

# Dangerous TA “Transactional Analysis” Mind Games that Impact on Corporate Life

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It is considered to be a personality disorder when the degree of disturbance affects an individual’s socio-professional or work life, but Millon himself talks of “normal types” within the correlated disorders. This “normality” implies a trend, but one that, in principle, does not cause serious problems in work life. This does not mean that it does not affect the professional life of others, and it is this issue that we shall be focusing on in this article, in which we shall look at some examples from our clinical research into Transactional Graphoanalysis, in which the “Little Professor” role is used to play “mind games” (always harmful ones) that the reader can transfer to his or her own psychological or behavioural experiences in the context of organisations, or what used to be called Industrial Psychology.

Each of the nine externalisations of the Ego-States described in our work (“Parent”, “Critical Parent”, “Nurturing Parent”, “Adult”, “Little Professor”, “Adapted Child”, “Rebellious Adapted Child”, “Submissive Adapted Child” and “Free Child”), just like their correlations in the Enneagram or the “normal” types in Millon’s disorder tendencies are unlikely to be pure. Even DSM experts always take into account the character combinations and ratios in the patient’s combination of personality disorders.

Each of the character types can easily develop aspects of the “Little Professor” in order to achieve their unconscious or guiding goals set out in the “Script” or “Mini Scripts” of their behaviour, hence the term “mind games”.

To play these mind games, one has to use the “LP” role. “LP”, as a character, manipulates or evades in order to defend their own little “ego”. We must also remember that their life position is one of “I am OK when I am not OK but I look for a way of being OK”. For this they build their own little computer like the “Adult” but working for an “ego” that feels bad or inferior.

## **“Now I’ve Got You, You Son Of A B...”:**

In “Parent” mode, the “Critical Parent” (CP) can play at “now I’ve got you, you son of a b...” CP’s need to “punish” (in his negative facet) or to “make the other feel bad” in his life position or attitude, which, deep down, translates as “I am OK when I am OK and you are not OK” (“when I am in a position of superiority”), can

become unhealthy to the point that he forces the other to feel bad even if he does not want to, provoking his weaknesses and manipulating him so he gives in to temptation. The CP that plays this kind of game may be a boss that makes things so difficult for his subordinate that he makes the latter deliberately break a rule while he is watching and it is then that he comes out with "now I've got you, you son of a b..."

Other much more subtle CPs are able to give the subordinate employee some apparent freedom. We know of a case in which, following sustained psychological abuse of an employee and having told him that he would soon be sacked for incompetence, his boss made him stay longer than everyone else for a whole week to lock up the office, while using a hidden camera set up in the office to record any rummaging in drawers, copying of files, photocopying of documents, etc., so that when the employee least expected it, he could get sadistic enjoyment out of calling him into his office and condemning him to "now I've got you, you son of a b...". The CP's handwriting is characterised by the imperiousness of the lines, especially the vertical ones (top-down pressure), by stiffness and angular lines, etc., but the dose of "Little Professor" he needs to manipulate or come up with solutions to achieve his purpose or need to punish the other makes him also incorporate curls, loops, curved returns and other artificial forms that disguise his true tyrannical intentions.

#### **"Absence":**

Among the different versions of "Adapted Child", the most typical games are not exactly played with the pure type or basic "AC", who may indeed play hide-and-seek or "absence" or "camouflage" as though he did not exist (any contact with others causes him anxiety).

In organisations, the AC uses this kind of mind game to get people to leave him in peace and not bother him, for example, by claiming to have a lot of work on, that he has to do something that requires a lot of concentration and that he will be fully absorbed by it, as a justification for not getting in contact, etc. Another way of applying this game is to find a way of not coinciding with others at moments of leisure or "social moments", including arriving and leaving, sharing a lift, going for a coffee, social get-togethers, etc., that he can avoid.

#### **"Wooden Leg":**

The SAC (Submissive Adapted Child) has taken his feeling of inadequacy to a level at which he can abandon himself and easily play the "wooden leg" game (in which he presents himself as an invalid in order to get a "Nurturing Parent" to adopt him or get others who are stronger, more powerful, healthier or simply luckier to solve things for him).

This is the favourite game of the indolent, those who do not have much pride or willpower and, in extreme cases, do not care much about being insulted if, in return, they get the benefits of having their work done for them or resources given to them. Some employees who see themselves as inferior often play the "wooden leg" game in an attempt to earn pity because of their misfortune or lack of resources, their bad luck, personal circumstances, etc., and in many cases they get other colleagues and even their bosses to help them or do their work for them.

