosta de sofrer.</p> <p>Will Jason let his sons be so abused, even if he's fighting with their mother? Children, do you hear the way your father is treating you?</p> <p>You see, this is it. Dear children, your mother has stirred up her heart, she has stirred up her rage. Hurry up now and get yourselves inside the house – but don't get too close to her, don't let her see you: her ways are too wild, her nature is hateful, her mind is too willful. Go in. Hurry up!</p> <p>Their father's done wrong—why should you hate <i>them</i>?</p>
Medea	<p>O children, accursed, may you die—with your father! Your mother is hateful. Go to hell, the whole household!</p> <p>Once that's done, the next thing I must do chokes me with sorrow. I will kill the children – my children. No one on this earth can save them. I'll ruin Jason's household, then I'll leave this land, I'll flee the slaughter of the children I love so dearly. I will have the nerve for this unholy deed.</p> <p>Porque eu vou matar os meus filhos. Não há quem os possa livrar. E, depois de ter derrubado toda a casa de Jasão, saio do país, fugindo do assassinio dos meus filhos adorados, eu, que ousei a mais impia das ações.</p> <p>He'll never see them alive again, the children that I bore him. Nor will he ever father another child: his new bride, evil woman, she must die an evil death, extinguished by my drugs.</p> <p>Não era para isto que eu vos tinha criado, ó filhos, não foi para isto que eu sofri trabalhos e passei torturas, suportando as dores agudas de dar à luz.</p> <p>Your eyes no longer will look upon your mother. You'll move on to a different life.</p> <p>Oh god, your eyes, the way you look at me. Why do you smile, my children, your very last smile? Aah, what will I do? The heart goes out of me, women, when I look at my children's shining eyes. I couldn't do this.</p> <p>I'll take my children with me when I leave. Why should I, just to cause their father pain, feel twice the pain myself by harming them?</p> <p>By the avenging ones who live below in Hades, no, I will not leave my children at the mercy of my enemies' outrage.</p> <p>My friends, it is decided: as soon as possible I must kill my children and leave this land before I give my enemies a chance to slaughter them with a hand that's moved by hatred. They must die anyway, and since they must, I will kill them. I'm the one who bore them (...) Unhappy hand, act now. Take up the sword, just take it; approach the starting post of pain to last a lifetime; do not weaken, don't remember that you love your children dearly, that you gave them life.</p>
Chorus	<p>Do you hear the shouts, the shouts of her children? Poor woman: she's cursed, undone by her fortune. Shall I go inside? I ought to prevent this, the slaughter of children.</p> <p>Poor thing: after all you were rock, you were iron: to reap with your own hand the crop that you bore; to cut down your kin with a fate-dealing hand.</p>

\* Euripides. *Alcestis, Medea, Hippolytus* (Translated by Diane Arnson Svarlien). Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007.

As much as there are endowed with soul and reason, we, women, are the most wretched little creature. We first have to buy, by dint of wealth, a husband and a despot of our body - one evil hurts even more than the other. And that's the biggest risk, regardless if we take it as good or bad. Because the separation for the woman is inglorious, and she cannot repudiate the husband . . . They say: as we live in a risk-free life at home, and he is fighting with the spear. Unreasonable people! How I would prefer 1,000 times to be in the line of battle than being a mother even once! (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 13)

Despite the tragedy of Euripides exploring the psychology of female hurt and humiliated, the myth of Medea as manifested in life and in relationships of people has psychological implications not only for the woman and the man, but also for the children. In the manifestation of the archetype of Medea in the present day, beyond the obvious suffering of woman/mother or of man/father, the suffering of the children is present, which in turn is often overlooked and disregarded by both parents, as well as for the other actors involved. Thus, when considering the archetype represented by the myth of Medea and relating it to PAS, a look at the psychology of children who experience the suffering of a confrontational marital separation, the archetypal manifestation of Medea in the figure of the father or of the mother and the psychic attacks produced by alienating parents. The following is the definition of the PAS and its psychological effects on the child. Later, a Jungian understanding of this phenomenon is proposed.

