


## The myth of origin in adoptive families

Rebeca Nonato Machado \*

Terezinha Féres-Carneiro 

Andrea Magalhães 

Renata Mello 

*Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Department of Psychology. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil*

**Abstract:** This study is part of an extensive research on the experience of adoptive parents with regard to parenting and filiation in the adolescence of their adopted children. This qualitative study was conducted based on semi-structured interviews with 10 subjects from the middle and upper classes of the population from the state of Rio de Janeiro, using the method content analysis. This study focuses on issues related to the myth of origin, to the narratives constructed about the origin of adoptive kinship ties, and to the reinterpretation of these subjects. The data acquired showed that questions concerning the myth of origin permeated the children's curiosity on the origin and development of sexuality. The parents' sensibility in recognizing their children's questions was a promoting factor for family emotional health. There is a need to elaborate double filiation, both by parents and adoptive children, which creates some particularities in sublimatory destinations.

**Keywords:** parenting, myth of origin, adoptive family, psychoanalysis.

### Introduction

Currently, the contemporary family has become grounded on affective bias. At the beginning of the twentieth century occurred the transition from hierarchical patriarchal logic to affective logic, supported by the formation of bonds through romantic love, allowing for affective reciprocity (Pereira & Arpini, 2012; Sulzer, 2014). We believe that this social transformation, among other factors, had an influence on the change in social imaginary on the respect and appreciation for the adoptive kinship ties. Consequently, today's take of this parenting modality differs from an earlier perspective, in which adoption was seen as a deviation from the normality of biological filiation (Schettini, Amazonas & Dias, 2006).

In the Brazilian Constitution, as per Law No. 12.010/2009, the family is defined as a community formed by any of the parents and their descendants. Cardoso and Baiocchi (2014) consider it important to emphasize that this law allows to legitimize the complexity of new family configurations, taking into account and valuing the bonds of affinity and affection that constitute them. Our legislation seeks, above all, to preserve and guarantee the rights of children and adolescents, offering them full protection (Bittencourt, 2013).

Legendre (1985) points out that, in the context of Western society, genealogy should be considered an institutional principle, taking into consideration the risk of introducing dogmatic practices that manage a truth producer discourse. This discourse is transplanted onto the

legal sphere, which starts administering family practices, establishing a three-dimensional link between biological, social and unconscious aspects, which enables one to live in society. Therefore, the family is an institution legally legitimized and monitored. With regard to adoption, this process of legitimizing affective bonds through justice allows adoptive filiation to protect family relationships by means of legal processes (Ladvocat, 2014).

In the context of adoption, we developed a broad study on parenting and adoptive filiation, with the general objective of investigating the experience of adoptive parents with regard to parenting and filiation during the adolescence of their children. In this study, we focus on issues related to the myth of origin, to the narratives constructed about the origin of adoptive kinship ties and the reinterpretation of these subjects.

### Myth of origin

When speaking of myth, one generally refers to a belief, a tradition, but not necessarily to objective occurrences. According to Moretto and Terzis (2010), myths are considered signs of help to the human being in the search for the truth about oneself, that is, myths are the search for self-decipherment. Green (2007) states that interest in the myth exists because it establishes an encounter with the depths of that which is old, updating the past into the present, thus showing that old issues are not dead. As one of its functions, the myth poetically addresses fears, dramas and terrors of humankind, enabling humans to be aware of them and their elaboration. Hence the use of myths for the

\* Corresponding address: recanm@gmail.com



understanding of psychological situations (Moretto & Terzis, 2010).

According to Abrão (2014), Freud (1913/2006, 1914/2006, 1924/2006) acknowledged the value of myths in order to understand the psyche since the beginning of his work, using them to think of the deeper truths of the subject, expressing fundamental aspects for the constitution of emotional functioning. In psychoanalysis, the original fantasies and myths have the character of solutions to enigmas. It is necessary to create, for each individual, a theory of their own history, and this origin is represented by the primary scene – the parents' coitus. Abrão (2014) understands that by adopting this construction on decipherment of oneself, inherent to every individual, is lived concretely, since the primary scene is displaced from the adoptive parent couple.