## “Let's You and Him Fight”:

This is one of the most destructive games there is, as it tends to be “violent” and it is one that Freud himself, the founder of psychoanalysis, classed as a form of sadism or sexual pleasure with TA nuances, as a product of the RAC (Rebellious Adapted Child). To this we would add that there is a combination of “Critical Parent” (Millon’s Compensatory Narcissist) in which they resort to the “little professor” to deceive players, making them play without them realising that they are entering the ring, so that the organiser then enjoys throwing a stone at them from the barrier and seeing how the cocks fight each other to the death. They are thereby reaffirming their need to water down others’ expectations by proving that “everyone is stupid” or, in other words, “everyone is not OK” and “so you cannot be better than me even if I’m not OK, because you’re no better, and maybe you’re even worse”.



A.G. had some serious issues with alcohol, medication addiction, reports of sexual harassment by one of the teachers that worked with him in the association, etc. However, he had a disproportionate need for status that was more powerful than all of that and it was this factor (as a TA psychological mini script) that became the real driver of his “compensatory narcissism” to the point where all the pity that he apparently garnered, because of his

stutter or incomprehensible speech, his melancholic tone of voice and apparent inoffensiveness, earned him the trust of people who feel sorry for the weak. This was particularly true of his group of loyal elderly ladies who were always willing to protect “child” victims — even when these were over sixty years old (he had been brought up by his grandmother). Through this he found a perfect path as the “Little Professor” to reach the highest level in social transactions. Of course, to this end he had to spend most of the day on the phone or sending messages hither and thither, achieving a degree of affinity-intimacy with individuals, to then secretly twist them around and twist each other around so that all the victims noticed was that people who used to talk to them had now distanced themselves and they did not know why, while he was still everyone’s friend and benefited from all these relationships. One of the strategies we observed, for example, was that of making sure the group of workers received an erroneous news item about a colleague who overshadowed him, and then hiding the corrections that were subsequently published in which the newspaper admitted it was an error on its part.



This type of personality usually has dependents (people of weaker character, with Millon’s dependency disorder) who do a lot of their dirty work for them. However, it is also typical of dependents to “put their foot in it” precisely because of their naivety. They are so credulous of their narcissist that they are capable of being insulting or aggressive for their narcissist’s sake and of course in the end they are the ones who then look bad and receive the most direct and harsh reports and punishments. The compensatory narcissist, with their great astuteness, generally

comes out safe and sound and can always sacrifice their dependent by blaming everything on them (claiming that they were mistaken because they misunderstood the message, that they drew the wrong conclusions about the ambiguous message, and so on). Their handwriting may look like a mix of the apathetic and the CP. It may be stiff, drawn, not at all spontaneous, without any basic rhythm, without contrasts in the mobility of the rhythm and it may also have plenty of gestures with an upward diagonal pressure, as well as unconnected elements, "ambiguous and evasive letter formation" etc. The graphologist must always remember, however, that if he analyses the handwriting of another graphologist, the parameters can change and he must differentiate between what is unconsciously assimilated (as what would happen with a Rorschach analyst) and what is a real reflection of the true personality in this particular form of analysis, which may well come out in traits that are not the most obvious, formal or external.



R.A., a woman who lived practically in the middle of the jungle and needed to offload her frustration and aggression, was clearly intelligent enough to analyse and deduce, but her emotions took a different, unhealthy, direction to the point where she specialised in causing a public war between two large organisations, which for her was nothing more than a chance to let off steam. She "throws the stone" with a criticism typical of someone who is in a legitimate position to question the attitude of one of the organisations, following the appearance of a news item condemning the protected organisation, but in fact she does not really care about this organisation. What she is interested in is forcing the supposed critics to take their place in the arena with the other hidden organisation that has done unmentionable business with the protected organisation to secretly profit from benefits drawn from the protecting organisation. The woman has this insider information, so for her it is a unique opportunity to put on a good show, because at this circus, the tickets are priceless. Thus, she once again proves to herself that "everyone is stupid" and that way, she will not feel so small and so bad in that jungle in which due to unfortunate circumstances her true destiny has abandoned her. Her handwriting is all show: formal, not spontaneous, carefully drawn, with irregular combinations of pressure.