## The Parental Alienation Syndrome – PAS

### *PAS Definition*

According to Duarte (2011), PAS designates a psychological condition caused by the abusive exercise of power over the child, when one of the parents prevents the coexistence of the child with the other parent. For Duarte, parental alienation is a form of mistreatment or abuse in which a parent handles the consciousness of the children with the aim of preventing, hindering, or destroying their linkages with the other parent. According to Dias (2006), one of the trigger that sets the alienating process is the difficulty of drafting the mourning after separation. This author believes that the demoralization of the former spouse arises from the desire for revenge that one feels when outraged by the end of a relationship.

The PAS is a complex condition, which manifests itself in children as a set of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. According to child psychiatrist Gardner (2002), the child who suffers from PAS systematically denigrates the alienated parent and refuses his/her presence, without being able to explain why. Generally, the person provides weak and fanciful explanations. In addition, she/he does

not show ambivalence towards the alienated parent and fully supports the alienator.

The child usually plays the alienator, staging and playing interactions that he/she witnessed between the parents as if they had occurred between her/himself and the alienated parent. When questioned, he/she claims that those are their own thoughts, and does not demonstrate guilt or remorse for the way he/she refers to the alienated parent (Gardner, 2002). The affirmation of the child that he/she is not imitating or obeying the orders of the alienator is named the independent thinker phenomenon by Gardner (2002). This phenomenon requires a lot of attention, since one can easily assume that the child is acting with conviction to demonstrate their own impression of the alienated parent.

From an emotional point of view, the child feels that there is no room for the development of their autonomy and identity. Children feel threatened and adopt a posture of survival, aborting their own feelings and thoughts. Gardner (1980) points to the suffering of children involved in the process of separation or divorce when he describes that some get very sad, struggling to feed and sleep, lose interest for studying and for games, and devote a lot of time thinking about their parents and family. This suffering is probably even greater for children subject to alienation, and the psychic effects can be so damaging to the point of affecting their physical development and their future life of relationships.

### *Psychological effects of PAS*

In parental alienation, bitterness and resentment from the end of the conjugal relationship falls on the children. Because of the impact on the development of the child's personality, his/her mental health and his/her future behavior, the issue of parental alienation deserves special attention from psychologists and other professionals who deal with children. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) and Jacobs (1988) developed works in which they named as Medea syndrome the condition of divorce in which parents use their kids as an extension of themselves, without understanding them as different people. They considered obvious similarities between this condition of divorce and the emotional and behavioral characteristics present in the myth of Medea.

The relationship between the divorce and the appearance of psychological disorders in children has been proposed in several works of psychiatry and psychology (Vallejo Orellana, Sanchez-Barranco Vallejo & Sanchez-Barranco Vallejo, 2004). Gardner (2002) reported that the children who are victims of parental alienation, being away from one of the parents due to the manipulation of the other, present more psychological disorders than those who live the divorce in an emotionally balanced environment. For Vallejo Orellana et al. (2004), one of the variables that interfere with the installation of more mental problems in children in the context of divorce are the alienating attitudes of the parents.

The handling of the child's bond with the parent, permeated by destructive feelings and thoughts, unbalances and harms the development of it and makes the elaboration of mourning from the separation and continuing healthy of life difficult (Jacobs, 1988). The serious consequences resulting from this form of violence harms the child's relationship with the world, and produces an excessive attachment or even exclusiveness to one of the parents (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

The necessary emotional stability for the healthy development of the child is threatened by the separation or divorce of the parents (Vallejo Orellana, et al, 2004), and even more so when there is parental alienation. According to Cuenca (2006), the psychological reality of the alienated child is very complex. He/she doesn't feel alienated and manipulated, and his/her attitude is to treat the parent as a hateful villain. Depending on the degree of alienation to which he/she is exposed, the child passes to act aggressively against the alienated parent, and thus contributes to the actual distancing from him/her.

