Transgenerational Cultural Scripting:

Realising Berne’s Systemic Vision

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&

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Who are we transactional analysts?
Who are we?

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

MEMBERSHIP

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Where do we come from?
Sigmund Freud
1856-1939
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 metaphor?
CULTURE

ETIQUETTE

TECHNICS

CHARACTER
How do we behave around here?
Eric Berne
1910 - 1970
• how do we behave around here?
• traditions
• clarifies us/ them
• our acceptable games
What structures does TA have in place?

And how do these support our behaviour?
• physical environment
• resources: economic
   technological
   intellectual
• opportunities
• justifies game moves + payoffs
your metaphor
HOW WE AGREE TO IGNORE THE CONTRACT

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

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CULTURE

unhealthy
  - gamey
  - less productive
  - stuck
  - not OKness
  - script/ shadow

healthy
  - supported
  - productive
  - autonomous
  - I’m OK
  - You’re OK
  - They’re OK
DYNAMICS

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

CULTURE

character
ambience
atmosphere
morale
‘feel’
metaphor
shadow
health

= ORGANISATIONAL SCRIPT

STRUCTURES

technics
boundaries
vision
mission
authority
hierarchy
canon
procedures
constitution
slogans
resources

energy
autonomy
scripts
imagos
proclivities

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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

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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.

Drama Triangle
(Karpman, 1972)

Contains an unconscious need to understand or give meaning to an unresolved issue from past generations.
"Scripts belong in the realm of transference phenomena" – Berne (1961)

The transference relationship contains the emotional tone involved in the original relationship experienced with our ancestors.
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, 157)*

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 Episcript

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

- **Europe**
  - 1980s
- **Latin America**
- **Australia**
- **Asia**
  - 1970s
- **Europe**
  - 1990s

- Globalism
- WW2
- Existentialism
  - 1950s
  - USA
  - 1960s
- **Academia**
- **Games People Play**

**Dates:**
- 1950s
- 1960s
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s
NEW LIFE FROM OLD ROOTS

ERIC BERNE

CLASSICAL Cognitive & Behavioural

CLASSICAL Psychoanalytic
### Transactional Analysis Overview

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*Are there other perspectives?*
Transactional Analysis evolves...

...and keeps evolving
A Cultural Health Warning

Your Culture is
OK

My Culture is
OK

GLOBAL
OPEN-MINDED
INCLUSIVE

XENOPHILIC

My Culture is Not OK

WE- THEY+

WE+ THEY+

WE- THEY-

WE+ THEY-

MISANTHROPIC

XENOPHOBIC

Your Culture is Not OK
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

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