Another version, similar to the previous one, can be found in a case of megalomania (excessive CP with FC) in a woman, Y.X., who despite her mediocre drive and average level of qualifications, carries a degree of narcissistic self-satisfaction. This has grown after giving lectures in so-called international associations and because she is a member of these associations which are "pyramidal" and which only accept people working for the top level (she translates articles in their newsletters and has made friends with their enemies in order to spy on them and report back to the management, etc). Because of her excessive CP, this player could move directly into insults, but her "Little Professor" advises her to manipulate the environment so that her own aggression does not play against her. For this she

uses a sub-speciality which is that of labelling anyone who crosses her path as "prejudiced". She belongs to a specific ethnic group that, for historical reasons, increases her credibility when she adopts the position of social victim, so she only needs to indicate that such and such a person is prejudiced and does not accept or like her ethnic group and she will achieve the effect of planting doubt and "damaging" the person's reputation and honour, however scientific and professional they may be. The person is now marked. What we see here is talented people finding it impossible to develop or gain social recognition because they have been cut off from the scientific community because of unfair and untrue labels they have been given. This is a variant of the "Let's You and Him Fight" game because she "throws the stone" as a "victim" and the others become the "hangmen" of the true victim, whose only crime was to overshadow the arriviste or social climber (in Millon's compensatory narcissist mode) who wants to be the only one on the international scene. Her handwriting shows a combination of angular traits that are steady on the vertical lines, with pressure typical of the CP, together with unconnected elements and final filiforms common to the "Little Professor" and lower opener ovals (underneath), in combination with the RAC and perversity.



I.Q., a boy "from a good family", as they used to say, (because he wanted for nothing), was very bright and highly qualified, so much so that he became arrogant and his hobby was signing up for things to punish people, not specific individuals, but indiscriminately. In fact, he was the typical "sniper", although his "Little Professor" disguised this and he even sometimes took the role of someone's defender, the poor person! They may have thought that I.Q. really valued them but what they did not know was that he was a psychopath

who had used him or her as a bait to attract others onto the scene and then shoot them. Clearly, it was not like an animal hunting for food, but a sadist's indiscriminate hunting and attempts to spread panic. And he succeeded: many no longer wanted to take part when they saw the results of his macabre actions. Eric Berne would liken it to the Nazis, as a regression through which all the ties and social taboos assimilated from previous cultures into the Parental System take one to the worst possible "Free" or "Natural Child" in his most primitive version of cannibalism and joy at the sexual humiliation of the losing side. The strongest peculiarity of his handwriting is the displaced pressure or lines dominated by the upward diagonal.



J.M., a young teacher, took an opportunity provided by a presentation given by a distribution list leader who was talking about his words having been twisted in an interview. The teacher, with Millon's Negativist "Boss's Son" syndrome, cast a stone, in the form of a statement supporting the media. He managed to create a veritable war zone in the lists, from which he had made a clean escape to then enjoy watching how they tore each other apart. Now and again, if he saw that the uproar he hoped for was not happening, he stoked the fire by sending a provoking message to a potential player who did not want to get involved. For

him, it is a way of offloading all his frustration for never having bettered his father,

so he transfers this image of the successful parent that quashed him and that he would like to annihilate onto others, and of course he rationalises this transfer with intelligent arguments. His handwriting is in capital letters, tight, with strong upward diagonal lines.

### Games with a “Boomerang” Effect

By way of a second part and as an extension of the games described in Transactional Analysis, we have selected a few recent examples in which the manipulation of the child system in “Little Professor” mode working for the “Rebellious Adapted Child” or in combination with the “Critical Parent” and even the “Free Child”, ends in the analysis of the “ha ha ha” laughter that Eric Berne attributes to: *“I’ve pulled a fast one on Joey... I’m going to get it now...”* which plays against the person who designed the whole manipulative strategy to unfairly hurt another.

#### Case Studies:



They write pejorative things to ridicule someone who has written on the other side. For example, a person with a pretentious turn of phrase who wrote “I have lost my honour, but I care not”: the people in his little circle knew that he was taking a shot at someone whose success he resents. Like any good chameleon with all its appearance-changing skills, it will try by every means possible to cut away at this person’s fame, but the funny thing is that because most people do not know anything about

this situation, all they see is that they identify themselves with “I have lost my honour”, and all their damage-causing potential comes back to hurt them.