We refer to the Oedipus myth of the Greek tragedy by Sophocles, since it exemplifies the search for the truth of the subject's origin, that is, the search for the enigmas pertaining to oneself, to one's very existence. Ultimately, we can say that the myth of Oedipus leads to the realization that the subject is, inevitably, constituted by a lack: castration, which is transmitted from parent to child (Brunetto, 2008). Man feels helplessness in the face of his incompleteness, called castration by Freud, from which he never frees himself (Freud, 1909[1908]/2006; 1924/2006). Above all, Oedipus was curious and, therefore, a decipherer of enigmas. His name means swollen feet, as he keeps the mark of his origin in his body, since his father, king Laius, had him get his feet pierced before the attempt to kill him. Thus, his own name records his origin, marked by the desire of filicide. The mark of exclusion is eternalized in his body and symbolically in his name. The return to the origin resumes constantly, even after deviation attempts.

By investing in the reconstruction of one's own origin, the individual undertakes a trajectory that leads to foreign lands, and it is deceptive to believe that the individual, in confronting the truth, has found something liberating from the unrest before the enigma of existence. The decipherer, Oedipus, even as he sought the hidden truth, deformed by the plots of language and caught into a generational misunderstanding, did not find completeness. The incompleteness seems to be fulfilled in his blindness, because, despite having managed to see beyond the facts, he was deprived of his own vision.

From beginning to end, this Greek tragedy involves questions such as: "Who am I?" "I'm the child of whom?" "What's my place in the world?" "Am I a foreigner on what land?". Oedipus did not know the truth, and even when he acquired it, he could not recognize himself in it. If there is something that is always at half, both in the tragedy of Oedipus and in the life of the subject, it is the truth (Brunetto, 2008). We consider that the truth in question goes beyond the materiality of facts, arising precisely from the interweaving of facts and myths, from additions and distortions, thus dealing with a "historical

truth", as Freud (1939/2006) postulates in "Moses and Monotheism".

The anguish of finding the truth of one's existence is part of the condition of subjectivity. This anguish is related to the sexual curiosity of children, who develop the classic questioning about the origin of the babies (Freud, 1905b/2006). Not knowing is also part of this helplessness, because at the core of the child's curiosity in knowing the truth about the origin of babies lies the desire to guarantee their place in the parents' desire, since they fear losing it (Santos & Lajonquière, 2010).

The genuine experience of this curiosity results in the discovery that it is only possible to be born because someone has wanted it to occur. The realization of the alterity and autonomy of those from whom we are born and depend is laborious, but it allows the decline of omnipotence to occur, giving insight to the perception that one's own will does not determine the world (Dunker, 2006). Children produce questions that have as their source anxieties related to the origin of babies and their parents' place in this procreation. They seek the truth of the enigma of sexual difference. However, in a way, we can think that the task of wanting to understand the enigma is structural to the psyche, since it forces the individual to face the abyss, the mysterious and the impossibility (Farias & Barros, 2008).

We may consider that in the adopted child, the issues of helplessness, mystery, and the search for reassurance of parental desire are tied to the process of filiation. We think that the condition of adoption is imposed on the subject and highlights the enigma of the inherent origin of the human being. This information remains alive and visible at all times, as a metaphor for the marking of the holes on Oedipus feet. In the context of adoption, therefore, castration is clearly defined, and the possibilities of elaborating it will depend on each family and each individual. The story becomes incomplete, as the knowledge of each story necessarily involves a mystery: an aspect comparable to the "dream's navel" (Farias & Barros, 2008). Every time knowledge is acquired, the paradox of finding emptiness is created.

### **Origin of the adoptive bond: double filiation**

For adoptive children to constitute his identity, they need their adoptive family to legitimize their place in the generational chain and, for such, it is necessary to legitimize their own history (Peiter, 2011; Rotenberg, 2011; Silva, 2011; Souza & Casanova, 2011). One of the resources used to legitimize the story is through narratives about the origin and the encounter with the new family.

The narrative of the condition of adoption seems to have a double face, and can help both the children and the adoptive parents themselves in overcoming mourning, as well as in the elaboration of their emotional experience. As we have mentioned, the act

of speaking about this origin, of creating a knowledge about prehistory, is, paradoxically, coming into contact with the continuous not-knowing from history itself. The function of the act of talking about adoption is to structure kinship ties and adoptive filiation, in addition to joining all those involved together to the impossibility of full knowledge.