Turkat (2005) states that the negative consequences of parental alienation on children can be serious. The child feels broken in half and forced to hide his/her suffering as a result of separation from a loved one. The first reactions of the child after divorce usually include fear of losing parental availability, sadness, and confusion (Vallejo Orellana, et al, 2004). Most children miss, discomfort and anger, feelings that generally stands for decades, targeted to both parents. In parental alienation situations, the child is not welcome and comfort in familiar surroundings, because parents, self-preoccupied for the pain and suffering of separation, are oblivious to the suffering of the child. The resulting angst intensifies the suffering and makes the child even more vulnerable. With that, she can spend acting way, having mood changes in school performance, feed and sleep (Turkat, 2005), to take over as their alienator's feelings, to resist contact with the alienated and reject their own feelings of confusion, fear and longing, as well as their need for protection and care (Vallejo Orellana et al., 2004).

For Salles, Paulo and de Matos (2012), parental alienation is the biggest cause of stress for the child and can cause psychosomatic and psychiatric illness. The child victim of alienation can still demonstrate a very intense level of anguish and fear of separating from the alienator parent, once your bond with one of the parents is impaired (Cuenca, 2006). This author also emphasizes that children alienated have low self-esteem and can send handlers and hidden behaviors to achieve recognition and affection.

Baker (2005), in a qualitative study, investigated the long-term effects of parental alienation on the lives of 38 people exposed to it during childhood. He found significant impact of parental alienation in the self-esteem of these adults. From interviews with them, Baker found that the rejection of a parent by the other was experienced by

the child as rejection of herself. The child understood that was the result of the Union of two parents and who carried themselves parts of both. Therefore, the natural conclusion was that alienator hated not only the other parent but also the part of the child who kept similarity with the hated. In this way, the children victims of parental alienation incorporated to his identity the feeling of less-valuable and that they were not loved by any of the parents, nor deserving of love. Hearing that one of the parents the rejected, became embedded in the reality of the child and confirmed his idea that was not worthy to be loved.

Ben-Ami and Baker (2012) found significant associations between exposure to parental alienation on children and higher rates of depressive disorder in adulthood, corroborating the view that there are significant consequences in the lives of adults who have experienced parental alienation as children. For Baker (2005), depression arises from the feeling of traumatic loss of both parents and the perception of not being loved by them. This author pointed out that substance abuse is common among adults who were victims of parental alienation in childhood. He suggests that substance abuse work as elusive for the feelings of pain, anger, guilt and resentment that arise when the person realizes that was manipulated by the alienator parent.

Another area that suffers negative impact of parental alienation is that of confidence in yourself and in others. Ben-Ami and Baker (2012) pointed out that, as adults, victims of parental alienation are little self-confident, have difficulties in taking independent decisions and have a higher chance of not being able to take care of themselves. For Baker (2005), lack of self-confidence derives from the sense of less value and high dependency ratio and exclusivity that is created between the alienator parent and the child. With respect to trust in others, Baker suggested that the child would be too scary to think that parents who she depends on mistakes of perception or judgment, so she believes they are right, and trust them. When the child hears the demoralization campaign carried out by alienator, not trusting the alienated. However, when he finds out she's been deceived by alienator parent, is very hard to trust anyone. According to Baker (2005), the thought that is at the root of the problem of child's confidence is that if parents, their first loves, not loved and betrayed, no one can love her, not be worthy of your trust.

Note, therefore, that the parental alienation interferes with the affective development of the child, in their behavior and feelings, and also in the construction of his personality. To understand the psyche, psychology suggests the analysis of the relationships with parents and among them as one of the fundamental tools. Thus, a Jungian understanding of the parents-children relations from the wealth of images present on the myth of Medea and their manifestation as PAS, can allow the expansion of knowledge about the psychic development and functioning.

## Jungian understanding of Medea and PAS

### *Analysis of the mythic context of PAS*

Jung (1981/1985) States that the goal of analytical psychology is to understand the way life is manifested in the human soul. For him, the Analytical Psychology offers new possibilities for expansion of knowledge about the processes that unfold in the unconscious (Jung, 1971/2000). The understanding of the processes of the human soul can be a tool for promoting a better adaptation to life (family, profession and society) and the requirements of the inner life.