There are hundreds of examples like this one on Facebook. The case of an elderly abuser who pretended to be a war veteran is still relatively recent. He also happens to be a loyal dependent of a sympathiser of the Manson clan. Together, they hired the profile of an asiatic woman who was promised a good financial deal in exchange for letting them write on her wall as though they were her. This was discovered straight away by the forensic sociolinguist, as the brusque expressions used by the black man could never have been produced by the naive Indian woman. Besides this, when there were earthquakes in India, the old man was completely uninformed and wrote trivial messages. One day, he decides to post a highly sexist joke that is completely degrading to women, about a man who treats his wife as though he was a pimp. Actually, what the black man and his owner or mistress (the Manson sympathiser) wanted was to teach a lesson to someone they did not like because they were not able to put her under their thumb. But because people see that it is not the Indian woman but the man and his boss, they are the ones that come out looking ridiculous. However, it is not a good outcome for the



woman, because to those who do not know the whole story, she ends up looking like a deprived woman who herself furthers sexism, especially when the guilty couple continued making jokes about sex and pigs, etc. We hope that this lady and her family have not been marginalised or suffered reprisals because of their apparent jokes which are more indicative of sexual obsession than of a normal person, and much less of a woman, because India does not have the freedoms to which we are accustomed in the West

and they can condemn and punish these behaviours from a woman very severely (it should be remembered that in India a woman is worth nothing and owes her husband absolute obedience).



This story leads us onto the case of a graduate graphologist from the Argentine (a private organisation, although it purports to be a professional association) who believed that the advertising put out by the Director of an organisation regarding an event should be punished for including the photo of a person who was invited only out of duty but was not liked. The graphologist, on behalf of the "professional association" decided to punish the advertiser (who drew no benefit from doing so) and referred to the joke by

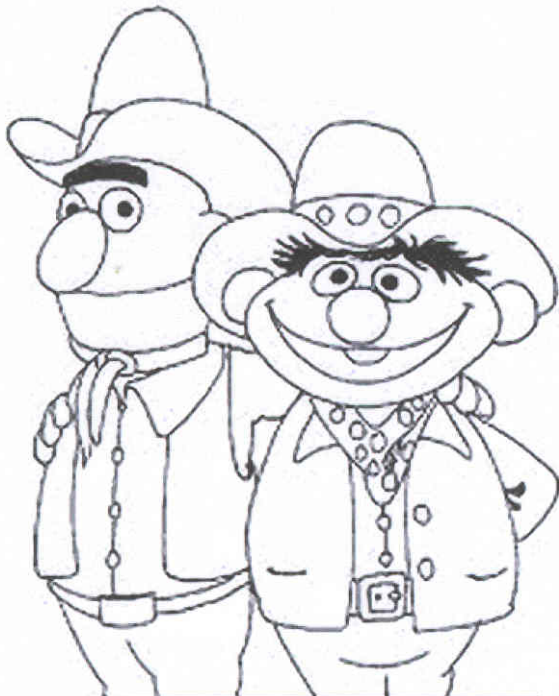
the asiatic lady (which was in fact by the old man) which confirmed that this was directed at the person who is the object of constant harassment (the Director) who was advertising the event, so that the action in the name of the so-called "professional association" just looks grotesque, crude, sexist and abusive. At least, this is what the general public has seen, and for those who know the score, the organisation looks even worse as it has been revealed that it uses unethical practices.

On the Internet, the distribution lists of professionals, no matter the business sector, and especially in the Anglo world where competition is brutal and raw, it sometimes become part in true "settling of accounts" with the colleagues, when they are created or used false identities or real identities of others under



agreements, which will later be cooked rumors spread in social networks. In this climate of excessive competition, once upon a time there was a woman who had everything that many would ask for: she was young, pretty, happily married and successful in her career. She was highly qualified, held down an important management position and had written several university text books. So many positive features became unbearable to some people who, instead of working or studying, spent their time comparing themselves to her and because they could not reach her level of perfection, they wanted to destroy her. As they could not attack her professionally or academically, they decided to attack her marriage and try to damage her reputation, in a contradictory and pseudo imaginative demonstration, as untalented

scriptwriters of soap operas (to consumed quickly on the Latin market) that move the invention of characters to their reality distorted, one infidelity was invented and even speculation about her sexual orientation. The fortunate thing about these rather pathetic cases is that one need not do anything: things have a way of clearing themselves up. People realise that the whole thing has been manipulated and the ones who come out worst are the people who have tried to misrepresent or unfairly discredit others.



Epi y Blas en el rol de  
"Hermanos Malasombra"

The "Malasombra brothers" used another way to taint reputations. They created a gay pornographology forum which was full of insulting references to colleagues who they thought overshadowed them. Problems arise when the affected party does not settle for taking it as a joke and decides to take libel action, at which point the police were called in and, although the forum was fortunately closed before the court intervention, the case is still with the technological crime unit, awaiting a decisive settlement that will force them to compensate for the damages and the financial costs of the investigation. But at least, for the moment, the entire profession knows what they have done and what kind of people they are, which completely discredits them from an ethical perspective from working in the profession and even more so from teaching.

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