

**The Internal Experience of the Oedipus Complex  
by the Blackleg Pictures Test**

Mariana da Rosa, Emília Fraga, Victor Moita

**Résumé**

Ceci est une étude comparative entre un groupe normatif et un groupe d'enfants présentant des problèmes de scolarité, menée après avoir procédé au recueil et au traitement des données effectués séparément et qui ont été obtenus chez un échantillon d'une population de garçons et de filles âgés entre huit et dix ans (Phase de latence).

Selon la contribution théorique de plusieurs auteurs, dans une perspective psychanalytique, nous pensons que l'enfant peut rater sa "phase de latence" en conséquence d'une relation problématique avec les parents et que ce fait aura des retombées négatives sur sa réussite scolaire.

Partant de ces bases théoriques nous avons essayé de démontrer qu'il existe des différences entre l'expression oedipienne comme fonction pour distinguer un enfant qui présente une réussite scolaire d'un autre qui révèle un échec scolaire.

Afin de vérifier cette hypothèse, nous avons étudié les résultats de l'application de soixante protocoles PNNDt 1 sur des filles (n= 30) et des garçons (n= 30).

Nous avons sélectionné les réponses aux images PN avec une thématique oedipienne, et les indices de Corman qui expriment cette problématique. Nous avons observé des différences significatives de l'expression oedipienne dans le groupe de garçons comme étant une fonction de succès scolaire.

Aucuns résultats similaires n'ont été observés dans le groupe des filles.

**Abstract**

This is a comparative study between a group of normative versus a problem scholarship group of child, carried out after separately collect and treat data obtained from a population of male child and another population of female child aged eight to ten (Latency Phase).

According with theoretical contributions of several authors, psychoanalytic in orientation, we consider that the child can fail their "latency phase" as a consequence of a problematic relationship with the parents and that will have negative consequences on school success.

Under that theoretical bases we tried to demonstrate that differences exist on oedipal expression as a function and distinguishing successful and non-successful school child.

To check the hypothesis we studied the results of application of 60 PN protocols to female child (n=30) and male child (n=30)

We selected the answers to PN cartoons with oedipal thematic, and Corman indices expressing that problematic.

We observed significant differences on oedipal expression on the male group as a function of school success.

And no similar results were observed on the female group.

## Introduction

On psychological terms, we consider that the primary prevention is relevant to achieve the mental health and to reduce the potential risks of disease in the future.

On that proposal our work considers the Latency, the period of human development where parents and teachers frequently claims for speciality people's help.

According with Celeste Malpique (1986) "...children, symptom of School and Society, never are heard on their complaints, because the consultation determinant is an adult problem: a problematic scholar progress.

The proposal of this work is to study the oedipal life expression of children in the scholar age, using for the projective test designed by Corman and named "Blackleg Test".

On that study we consider the partial results of two separated works involving 30 female and 30 male school child submitted to the test.

We tried to check and compare the expressed characteristics of a normative group and another group of child with scholar failure.

## Theoretical Ground

E Kestemberg (1962) postulates that the successful resolution of oedipal conflict is the key of Latency Phase, where the prevalence of lived facts - Oedipus Complex - will be changed for the known facts.

After Anzieu (1966), during the Oedipus Phase the child's interests focused on the parental role and on the particular nature of their relationship.

On that trine relationship the child, conflicts and try to take the place of the parental figure of the same sexual signal, feeling for it simultaneous admiration and affection.

On the other hand, child invests love on the parental figure of the opposed sex, and express aggressiveness when feeling the frustrations imposed by it.

This bivalent feelings about the same parental figure give the child a better chance to adapt to the familiar and social context.

Experiencing a frustrating experience arising from one of the parents, the child responds with aggressiveness taking support on the other's love.

After Corman (1981), that is helpful to distinguish between non-conflictuous and conflictuous oedipal living:

- The non-conflictuous situation arises when the child pulsive tendencies are moderate in intensity not prone to promote personality deficits in development.
- The conflictuous counterpart results of the child's experience of anxiety and guilty, as a consequence of the abnormal intensity of the oedipal feelings. The

Ego mobilises massive defence mechanisms that block all kind of pulsive movement and express a rigidity non adapted to the real exigencies.. The child's character can suffer great changes as a result.

E Kestemberg (1962) tells us that with the Oedipus resolution, the child will tend to preferably identify with the parent of the same sex, and that this will be a source of narcissist gratification and of a structuring idealistic Ego.

Celeste Malpique (1988) postulated that entering the Latency Phase is like some kind of a deadcalm between storms, at childhood represented by the Oedipus conflict and at puberty generated by the awakening of adult sexuality.

Paul Denis (1979) explains that the Latency Phase is a time of intensive mental structuring and of relational enrichment.

