

# Transgenerational Cultural Scripting:

Realising Berne's Systemic Vision


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TSTA (P)

&

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TSTA (O, E, C)




Who are we  
transactional analysts?

# Who are we?

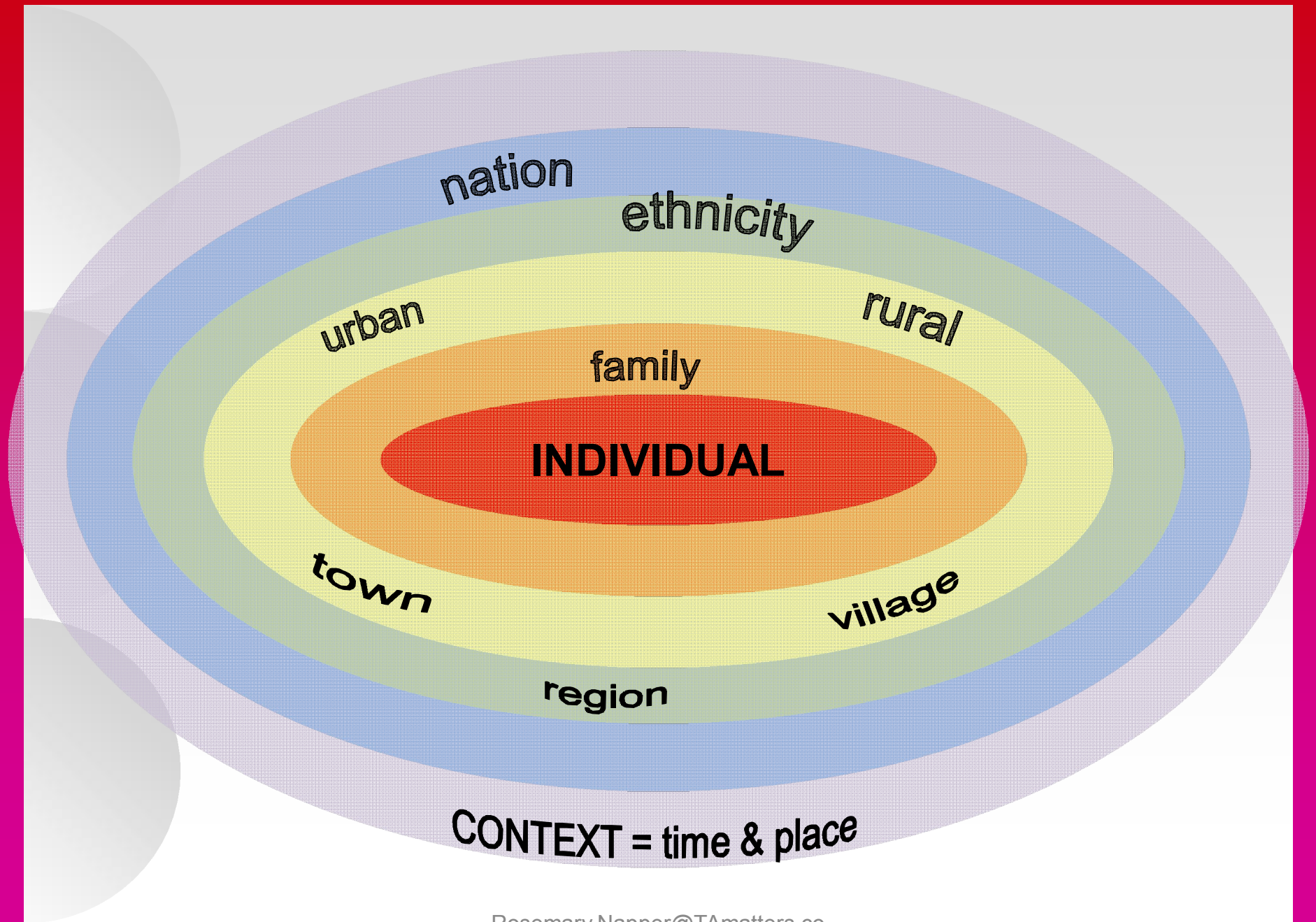
- accidental – by birth
- obligatory – conscripted
- optional – by invitation
- voluntary – apply
- conditional – achieve

## MEMBERSHIP



Where do we come  
from?