In Jungian perspective, one can understand that the myth of Medea symbolizes the nuclear complex of neurosis that manifests itself in the PAS. The illustration of this neurotic condition through the myth of Medea leads to reflection on how feelings of love, hatred, rage and revenge, resulting from a separation, can dominate the psyche and lead to destructive behaviors. Considering the parental alienation as archetypal manifestation of the myth, both father, mother's personal staff may be owned by the Medea complex and therefore act under his influence in the relationship with the children. Both mother and father when dominated by personal archetypal force of Medea, act in a destructive manner in relation to children and the spouse disposed of.

According to Jung (1976/2000) consciousness evolved, restricted, fragile little, easily becomes a twisted mind and manipulative, Ivy and unscrupulous, like in archetype represented in the myth. "The primitive mentality didn't invent myths, but the experience" (Jung, 1976/2000, p. 148). The attitudes of Medea, when feeling betrayed and abandoned, are very much current in disposals and has led children to parental neurotic disorders early, with serious commitment in the development of their personalities.

According to Jung (1988), the condition of consciousness of the child and the development of his personality are influenced directly by the archetypal form of their parents, the archetypal couple, as well as the experiences with the father and the mother. For him, the archetypal designed on mother and father, in addition to the features and experiences with mother and father, personal causes them to have a mythological character and numinous (Jung, 1976/2000). "The mother-child relationship is, in any case, the deepest and most moving known" (Jung, 1971/2000, p. 154). Jung believes that the child lives in a State of unconscious identification with the mother and can live for many years in this State, slowing the evolution of his consciousness (Jung, 1971/2000). To Jung, the unconscious identification condition and the lack of psychic differentiation makes the construction of individuality impossible. For him, the child lives in mystical participation<sup>2</sup> with the

psyche of those who they live with, and their psyche is mixed to the environment in which they live. Thus, what happens in their environment is felt as their own. When differentiating between the parents and the child is prevented or interrupted, you can install psychological disorders in children. As for the father, in psychology, its function was greatly exploited, reflections on the question of the authority of law and order. Freud emphasized the importance of the relationship with the father in his analysis of the myth of Oedipus, for example. The analysis of the paternal function present in the myth of Medea is out the scope of this study.

Thus, in parental alienation, one can understand the personal alienator mother or personal alienator father as the archetype of Medea. Under these conditions, the personality that exists in child germ, cease their natural development and gives rise to a false personality, an imitation of the adult, unnatural and early. Conflicting marital separation and parental alienation unbalance the affectivity of the child (Dolto, 2003). The neurosis that manifests itself in the child victim of alienation is a children's psyche's attempt to ensure its survival in the face of the risk of being punished, rejected or abandoned by their alienator mother or father. His/her fake personality is an expression of the inner activity of the soul, which of course loves and hates both parents, once this manifestation is rejected in the family atmosphere of the alienator.

The dismantling of the archetypal pair that occurs on parental alienation leads to child having distorted impressions of reality and work with a dissociative psyche that defies alienator and demonizes the alienated one. Jung (1988) argued that the neurotic child development has definite causes in parents' disorders. In the myth, Medea is alienator when it keeps the children of living with the father, by means of death. According to Gardner (2002), in the vast majority of cases of parental alienation, the spouse alienator is the mother, while the father also practices acts of alienation. In an analysis of female feelings evoked from a separation, to Levy and Gomes (2011), the loss of the loved one is equivalent to the loss of parts of herself. To Jung (1971/2000), an emotional shock can produce the feeling of losing a piece of the psyche, regardless of genre who suffers. The sense of loss of a piece of his own psyche, or soul, it would be, for Jung, one of the origins of the so-called complex. In this sense, the resentment and hatred for the loss of the beloved object may lead the individual to the perversion of love and the desire to annihilate the other (Levy & Gomes, 2011). These authors consider that the rupture of a romantic relationship hurt the omnipotent child narcissism and causes to be loved and lover is more valuable than being a mother or father. Jung (1971/2000) States that the breaking of the marital relationship can generate a temporary modification and unaware of the personality, which in turn interferes with the will, disturbs the conscience and dominates the ego.