On that work we consider the age group 8 to 11 years, because that is the age group where child presents the greatest consolidation of Ego defences, deals better with environmental problems and achieves more gratification's from the real life.

The Latency Phase is a time where the child interests rotate from parents to the external word, promoting socialisation and further knowledge.

That progress can be disturbed by non-solved conflicts on the preceding phases. Thus the child fail their Latency Phase as a consequence of difficulties in the relation with parents, that relation having direct consequences over the school success.

The non-resolution of de Oedipus Complex parallels a general deficit of psychological maturity and that can be in the genesis of school difficulties not explained by intellectual and/or instrumental handicaps.

## Methodology

### Definition and Characterisation of Data

We collected data for that work on the school period 1989/1990, the population being male and female child, regularly frequenting the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Lisboa Official Basic Schools nos.

34, 35 and 151

The collected data were obtained from two groups of child, 30 male and 30 female ones, with ages between 8 and 11.

The child of the two different sexes were distributed by two distinctive groups of 15 according the criteria: GN1 child with school insuccess; GN2 school normative child.

We consider as school failure the occurrence of one or more ploughs on the child's school results.

Normativity is the case where no school failure was not observed.

We controlled the following variables:

- Socio-economical status (after the National Classification of Professions and Situation on Profession)
- Age group
- Scholarship level (2nd year of 1st phase and 3rd and 4th years of 2nd phase of schoolarity)
- Absence of intellectual or instrumental deficit

The child selection was done by the school teachers and made on the bases we suggested.

We apply the Blackleg Test individually to each member of each group of child. Taking the stories we select those suscited by the cartoons: KISS, NIGHT, MOTHER'S DREAM and FATHER'S DREAM. According with Corman those were directly remissives to the Oedipal child problems.

The analysis of selected stories was made recurring to an analysis framework that we constructed based on the Blackleg test fundamentals, its interpretation rules and Corman published indices.

Corman (1981) considers that the oedipal situation is experienced without guilt when the oedipal pictures are ACCEPTED (AC),

LOVED (AM), IDENTIFIED (ID) and NOT SCOTOMIZED (NSC).

And that, in case of oedipal conflict, the pictures will be NOT ACCEPTED (NAC), NOT LOVED (NAM), NOT IDENTIFIED (NID) and SCOTOMIZED (SC).

## Data Presentation

The obtained results, after the application of the analysis framework to the 60 protocols of the two samples, were treated statistically to know if there was significative differences.

## Treatment of Data and Significant Results

### Treatment of Data

Using the obtained data we develop our study under the general null hypothesis:

H1 - If there is experience of school insuccess, the child present different kinds of oedipal conflict expression.

### Variables

*Independent variable* - School failure (child with one or more ploughs on the school curriculum)

*Dependent variable* - Oedipal conflict expression considered if there is NAC, NAM, NID, ES in presence of the selected the Blackleg cartoons.

### Statistical Treatment

For treatment of the obtained results we use non-parametric statistical tests for independent samples.

We use the qui-square test and the Mann-Witney test, the two beeing adequate to treat nominal data, of independent groups, and samples of restricted dimension

The significant level established was  $\beta=0.05$

## Presentation of Significant Results

### INTRAGROUP RESULTS

#### G N 1 - SCHOOL FAILURE GROUP

|                | KISS     |          | NIGHT    |          | MOTHER's DREAM |          | FATHER's DREAM |          |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|
|                | M        | F        | M        | F        | M              | F        | M              | F        |
| AC/NAC         | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1  | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |
| AM/NAM         | Ac. H 1  | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 |
| ID/NID         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |
| NSC/SC         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |
| AC+AM+ID+NSC   | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |
| NAC+NAM+NID+SC | Rej. H 1 | (*)      | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |

#### G N 2 - SCHOOL NORMATIVE GROUP

|                | KISS     |          | NIGHT    |          | MOTHER's DREAM |          | FATHER's DREAM |          |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|
|                | M        | F        | M        | F        | M              | F        | M              | F        |
| AC/NAC         | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 |
| AM/NAM         | Ac. H 1  | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | (**)           | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |
| ID/NID         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1  | Ac. H 1  | Ac. H 1        | (**)     | (**)           | Ac. H 1  |
| NSC/SC         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | (**)     | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1        | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |
| AC+AM+ID+NSC   | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 |
| NAC+NAM+NID+SC | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1        | (*)      | Rej. H 1       | Ac. H 1  |

(\*) sem condições de aplicabilidade

(\*\*) próximo da significância estatística

## INTRAGROUP RESULTS

GN1/GN2

|                | KISS     |          | NIGHT    |          | MOTHER'S DREAM |          | FATHER'S DREAM |          | TOTAL    |          |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|
|                | M        | F        | M        | F        | M              | F        | M              | F        | M        | F        |
| AC/NAC         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 |
| AM/NAM         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 |
| ID/NID         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Ac H 1         | (**)     | Ac H 1         | Rej. H 1 | Ac. H 1  | Rej. H 1 |
| NSC/SC         | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 |
| AC+AM+ID+NSC   | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 |          |          |
| NAC+NAM+NID+SC | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 | Rej. H 1       | Rej. H 1 |          |          |