With respect to the vicissitudes of the adoptive child's origin, there is the indisputable fact that the adoptive child experiences a double fidelity. The child has a tie (though severed) to the mother of origin, as well as to the adoptive mother, a tie created by culture and affective bond (Abrão, 2014). Thus, adoptive children have recorded in themselves that the one who generated them is not nearby, and the place of those who confer them existence and belonging is occupied by the adoptive parents.

One of the major stumbling blocks of the adopted child's myth of origin is the mixture between fantasy and reality, since their history, with gaps in information, will further require the ability of adoptive parents to retell and listen to their children's fantasies. It is paramount that parents understand and make themselves available to their children's demands regarding their origins. In this way, Ladvoat (2014) notes that it is essential for the adoptive child to have access to their origins in order to reduce anxiety on the unawareness of biological ties, which may interfere with the integration to the adoptive family.

To reveal history does not therefore consist in a mere revelation of facts that give meaning and continuity to the child's life. It consists, in fact, in the possibility of psychic assimilation of what the child experienced as well as the constitution of who the child is. The facts and events which they experienced end up leaving memory marks, though outside of the linguistic register (Souza & Casanova, 2011). If the parents cannot come into contact with the possible suffering that the origin of the child causes them, the child will perceive that the subject is forbidden and that it is a source of anxiety. Consequently, he will stop asking, and may inhibit their original genuine tendency to seek knowledge (Rotenberg, 2011; Silva, 2011).

We found that the adoptive family context is fertile with ambivalent experiences regarding the origin of the child. Often, the erasure of biological filiation occurs in family narratives, characterizing itself as a resource to distance itself from possible threats to affective parenting. In this sense, Abrão (2014) affirms that the issue of the sense of belonging for the adoptive child is more complex, since it deals with a double belonging.

According to Winnicott (1983), these relational problems do not stem from adoption itself, but from unconsciousness fantasies. The idiosyncrasies of adoption are colored by the infantile fantasies of parents and children, as well as by their unconscious representations, instilled even before the advent of adoption.

## Primitive issues and their reprint in adolescence

The epicenter of the transformations in adolescence occurs at the intra-subjective level, but both old and new anxieties are triggered within the family context, provoking transitional phenomena in the unconscious functioning of the group. We believe that we must understand adolescence as a frontier phenomenon, which establishes itself in a "between": between the infant body and the adult body, between the past and the future, between the individual and the family group.

As they reach puberty, boys and girls relive primordial anxieties, as well as very primitive defenses to deal with these emotions (Winnicott, 1965/2011; Palhares, 2008). Among these anxieties, the one referring to the origin reappears, linked to the experience of sexuality. In this sense, Winnicott (1983) affirms that there is in adolescence a repetition of infantile life, in which repulsion is issued again to the non-self, so that later it is possible to connect to it. The adolescent, while living a regressive dependency, wants to establish a daring independence. That is, the adolescent wants freedom, but feels abandoned if the family succumbs to this desire (Outeiral, 2008). Thus, adolescents oscillate between being supported by their own legs and returning to dependence patterns, to the point of acting as babies (Palhares, 2008).

This dynamic is crucial for adopting, since the adolescent will turn against their adoptive parents in order to find the feeling of continuing to exist, willing to turn anxieties into a sense of filiative safety. According to Lévy-Soussan (2013; 2006), many adoptive adolescents identify themselves as the child abandoned by their evil or unkind mother. As if a certain temporal abolition proper to the unconscious, the adolescent sees himself as abandoned. The adolescent should do an important psychic job in order to understand that it is not he who has been abandoned, but a baby.

Considering all of this, the objective of this study is to understand issues related to the myth of origin in the adoptive family, seeking to analyze the narratives constructed on the origin of the adoptive kinship ties and the reinterpretation of these subjects during adolescence.