In Jungian understanding, when the marital separation occurs in a manner conflicting, can turn into a

2 Jung (1942) presents the concept of participation mystique to characterize the lack of differentiation psychic between subject and object, when the first establishes the second identity relationship. Jung (2007) stated that the first mystical participation happens in relation to the parents: for example, when the child identifies with his father and acting like him, and also the father designs your dreams, frustrations and desires in the son, in a process that receiving feedback.

complex individual with the mythological content of Medea, surrounded by content from personal experiences. The complex has its own energy and sets the reactions of the person for he dominated (Jung, 1971/2000). The complex can cause reactions disturbed, putting the person in a State of obsessive thoughts and compulsive actions (Jung, 1971/2000). The activated complex in separating conflicting situation involves a person in emotional blindness and she ignores the psychological damage it causes in children. According to Jung (1971/2000): "the freedom of the self ceases where the sphere of complexes starts" (p. 23). In that sense, he believes that the complex has a value that can overcome the conscious intentions.

In the text of Euripides, Medea in demonstrates how much ambivalence the urge to kill her children, for example: "-The spirit escaped me, women, since I saw the clear gaze of my children. No, I wouldn't be able." (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 41). Medea also demonstrates desire to protect the children: "it will never happen that I delivered my children to enemies to suffer their insolence. . . . - it is not going to happen that, getting idle, I abandon the children to be killed with more hostile hands." (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 46). But, possessed by the complex, she is not able to avoid the filicide. In parental alienation, the attitudes of the alienator parent strike against serious children like psychic attacks the dagger of Medea, even if her conscious intention is to protect them. In the myth, the kids expect to be protected by his mother, who ends up killing them. In parental alienation, the child has hope of being helped by the parents, in the face of sustained process of separation, however, is annihilated in their individuality, forced to become a false adult, an extension of the unconscious of the alienator, in an expression of the need to help not perceived consciously by one that is dominated by the complex. Each scream threat, name-calling and blackmail hurts the child's psyche. In this environment, the child has no defenses and get sick. When fold and denigrates the figure of the other parent, prevents or hinders the contact of children with him and instills in children feelings of anger and fear, the alienator denies the children the right to arbitration, the assessment of the feelings and thoughts and to autonomy. Thereby, denying recognition and respect for the identity of the child, turning it into a piece of a perverse game of personal revenge.

Both in myth and in cases of parental alienation, note the fact that the children are delivered and helpless against a powerful enemy that threatens constantly: the parent or mother, the one who granted life and who the child depends on to survive and develop. In the myth, the speech of the children: "- Oh, what shall I do? Nowhere to run from mom?" (Euripides, 431a. C./2007, p. 47) expresses the vulnerability of children in front of the archetypal power of the mother, which can simultaneously generate and take life. According to Dolto (2003), the child in the divorce situation feel threatened of losing the love of parents, especially when encouraged to say you don't like one of them. As the child has of course the need to continue to

love both parents, oppose this nature distorts your psychic balance and nullifies an important part of their psychological constitution. (Dolto, 2003). De Fruyt and De Clercq (2013) showed that personality disorders can originate in childhood due to some precipitating factors, for example, exposure to parental alienation.

The connection between the parents' attitude and the infant neurosis was presented by Jung (1988), when he said that the psychic difficulties of parents influence the health of the child by the mystical participation, i.e. primitive identity and her unconscious with her parents. In this sense, it can be said that, on conflict and divorce parental alienation, the child lives the parental conflicts and suffering as if the problems were her own. To Jung (1971/2000) just being an adult is able to disagree with and doubting himself. In this sense, when Gardner (2002) describes what he called the phenomenon of independent thinker, is evident the mystical participation between the child and the alienator parent. The psychic atmosphere of alienator, full of anger and grief, slowly penetrates into the soul of the child, as a poisonous vapor. The child goes on to repeat alienator's speech, as if it were their own. When the obstinacy of the alienated child when describing his feelings of rejection of the alienated parent, it is possible to assume that a large amount of psychic energy is needed to produce these feelings illusory (Jung, 1971/2000).