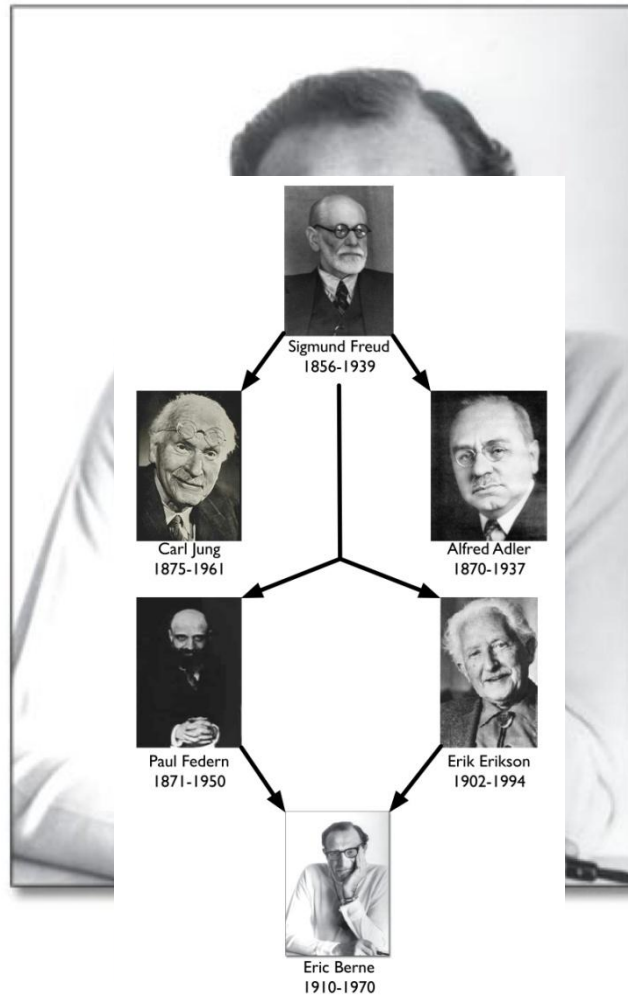


# Roots



Sigmund Freud  
1856-1939

# Roots



1910-1970

# Script transmission through generations

**“The most intricate part of script analysis in clinical practice is tracing back the influences of the grandparents”**

*Eric Berne, (1972)*





# Difference between culture and transgenerational scripts

In order to understand more about the difference between culture and transgenerational scripts we may review some of the original Berne's definitions on his book: **The Structure and Dynamics Organizations and Groups** (*Berne, 1963*)

**Culture:** “The material, intellectual and social influences which regulate the group work, including the technical culture, the group etiquette and the group character” (p. 316)

**Transgenerational scripts:** “An unconscious life plan based on a protocol, which runs through several generations in a family system or in an organization. By means of unconscious communication the TS permeates the social, intellectual and emotional relationships of the members as well as their attitudes and behavior.”



TA is like.....



**What is  
your  
metapho  
r?**

**CULTURE**

**ETIQUETTE**

**TECHNICS**

**CHARACTER**

# *transactional analysts*

How do **we** behave  
around here?



# Eric Berne

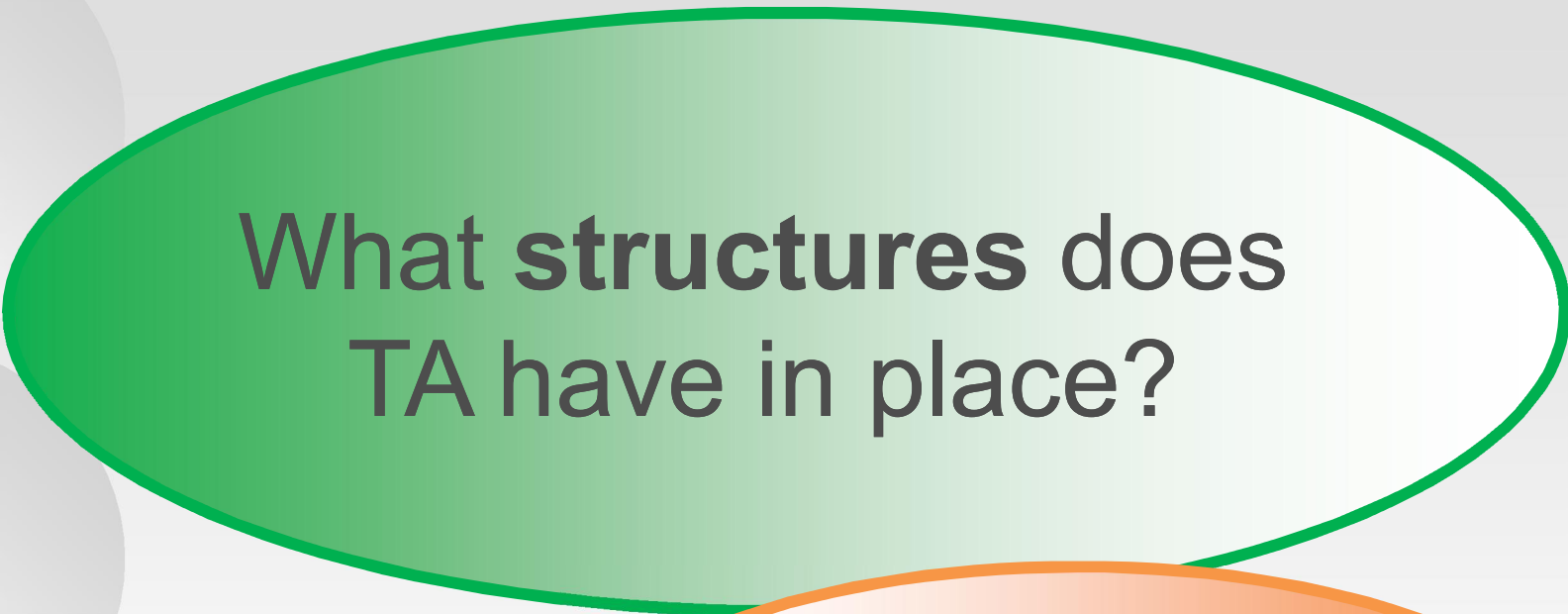
## 1910 - 1970



# ETIQUETTE

- how do we behave around here?
- traditions
- clarifies us/ them
- our acceptable games

## DYNAMICS



What **structures** does  
TA have in place?