## Method

We used a qualitative research methodology. To reach the predefined goal, we conducted semi-structured interviews with ten independent subjects (belonging to different families, and thus having no kinship ties between them), more specifically two fathers and eight mothers. For the presentation of the results, the subjects were given the following names: the two parents (Father 1 and Father 2) and the eight mothers (Mother 1, Mother 2, Mother 3, Mother 4, Mother 5, Mother 6, Mother 7 and Mother 8). The adopted children of these subjects were adolescents, between the ages of 13 and 18, as defined by

Emmanuelli (2005). Chart 1 below shows the biographical data of each subject in more detail.

Regarding family configuration, only two mothers constituted single-parent heterosexual families when they adopted their children. Both had a biological child while married and, after separation, wished to adopt a child. The remaining participants belonged to heterosexual families with the following configurations: three continued married, two lived in common-law marriage, three were divorced, and one was a widower. As a criterion for determining and approximating the profile of the subjects, parents and mothers from middle and upper classes from the state of Rio de Janeiro that adopted their children up to 12 years of age and whose adoption was not a secret in the family were interviewed. For the analysis of the material obtained through interviews, the content analysis method was used (Bardin, 2010).

The data collected were subjected to the aforementioned method, using its thematic-categorical aspect, with the purpose of investigating the meanings attributed to the phenomena in their discursive material. By means of this technique are highlighted thematic categories, which are organized according to similarity between the

elements contained in the narratives. For such, skimming was conducted, grouping significant data, identifying and relating them, until all categories were defined.

Similar, recurring themes emerged, which were grouped into seven categories for analysis: “manifest and latent motivations”, “adoption information”, “myth of origin”, “identification and identity”, “support network”, “parenting in adolescence” and, finally, “the unfathomable”. In this study, we analyze the category referring to the myth of origin and its association with the experience of double belonging in the adoptive family. The literature used as reference is grounded on psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic family psychotherapy.

In all cases described, names have been replaced, as well as some biographical details and family history. It was necessary to make certain changes so that family identities remained preserved and, thus, the ethical commitment of preserving the identity of the interviewees was maintained. The project that originated this research was approved by the Ethics Committee. All participants signed the Informed Consent Form, allowing the use of the data in research and publication.

Chart 1. Participants' biographical data

	<i>Age</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Adopted child</i>	<i>Time of adoption</i>	<i>Biological child</i>
Father 1	63	Divorced	Son – 18 years old	Baby – 1 year	-
Father 2	61	Widowed	Daughter – 17 years old	Baby – 1 month	Daughter – 30 years old Son – 27 years old
Mother 1	58	Married	Son – 17 years old	Baby – 4 months	Three daughters between 36 and 27 years old
Mother 2	33	Common-law marriage	Daughter – 14 years old	Pre-teen – 12 years	-
Mother 3	51	Married	Son – 18 years old	Baby – 1 month	-
Mother 4	50	Divorced	Son – 14 years old	Child – 7 years	Son – 18 years old
Mother 5	65	Common-law marriage	Son – 17 years old	Baby between 1st and 3rd months	-
Mother 6	45	Married	1st Daughter – 15 years old 2nd Son – 19 years old 3rd Son – 17 years old 4° Son – 11 years old	1st Daughter – 4 years 2nd Son – 9 years old 3rd Son – 7 years old 4th Son – 1 year old	-
Mother 7	46	Divorced	Son – 13 years old	Baby – 9 months	Daughter – 25 years old
Mother 8	55	Divorced	Son – 15 years old	Baby a few days old	-

## Results and discussion

### *Where was I born?*

Based on the analysis of the interviews, we see very clearly that the myth of origin is poignant to the lives of these adoptive families. We formulate the idea that this occurs due to the unquestionable intercurrency that occurs in the formation of parenthood and filiation, in which two parental couples coexist give birth to the

child, one couple at the biological level and the other at the subjective level of existence.