In the myth narrated by Euripides, in one try to truly protect children from danger of death that they run. Despite the talks like the nurse's: "- why enter the children in the father's fault?" (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007: p. 9). and the chorus: "- shall we go in? Save these children from the crime?" (Euripides, 431 b.C./2007, p. 47), nobody interfere with the relationship between Medea and her children. In parental alienation, also the professionals and family members involved in the divorce of the couple have difficulty identifying the situation of abuse and protect children from sale. A little careful observer tends to leave yourself over the manipulative strategies of alienator and obstinate behavior of the child. There seems to be a belief about the maternal competence consolidated social for the care of children, probably based on mythologizing of the mother, which makes the mother-child relationship impenetrable and inviolable. This belief makes it difficult especially the perceived destructive potential that the mother can represent for the child in cases of parental alienation.

It is common to the assignment to the children of the responsibility for the separation of the couple and they are induced to perform the task of destroying any new relationships of the former spouse. According to Von Franz (1985), is common in the family that a child, with an ego yet vulnerable, take on the role of doing evil that others would like to do. She succumbs to suggestions and dark aspects of the other. In parental alienation, the child acts anger, resentment and revenge of the alienator against the alienated parent. The alienator often acts with the intention to exercise control over the child and also on the former spouse. Being the child of a statement that was love and

what now is betrayal and abandonment, projects on child aggressive and vengeful feelings.

About the influence of the psyche of the parents about the child's personality development, Jung provided that:

Nothing is more powerful to make a child become a stranger to herself than the efforts made by the mother to embody and carry out the child, without taking into consideration once the son is not simply an extension of the mother, but really a new and individual (Jung, 1988, p. 133).

Note that this assertion of Jung meets than Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) and Jacobs (1988) described in his work on Medea syndrome, in which the alienator uses the child as an extension of himself, without recognizing it as different. The practice of alienation prevents the child from reaching the spontaneity of thought and the emancipation of his/her identity. The child see if inserted in a delusion, playing a role is designated and, according to Jung (1988): "the neurotic is always someone who becomes victim of illusion". (p. 117) the illusions, disguised of convictions and ideals, which are introduced in life during childhood grow along with the child and she will seek to perpetuate them (Jung, 1971/2000). The perpetuation of the alienated parent clearance and the belief that he was and is a great villain, symbol of all evil and suffering, it spreads to other relationships of the child, insofar as it develops. That way, she can pass to reject not only the alienated parent, but all and all who keep any similarities with him. The child, victim of illusion inculcated by the alienator, can grow with the conviction that you can't trust anyone, weddings are synonymous with pain and suffering and that engage affectively will always succeeded to rejection and abandonment.

The aggression and the psychological abuse that parental alienation represents the child leave indelible marks on your psyche and generate psychological sequelae that may contribute to the perpetuation of neurotic relationships, led by consolidated complexes and not remotely prepared. The myth of Medea can be seen as an expression of an archetype, which determines the characteristic course of behavior that stems from a contentious marital separation of a couple with children. The content shown in the myth are the result of operation psychic human ancestry, from

which all mythology (Jung, 1971/2000). This myth features the functioning of the psyche and, when translated into the language of the present, is manifested in many aspects of PAS. In this way, become aware of the archetypes, complexes, feelings, thoughts and behaviors that can occur in a situation of marital separation helps spouses and other adults acting consciously and thus reduce the psychic damage that parental alienation causes to children.

This work is not intended to explore deeply the emotional aspects of the parents who practice the alienation, but present evidence of the influence of the archetypal manifestation of Medea on the psyche of children and their development. If parents realize their unconscious content, their complexes and their destructive behaviors galaxies to the psyche of children and work to elaborate them, probably the child psyche would be better protected and preserved. However, when parents are dominated by complex, it is very difficult for the child psychotherapist convince them they need psychotherapy, monitoring the health of the child. Often, what happens is the search of the parents by the child Psychotherapy in order to conquer the psychotherapist as an ally to the alienation.