And how do these  
**support our  
behaviour?**

# TECHNICS

- physical environment
- resources:            economic  
                                 technological  
                                 intellectual
- opportunities
- justifies game moves + payoffs

# STRUCTURES



**your  
metaphor**

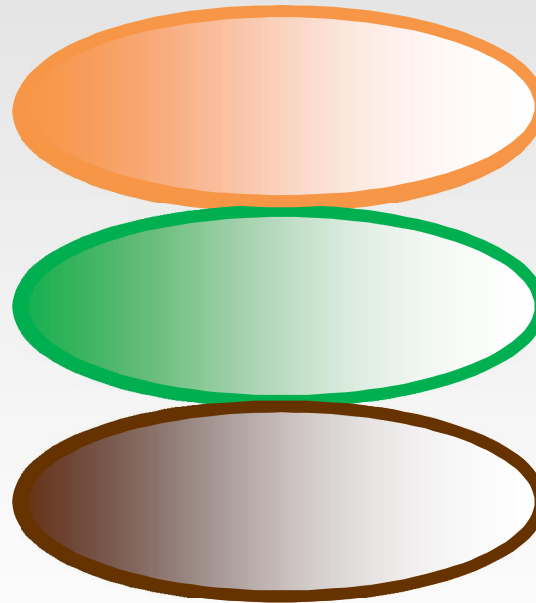
# CHARACTER

- expression of the group feeling, atmosphere, ambience
- mechanism for managing anxieties of individual/ group
- rationalises psycho-social aberrations resulting from games

## HOW WE AGREE TO IGNORE THE CONTRACT

# CULTURE

unhealthy  
gamey  
less productive  
stuck  
not OKness  
script/ shadow

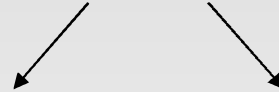


healthy  
supported  
productive  
autonomous  
I'm OK  
You're OK  
They're OK



# SYSTEMS

pressure



pressure



# CONTEXT



## DYNAMICS

**etiquette**  
transactions  
functional modes  
power & influence  
games  
agitation  
cohesion  
time structure



energy  
autonomy  
scripts  
imagos

## CULTURE

character  
ambience  
atmosphere  
morale  
'feel'  
metaphor  
shadow  
health  
= SYSTEMIC  
SCRIPT  
OK Corral  
injunctions

## STRUCTURES

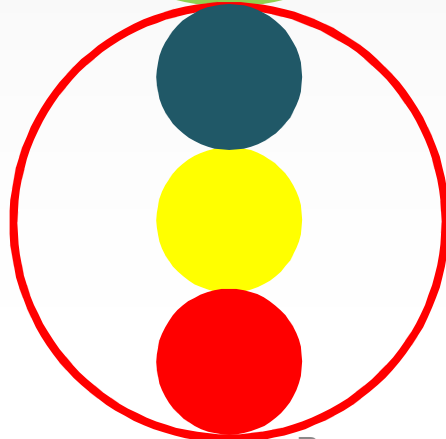
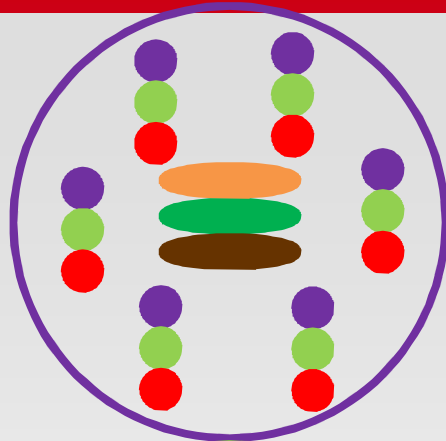
**technics**  
boundaries  
vision  
mission  
authority  
hierarchy  
canon  
procedures  
constitution  
slogans  
resources

# Unconscious Communication

**“The basic things in any culture and family go without saying. The most important things are taken for granted, never clearly stated, leaving you to guess them through ways of life, hints, or non-verbal communication”**

*Margaret Mead*

**Transmission of life scripts to subsequent generations occurs through some specific mechanisms based on a process of unconscious communication.**



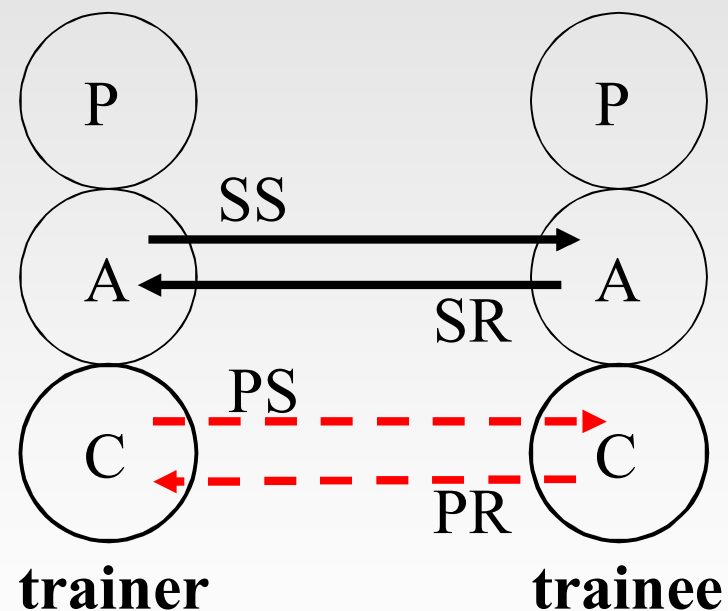
**CULTURE**  
is  
**INTROJECTED**  
  
and impacts  
our  
**SCRIPT**

# **Mechanisms of Transgenerational Script Transmission**

- **Ulterior transactions**
- **Psychological games**
- **Transference psychodynamics**
- **Projective identification**