*I was thrilled. Look, at the time I couldn't identify, but when my son arrived, the feeling I had was that of wanting to thank them, an immense gratefulness for the biological mother. I wanted to get in touch with that mother and thank her for her posture. Then this need passes! And one day I'll still meet her, I know he'll still want to, because curious as*

he is, he's going to search for her. And then I'll be ready for that. (Mother 8)

Then [the sister] was pregnant, with a huge belly, and the son [youngest one, adopted] occasionally placed his hand on my belly and said: "I was born in your belly too". I said, "No, my belly had a little defect, and we needed you to be born on a loaned belly. So you were born on a loan belly that was called X". And I remember that one day he made a drawing... he drew a half-open, kinda oval ball, and one other. One inside the other. And I said, "What is that?" And he said, "It's a belly and a baby". And I said, "Who is the baby?", "It's me" [responds the son]. And I said [excited tone]: "Ah! And the belly is me?" "Of course not, mom! Your belly was defective! That belly is X". I said, "Oh, okay". (Mother 6)

These data are in line with the claims by Abrão (2014), Brunetto (2008) and Ladvoat (2014), who consider the issue of origin and the sense of belonging more complex for the adoptive family due to the occurrence of double filiation. In the sections to be highlighted, the parents' ambivalence regarding the issue of double origin can clearly be seen. At the same time, as they reveal that they are very calm with the mourning present in the formation of kinship ties, they demonstrate that this manifest tranquility is not so sincere.

Mother 8 presents an ambivalent attitude between wanting and not wanting to know the biological mother of her son. Mother 6, even though she tells the truth to her son, denies reality when he shows his drawing pertaining to his origin, potentially being lead to think on her own desire to have been the "belly mom". The reports of these situations confirm the importance, as emphasized by Abrão (2014), in designing the myth of origin, as it will permeate several psychic constitution and identity processes of the adopted child.

Throughout the parents' speech, the question of origin is present in different moments of the child's life cycle, being related to several issues. We found the myth of origin as associated to genuine child-like curiosity on the origin of babies, as illustrated by the speeches below. Even after the mothers told the history regarding the adoption of their children numerous times, they witnessed child-like curiosity.

With 7 years he actually came to talk about it.... Then, he cried a lot. And my daughter went to talk to him: "That's silly, why are you crying! You are very loved, you are the son of mom and dad. It's the same thing. It's okay to be adopted". Then he replied, "Yes, but you were born from your mother's belly. I wanted to get out of Mom's belly".... My husband said to him like this: "Look, the girls didn't leave my belly either,

are they not my children? So you are too". That was one thing that helped a lot. (Mother 1)

Then, later, he asked, "Was it from here [belly] that I was born, mom?" I said, "No, my son, it wasn't from here that you were born". My sister-in-law said it was for my niece, so she got shocked only later. I would reply to him that no: "You were born..... from the belly of another woman, a young lady, but then mom got you. Don't you remember the story mom told you?" (Mother 5)

Additionally, we found the myth of origin as associated with the awakening of sexual life in adolescence, as the speech below illustrates.

And concerning the adoptee, last year he did like so... he came very quietly and said: "Mom, how do people get Aids?" Then I said, "Well, sex, injecting drugs, blood transfusions". Then he stood still, it wasn't enough to satisfy him. Then, I remembered that mothers can transmit it to the child too... Then I said, "Look, my son, don't worry, you took the test". Only then he was relieved. I noticed a bit of concern on him. I looked at him and said, "Hmmm, something is wrong". Then I remembered that he is adopted, because sometimes I forget that. (Mother 8)

Some parents have associated the adopted condition with certain behaviors, choices and conflicts in children. With regard to this, we think about how parents use the myth of origin to understand and give meaning to the idiosyncrasies of their children. It is possible to observe, in all the following selected excerpts, a particular way for each of the adopted children to elaborate their history and construct their myth of origin.

It was more or less like that, his mother lived... He himself had drink trauma. He could not see me with a pint of beer. "Mom, you're drinking!" You get it? Because the mother drank and left the children hungry. So he was terrified of drinking. So there's a whole story behind that, which is not for nothing. (Mother 4)

This is interesting [the friendships]! That she always seeks the minority group. She feels protective of those groups. Especially at her school, which has a lot of foreigners. Her group is Venezuelan, Paraguayan, Bolivian... Those are minorities, she's always with minorities, and she stands for them. (Father 2)

So he is very articulated, very mature. He helps people, he has this look of someone who helps

*the less favored.... Like my secretary, he has great affection for her, the people in the building, the janitors, the caretaker, he chats on an equal basis, good morning, good afternoon. (Mother 8)*

Perhaps the question is: are these factors also associated with origin in the case of non-adopted children? It is plausible, with respect to the children's curiosity and sexual discovery in the adolescents. However, with respect to the adoptees, we note that the condition of being a foreigner in their own history is latent and often unfathomable, as illustrated in the parents' narrative when mentioning the care of their children towards minorities and the socially disadvantaged. These data corroborate the postulates from Farias and Barros (2008), Brunetto (2008), and Green (2007), according to which the myth of origin makes of the past something that insinuates itself in the present, determining its course.