The shapes of the emotional issues of the father and the mother involved in a conflictual separation relate to the context of psychotherapy, to the extent that this modality of psychotherapy has as one of its objectives to help the couple becoming aware the unconscious contents and elaborate them in conjugality, or the context of the individual adult psychotherapy When she leads to awareness and integration of dark unconscious aspects designed in partner, for example.

Emphasizes that, in the context of this work, it is important to the understanding of psychic processes mainly occurring and act in the psyche of the child victim of parental alienation. The literature in the field of child Psychotherapy is still small and the ways to deal with the consequences of parental alienation on children are not yet well described. It is suggested that reflections on the subject, as well as investigations and surveys are conducted in order to develop efficient and effective strategies of protection and care with the psychic development of the child. The disclosure of impacts on child psyche of attitudes to parental alienation is an important step on the path to prevention of parental alienation.

## Os filhos de Medeia e a Síndrome da Alienação Parental

**Resumo:** A Síndrome da Alienação Parental (SAP) refere-se a um conjunto de sintomas manifestos pela criança durante e após o processo de separação dos seus pais. A SAP demonstra o sofrimento da família e os golpes psíquicos sofridos pela criança quando enredada nos sentimentos de vingança, ódio e rejeição. A criança é desrespeitada e usada como instrumento para punir e provocar dor no genitor alienado. Como no mito de Medeia, no qual a mãe mata seus filhos, na alienação parental, o alienador os sufoca e aniquila neles a capacidade de perceber, sentir e julgar livremente. A criança torna-se uma extensão do alienador, impedida de pensar, discriminar e escolher por si mesma. Ao adotar a tragédia de Medeia e o referencial teórico junguiano, este trabalho analisa as referências feitas às crianças no mito, relaciona-o à SAP e apresenta as consequências da alienação parental para o desenvolvimento psíquico da criança.

**Palavras-chave:** mitologia, psicologia, alienação parental, criança.

## Les enfants de Médée et le Syndrome d'Aliénation Parentale

**Résumé:** Le Syndrome d'Aliénation Parentale (SAP) fait référence à un ensemble de symptômes que l'enfant manifeste pendant et après le processus de séparation de ses parents. Le SAP montre la souffrance de la famille et les coups psychiques subis par l'enfant quand empêtré dans des sentiments de vengeance, de haine et de rejet. L'enfant est manqué de respect et utilisé comme un outil pour punir et causer de la douleur dans le parent aliéné. Comme dans le mythe de Médée, où une mère tue ses enfants, dans l'aliénation parentale, l'aliénant les étouffe et tue leur capacité à percevoir, sentir, et juger librement. L'enfant devient une extension du cédant, empêché de penser, de discriminer et de choisir pour lui-même. En adoptant la tragédie de Médée et le cadre théorique jungien, cet article analyse les références aux enfants dans le mythe, en le liant au SAP, et présente les conséquences de l'aliénation parentale pour le développement psychologique de l'enfant.

**Mots-clés:** mythologie, psychologie, aliénation parentale, enfant.

## Los hijos de Medea y el Síndrome de Alienación Parental

**Resumen:** El Síndrome de Alienación Parental (SAP) se refiere a un conjunto de síntomas que se manifiestan por el niño durante y después del proceso de separación de sus padres. El SAP demuestra el sufrimiento de la familia y los golpes psíquicos sufridos por el niño cuando se enredan en los sentimientos de venganza, odio y rechazo. Al niño se le faltó el respeto y se utiliza como una herramienta para castigar y causar dolor en el progenitor alienado. Como en el mito de Medea, en el que una madre mata a sus hijos, en la alienación parental, la alienante asfixia y los mata la capacidad de percibir, sentir y juzgar libremente. El niño se convierte en una extensión del enajenante, impedido pensar, discriminar y elegir por sí mismo. Con la adopción de la tragedia de Medea y el marco teórico de Jung, este trabajo analiza las referencias a los niños en el mito, se refiere a SAP y presenta las consecuencias de la alienación parental para el desarrollo psicológico del niño.

**Palabras clave:** mitología, psicología, alienación parental, niño.

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