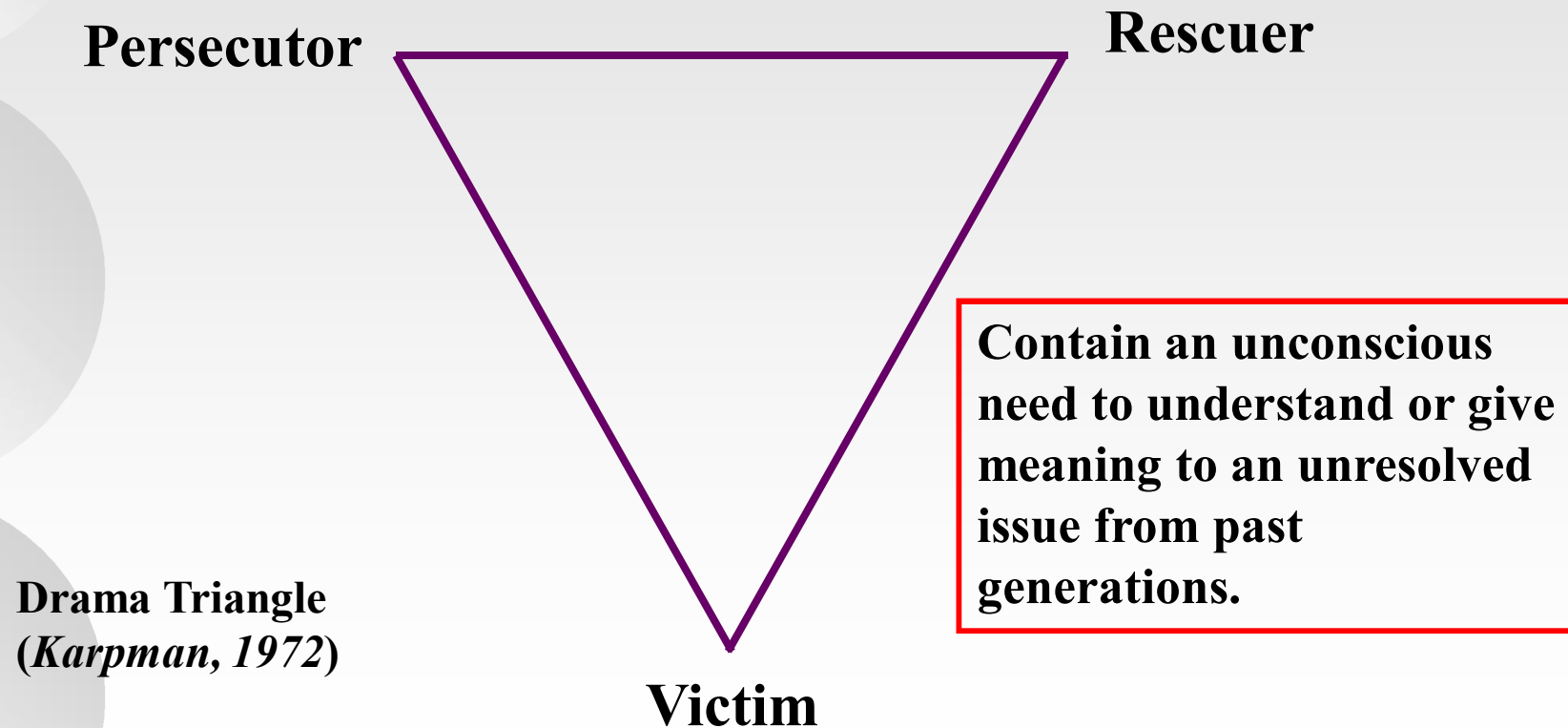
*Noriega, 2008*

# Ulterior Transactions



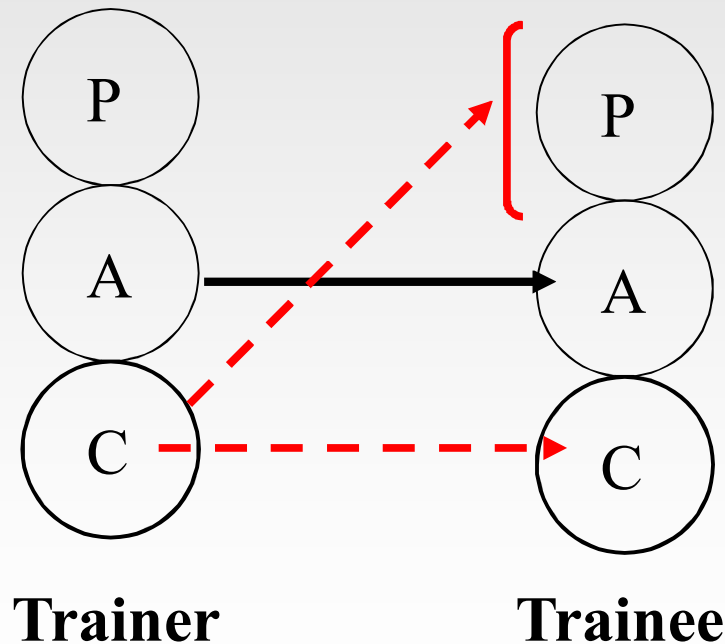
**Occur at two levels simultaneously: the social and the psychological (*Berne, 1961*).**