In children who were adopted while still babies, we observed that during the childhood phase of curiosity about origins, they explicitly asked their parents and talked frequently about adoption. However, this behavior differed for adolescents. Some of the interviewees pointed out that the children, who were previously open to talking about adoption, spent their adolescence explicitly expressing their desire not to deal with this issue.

*She asked when she was small. We told her that she was picked up at the hospital, that we do not know the reason. The people who chose her. Well, she was chosen by us. To provide this feeling. This is great. And I talk to her often about it, I do! But she [now in her teens] does not. The subject never goes forward [tone of strangeness, inquiring]. (Father 2)*

*He doesn't like to talk about adoption, he doesn't like me to talk about it. That is, to the extent that things are said naturally.... But he started not to want to. He didn't want to talk about it anymore, it was as if he had been bothered by it. (Mother 4)*

It is possible these adolescents have stopped talking naturally about adoption because there is some kind of emotional experience related to shame, to "being different" from the family and most members of their social group. This data proves the ideas of Winnicott (1965/2011) and Palhares (2008) about the tendency of the adolescent to seek an homogeneous state, which functions symbolically as a fusion.

The silence of adopted children during adolescence, as described by the interviewees, may indicate a certain difficulty in dealing with the aspect of being different with regard to their family group and perhaps among their friends, which threatens their propensity to an homogeneous state in order to differentiate themselves and at the same time, belong.

It is possible to observe that although the children have heard their history of origin early, they do not fail to go through the genuine phase of child-like sexual curiosity. We note that the issue of origin appears steadily for these families. We observed the sensitivity of certain parents to their children's conflict, legitimizing it and seeking to understand it in some way.

*He asked me, "Why didn't I get out of your belly?" Because, every time he heard that babies got out of bellies, he would ask. I told him that he didn't get out of mine because my belly was defective: "My belly was defective, so god gave me another way to bring you to me".... What was weird was that he would ask this from time to time when he was very small. Then he never went back to that subject. Not that he forgot, no. It's just that his parents are us and that's it! (Mother 3)*

We noticed that some parents were inclined to soften the pain of the adopted child, but what appears instead is a pain impossible to numb, although silenced with time. However, we note that for the strengthening of the parental-filial bond, the emotional availability of the parents prevails to listening to the emotional demands of the children. The elaboration of suffering in the family seems to strengthen the sense of family belonging and kinship ties.

### *What father am I?*

One topic that caught our attention, due to its recurrence and similarity in most interviews, was the search for psychological or neurological treatments, as well as diagnostic divergences. We identified that all respondents sought psychological treatment for their children, mentioning different reasons. Four interviewees mentioned that they had suffered from disagreements both in diagnosis and in treatment indications for their children. We wonder if this data could be related to a tendency of health professionals in conferring a pathological character to adoption. As we do not have sufficient resources to answer this question, we propose to understand this data based on Marinopoulos, Sellenet and Vallée (2003), regarding the "narcissistic hole" present in adoptive parents due to the lack of full knowledge of the child's origin.

We consider the hypothesis that parents, in their eagerness for solutions and understanding of symptoms, may unconsciously have the fantasy that health professionals will offer them answers to the lack of information that permeates their children's origins. It may be that in seeking answers in diagnoses and scientific evidence for situations that seem to be unexplained, they are asking "who is my child?", "why are they so?" or "what mother or father am I?".

To think in this way would be consistent with what we observed in the interviewees' discourses about the

ambiguity and ambivalence present in the constitution of adoptive parenting, raising doubts on what kind of father and mother they are. Were health professionals occupying the place of oracles in the fantasy of their parents, as with the myth of Oedipus? What role do health professionals play? What answers are unconsciously expected? These are some of our ponderations that deserve further thought in the future.