## GLOBAL RESULTS

GN1 (School Failure Group)

|                       | Acceptance |     | Preferences |     | Identifications |     | Scotomization |     |
|-----------------------|------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---------------|-----|
|                       | AC         | NAC | AM          | NAM | ID              | NID | SC            | NSC |
| <b>KISS</b>           | 13         | -2  | 13          | -2  | 8               | -7  | -4            | 11  |
| <b>NIGHT</b>          | 9          | -6  | 6           | -9  | 2               | -13 | -7            | 8   |
| <b>MOTHER'S DREAM</b> | 11         | -4  | 10          | -5  | 6               | -9  | -2            | 13  |
| <b>FATHER'S DREAM</b> | 12         | -3  | 10          | -5  | 2               | -13 | -2            | 13  |

AC - Accepted  
 AM - Loved  
 ID - Identified  
 SC - Scotomized

NAC - Not accepted  
 NAM - Not loved  
 NID - Not Identified  
 NSC - Not Scotomized

## Conclusions

Considering the general specific proposal of that work we have indicators to believe that the male child present different kinds of oedipal expression, when we compare the Blackleg test protocols obtained from normative child and those of the failure group

The difference is better expressed on the ID/NID criterium considered for the MOTHER'S DREAM and FATHER'S DREAM cartoons and further, on the oedipal pictures considered together. This criterium reports to the child's capacity to assume Blackleg's s role and to assume the oedipal tendencies generated on the cartoons presence. Here we appreciate the child relationship with the maternal and paternal pictorial expressions and so with the oedipal problematic

For the female child group we observed no significative differences on the oedipal expression when considered the two groups. We observed a result nearly ataining the statistical significance when using the ID/NID criterium for the MOTHER'S DREAM cartoon.

## Final Considerations

Some problems observed on that work result of the restricted dimension of the sample. The nature of sample have permitted no precise informations about the influence of socio-economical factors over the male group of child with school insuccess.

We think that further studies considering a great number of school child, wich will require time and significant economical and personel means, will be interesting to obtain a great precision of conclusions.

We also feel that it wil be interesting to retake this work to compare the identification process on a male group and a female group.

## References

- Aberastury, A. e outros, *Adolescência 5 Ed.*, 1988, Editora Artes Médicas
- Anzieu, D., *Les Relations Interpersonnelles Bulletin de Psychologie*, 250
- Anzieu, D., *Méthodes et Thécniques Projectives* in *Bulletin de Psychologie*, Paris 1966, Tomo 29, n. 249, Mar-PP. 1063-1073
- Ajuriaguerra, J., *Manual de Psiquiatria Infantil Masson*, 1983
- Bergeret, J., *La Personnalité Normale et Pathologique*, Dunot, Paris, 1974
- Bornestein, B., *On Lactency*, Psychoanalytic Study of Child, Vol.1, Inst. Univ. Press, (1951), New York
- Bornestein, B., *Masturbation in the Lactency Period*, Psychoanalytic study of the Child, Vol.VIII, (1953), Inst. Univ. Press.
- Corman, L., *Manuel - Le Test PN*, Vol. 1, 2 e 3, PUF, 1972
- Denis, P., *La Periode de Lactence et son Abord Thérapeutique*, in *Psychiatrie de l'Enfant*, V.XXII, PUF, 1979
- Freud, S., *Três Ensaio para uma Teoria da Sexualidade*, Edição Livros do Brasil, Lisboa, 1914
- Houzel, D., Mazet, Ph., *Psychiatrie de L'Enfant et de L'Adolescent 2a ed.*, Vol.1, Maloine, SA Editeur
- Laplanche, J., Pontalis, B., *Vocabulário de Psicanálise*, Moraes Editores, 1970
- Santos, J., *A Casa da Praia*, O Psicanalista na Escola, Livros Horizonte, 1988
- Kestemberg, E., *Notule sur la Crise de l'Adolescence, de la Deception à la Conquete*, *Revue Francaise de Psychanalyse*, 3 - Tome XLIV, 1980
- Kestemberg, E., *L'Identité et l'Identification Chez les les Adolescents*, *La Psychiatrie de l'Enfant*, Vol.V, Fasc.2, 1962
- Shapiro, T.e Perry, R., *Lactency Revisited*, in the *Psych. Study of the Child*, Vol .31, 1976
- Smirnoff, V., *La Psychanalise de L'Enfant*, PUF, 1966