# Psychological Games



**Games originally played by our ancestors might be perpetuated in our generation through transference transactions**

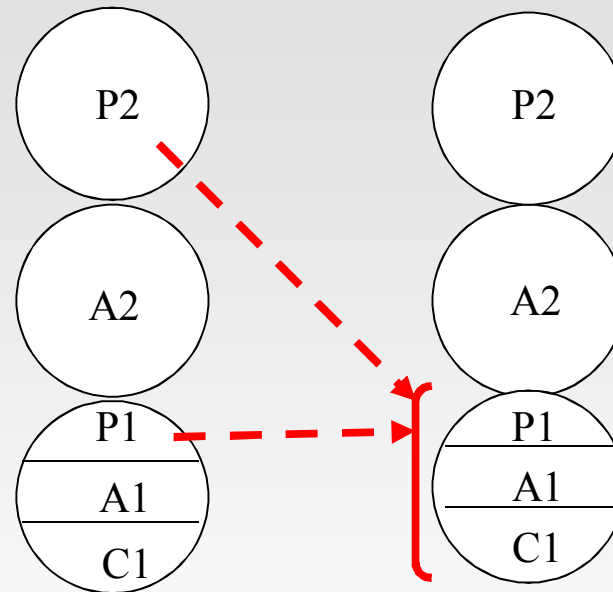
# Transference Psychodynamics



**The transference relationship contains the emotional tone involved in the original relationship experienced with our ancestors**

**“Scripts belong in the realm of transference phenomena” – *Berne (1961)***

# Projective Identification



**Mirror neurons:**  
Emotional closeness allowed the biology of one person to influence the biology of another person.

It's a defense mechanism, transmitted by fantasies, in which the person introduces parts of her or his self, onto the objects (other person) for purposes of avoiding unpleasant or unacceptable feelings. (*Klein, 1957*)

Projective identification seems to be the main way scripts are transmitted from parents to children, and it is involved in all the other mechanisms described before.





# The Episcrypt

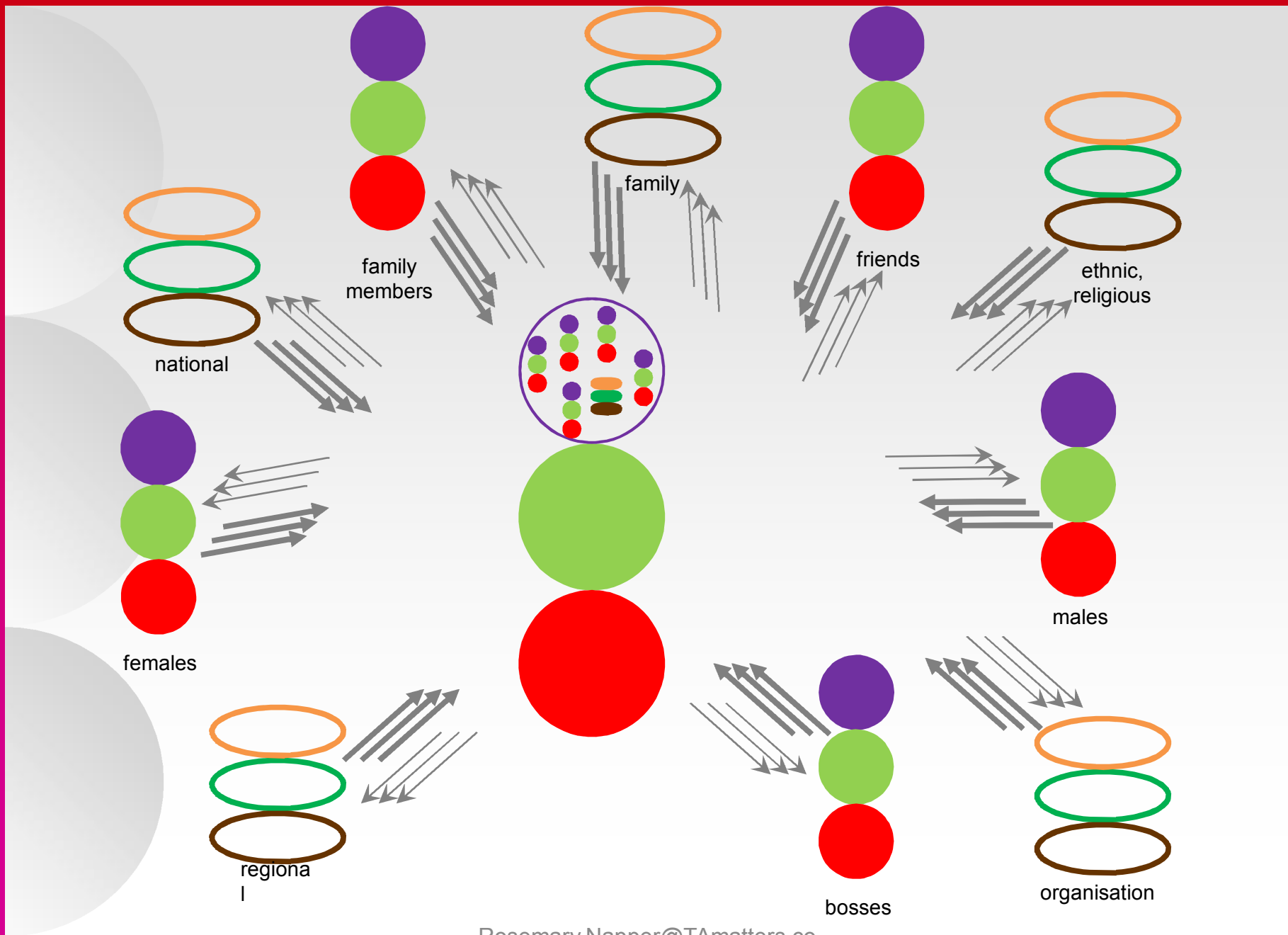
To become aware of the  
hot potato in a relationship