*. . . she went to therapy. She's already in third grade. We make mistakes when choosing. One diagnosed that she had dyslexia. Then, another one said she had ADD. Then this [the third] didn't diagnose anything. She has mild ADD. I took her to a serious neurologist. And she has to live with something minimal. She has some hyperactivity, . . . and gets a little lost when she has two or three tasks. (Father 2)*

*Since he's gone to the phonoaudiologist his whole life, he went to therapy due to these socialization problems, difficulties in learning. He has dyslexia. He has ADD. So we've always been around on all sides to understand all his problems. So he also sometimes asks, "So I do therapy and got to the phono because I'm adopted?". Sometimes he would associate things. (Mother 1)*

*When he was 5, 6 he became very depressed! It was very surprising because he was very mischievous and troublesome to deal with. He took controlled medication, at the time his pediatrician even referred him to another neurologist. . . . He gave a wrong diagnosis. . . . At the time, he did several exams and then changed a bit. Then he began to take the medicine. And, along with the doctor, he started with therapy, he had 5, 6 years. When the therapy ended, since I have my brother-in-law who is a doctor, I asked him to get another good doctor to examine my son. Then that doctor said, "I rip my diploma! This boy has nothing". (Mother 3)*

*He's not very academic, I don't think he's going to be a doctor. He has SLI. SLI is like dyslexia. He attends a phonoaudiologist. SLI is specific language impairment. It's from the dyslexia family, but worse! The problem is in reading, in phonemes and in interpretation, he has much difficulty interpreting. He is already well trained, he worked a lot, but he has much difficulty in interpreting, in exchanging phonemes from similar words. (Mother 7)*

We spoke above about the dual fidelity of adoptive children and their double origin (a biological one and an affective one that is constituent of the adoptive family).

We associate this idea with the symptoms mentioned by parents, such as the difficulty in performing the double task of interpreting and, at the same time, legitimizing double fidelity. We risk thinking that there is some relation between these symptoms and the double history lived by these families.

Not all of adoptive children's difficulties are related to the act of biological parent deprivation and the act of adoption. However, when the parents or children themselves make associations regarding what they are experiencing with their adoption situation, we see the premise that there is no negative for the unconscious. Therefore, we believe that it really is necessary to use a special lens for the symptoms of adopted children, so that we do not fall into the labeling of pathology nor into trivialization.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From a psychoanalytical perspective, every human being lives the Oedipal drama, the ineffable condition of primary object relations, and the foreign condition with regard to primary history itself. As we have pointed out, the development of sense of belonging in adoptive children is complex because they have to deal with a double belonging in their subjectivity, in their birth of "being" a subject.

In this way, we discuss how the presence of the myth of origin permeated the most diverse moments of human development, such as children's curiosity about the origin, the development of sexuality, and some other behaviors. One factor that proved to be very productive was the sensitivity of parents in recognizing the influence of double affiliation.

The elaboration of sense of belonging and origin concerns both children and parents. We note the particularities of sublimatory destinies to deal with the paradox of this dual affiliation, such as children who have been attentive to disadvantaged and minority groups, or have attached themselves to people with whom they have some resemblance. Sublimation can be understood as a secondary defense (McWilliams, 2011), serving as a fate that enables a creative possibility and the social acceptance of various conflicting individual forces. In other words, certain unconscious movements take special prominence in the life of the subject and, by way of sublimation, can be invested creatively in activities favorable to one's life (Freud, 1905a/2006; Freud, 1905b/2006; Freud, 1915/2006; McWilliams, 2011). However, although in sublimation there is a tendency from primitive tendencies towards creative expression, it is not a destiny that frees the subject from suffering, since its direction is not unrelated to impulsive sources (Mendes, 2011).

Another type of fate related to the issues of double membership that we verified was the creation of symptoms, leading parents to ask for reasons, whose

answers were expected, for the most part, from health professionals. The question remains: is it really about which reasons? It seems that this incessant search for health professionals is, in fact, a demand for the sanitation of the vicissitudes experienced by these children. Even if the intent is benign, what we consider to be complex is the extent to which this desire for sanitation is fraught with intolerance with regard to the existence of previous records, and may lead to a dissociation in the history of the adoptive child.