To eat it, to digest and  
transform, instead of  
continuing to pass it  
through the future  
generations

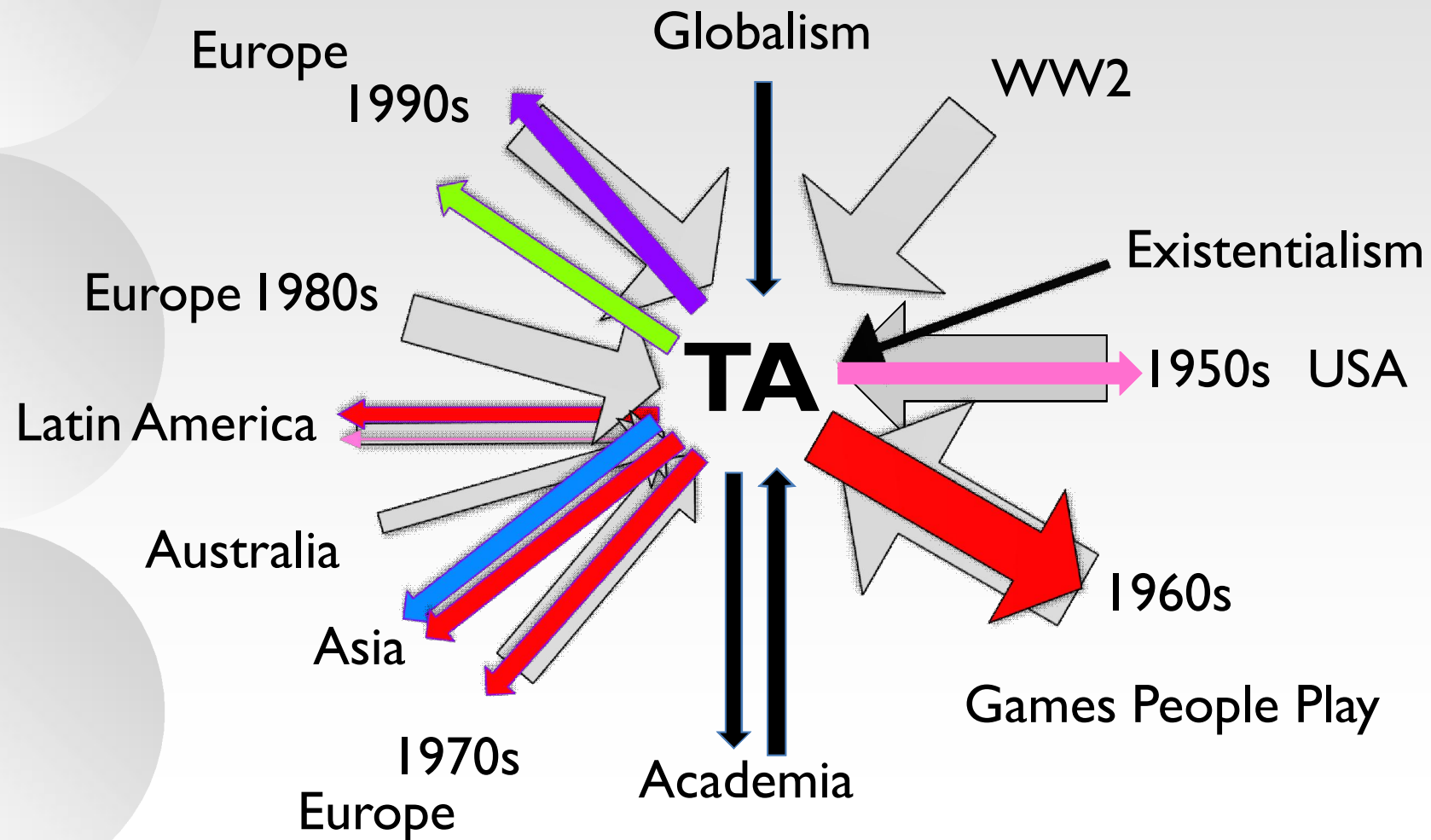


**The hot potato game**  
(*English, 1969*)



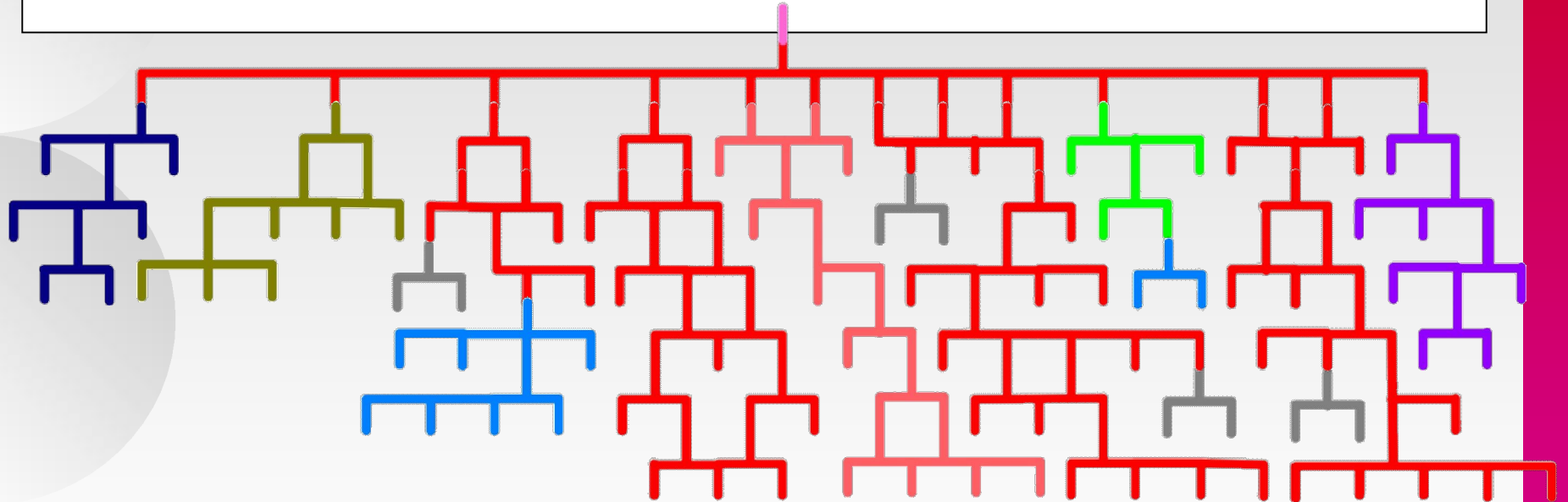


# Cultural Influences on and from TA



# NEW LIFE FROM OLD ROOTS

**ERIC BERNE**



**CLASSICAL Cognitive & Behavioural**

**CLASSICAL Psychoanalytic**

# Transactional Analysis Overview

INDEPENDENT

RELATIONAL

CO-CREATIVE

INTEGRATIVE

RADICAL PSYCHIATRY

CATHEXIS

REDECISION

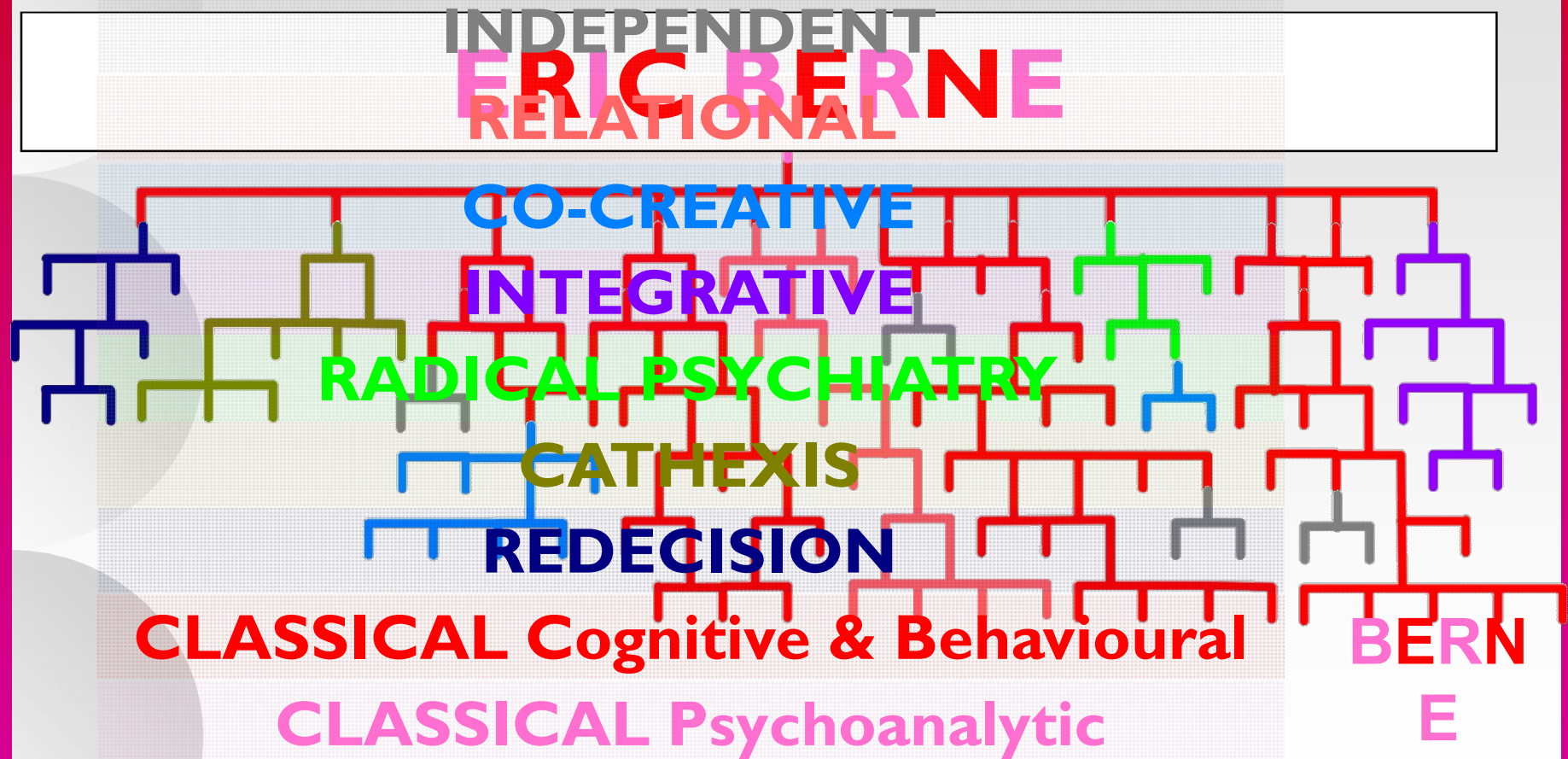
CLASSICAL Cognitive & Behavioural

CLASSICAL Psychoanalytic

BERNE

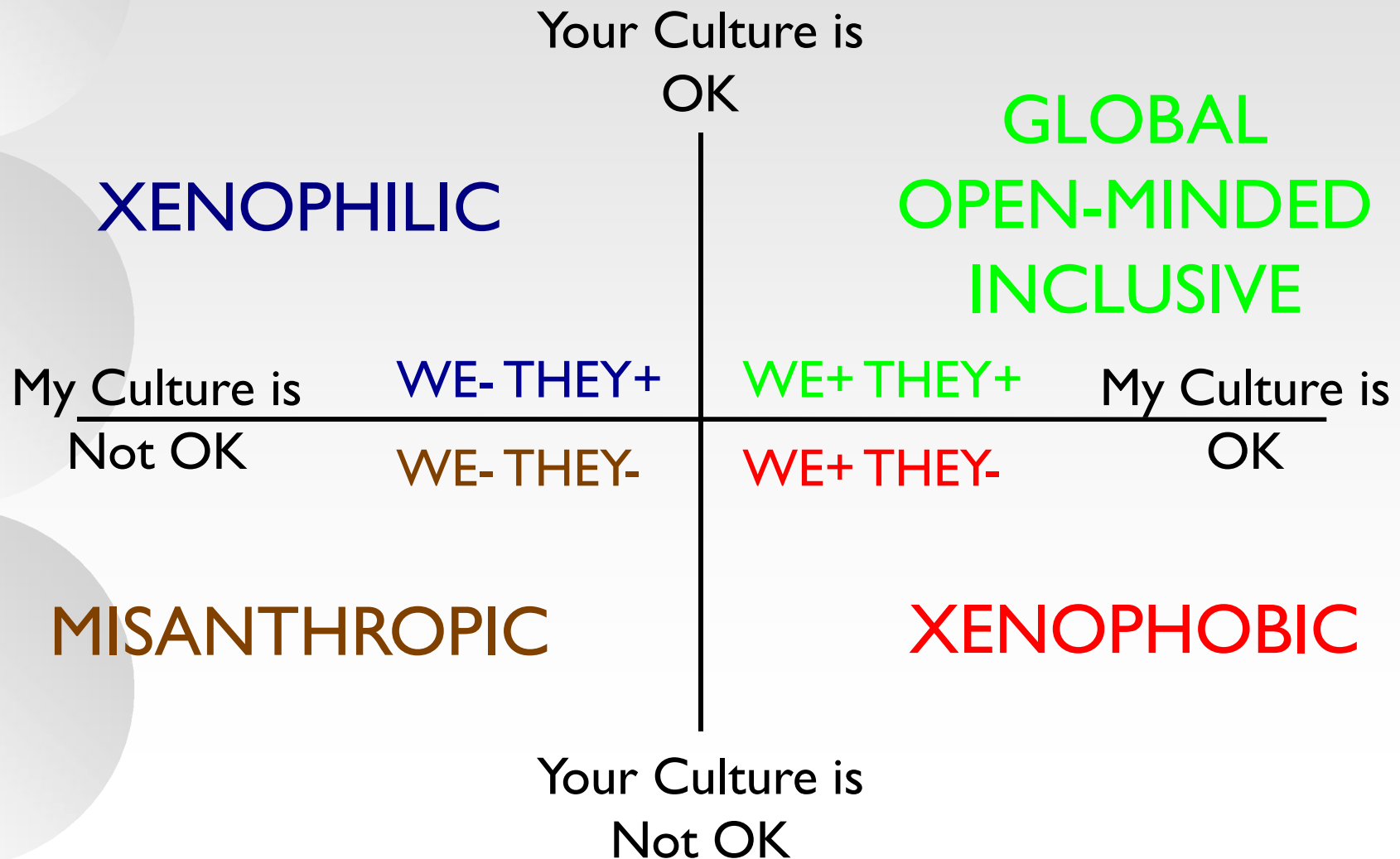
**Are there other perspectives?**

# Transactional Analysis evolves...



...and keeps evolving

# A Cultural Health Warning





# TA theory and organizations are changing

TA is changing. We need to become aware of our thoughts, feelings and behavior that might be projected in the way we relate to people and teach the TA theory.

We need to let go the unconscious negative aspects of our transgenerational script and reinforce the positive ones.

We may reinforce the positive TA script by allowing ourselves to know and respect the diversity of the now a day existing TA approaches, traditions or schools of transactional analysis. None is better than the other, we may agree with the authors or not, and we may decide if any make sense to us and suits for improving our work. This is the way to continue our development and updating process, at the same time that we may continue to increase our relationships from an **I'm Ok /You're Ok** position.



# The Future of TA

**new TA theory?**

**incorporate  
theory from  
other  
psychologies?**

**other TA  
fields of  
application?**

**develop  
theory of  
practice?**

**Think  
Martian**



E

T

C

# With great thanks to:

- Dee Keane, Alastair Wyllie, Rona Rowe for the amazing powerpoint
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- Tudor, K. and Hobbes, R. (2002) *Transactional Analysis in Dryden, W. (Ed.) Dryden's Handbook of Individual Therapy*, pp 256-286. London, (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)

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