We emphasize that it is hard work for the adoptive parents to identify and give meaning to the demands of children that are related to the myth of origin. Due to the demand of fine listening from parents, the adoption can be characterized as a vulnerable relational way, since parents often have their ears obstructed by conflicting fantasies and narcissistic wounds. We hold the argument that the adoptive plot is not innocuous. To deny this aspect is unhelpful for the psychoemotional development of the adopted child.

### **O mito de origem em famílias adotivas**

**Resumo:** O presente estudo é parte de uma ampla investigação sobre a vivência de pais adotivos em relação à parentalidade e à filiação no período da adolescência de seus filhos adotivos. Realizamos uma pesquisa qualitativa, baseada em entrevistas semiestruturadas com 10 sujeitos, de classes média e alta da população do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, utilizando o método análise de conteúdo. Procuramos compreender, especificamente neste trabalho, questões referentes ao mito de origem, às narrativas construídas acerca da origem do vínculo de parentesco por adoção e às reatualizações dessas temáticas. Os dados obtidos mostraram que questões referentes ao mito permearam a curiosidade infantil sobre a origem e o desenvolvimento da sexualidade. A sensibilidade dos pais em reconhecer os questionamentos dos filhos apresentou-se como um fator promotor de saúde emocional familiar. Observamos a necessidade de elaboração da dupla filiação, tanto por pais quanto por filhos adotivos, a qual promove particularidades nos destinos sublimatórios.

**Palavras-chave:** parentalidade, mito de origem, família adotiva, psicanálise.

### **Le mythe d'origine dans les familles adoptives**

**Résumé:** Cette étude fait partie d'une large recherche plus sur l'expérience des parents adoptifs en matière de parentalité et de filiation dans la période de l'adolescence de leurs fils adoptés. Nous avons mené une étude sur le terrain, basée sur des entretiens semi-structurés avec 10 sujets de classes moyennes et supérieures de la population de l'État de Rio de Janeiro, et ces entretiens ont été analysés par la méthode d'analyse de contenu. Nous avons essayé d'analyser, en particulier dans ce travail, les questions relatives au mythe d'origine, les récits construits sur l'origine du lien familial par l'adoption et le réactualisations de ces thèmes. Les données obtenues ont montré que les questions liées au mythe a imprégné la curiosité des enfants sur l'origine et le développement de la sexualité. La sensibilité des parents à reconnaître les questions des enfants présentées comme un facteur de promotion de la santé émotionnelle de la famille. Nous avons remarqué la nécessité d'élaboration de la double filiation, aussi bien pour les parents que pour les enfants adoptés, ce qui engendre des particularités dans les destins sublimatoires.

**Mots-clés:** parentalité, mythe d'origine, famille adoptive, psychanalyse.

### **El mito de origen en familias adoptivas**

**Resumen:** El presente estudio es parte de una amplia investigación sobre la vivencia de padres adoptivos en relación a la parentalidad y a la filiación en el periodo de la adolescencia de sus hijos adoptivos. Realizamos una investigación cualitativa basada en entrevistas semiestructuradas con 10 sujetos, de clases media y alta de la población del Estado de Rio de Janeiro, y las entrevistas fueron analizadas mediante el método de análisis de contenido. Buscamos analizar específicamente en este trabajo las cuestiones referentes al mito de origen, a las narrativas construidas acerca del origen del vínculo de parentesco por adopción y también las reactualizaciones de estas temáticas. Los datos obtenidos mostraron que las preguntas relacionadas con el mito impregnaban la curiosidad de los niños sobre el origen y desarrollo de la sexualidad. La sensibilidad de los padres para reconocer las preguntas de los niños se presenta como un factor de promoción de la salud emocional de la familia. Observamos la necesidad de elaboración de la doble filiación, tanto por los hijos como por los padres, con desdoblamientos en los destinos sublimatorios.

**Palabras clave:** parentalidad, mito de origen, familia adoptiva, psicoanálisis.



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Received: 07/14/2016

Approved: 05/16/2017