

POSTMODERN TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS I: THE DEVELOPMENT, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper represents the first in a series of four papers outlining a comprehensive postmodern transactional analytic philosophy, theory and practice. The development, structure and function of identity is critically reviewed in the light of postmodern sensibilities. Then the TA concepts of drama triangle positions, game theory, functional and structural script theory, personality and a relational model of the self are evaluated in this light, and a postmodern definition of identity is consequently outlined.

INTRODUCTION

When I first wrote on the topic of identity for *The Transactional Analysis Journal* in 2004 I quoted Freud's (1909, p. 63) metaphorical remark that, to paraphrase; "People ... do not show their sexuality freely, but to conceal it they wear a heavy overcoat woven of a tissue of lies, as though the weather were bad in the world of sexuality." While Freud was referring to sexuality – and, indeed, I went on in my paper to address the social construction of homosexuality in particular – if we accept that gender and sexuality represent foundational dynamics at the vital and vitalizing heart of our senses of identity and selfhood, then Freud's words speak to these latter notions in ways that would seem to warrant ongoing elaboration.

Take the meteorological metaphor by which Freud alludes to civilisation as an example. The weirding of our weather today is the result of climatic changes; structural alterations in the atmosphere of our global system have had profound ramifications for local variations, making them more diverse, dynamic and unpredictable. Does this not offer a vivid metaphor for the seismic shifts identity has undergone in our postmodern climate? After all, the twenty-first century has borne witness to the recognition of same-sex marriage, the explosion of gender identities and the queering of enjoyment, to cite some of the more contemporaneous examples of those paradigm shifts concerning sexuality and gender that began to emerge in the late twentieth century. While many Western nations have evolved to accommodate such shifts, others – such as a number of States in the U.S., as well as nations such as Russia and Uganda –

have reacted to this shift by passing prohibitive legislation ranging from the imposition of hetero-normative definitions of marriage and the protection if not promotion of discrimination cloaked as religious freedom, to the sanctioning of murder; all as part of an attempt to defend a regressive modernist template of sexual relating and a pseudo-Judaeo-Christian morality.

The quakes of these colliding tectonic plates have sent shockwaves rumbling through our global community. Like the seeds of climate change these man-made shifts were sown in the industrial revolution, and just as climate change demands a rethinking of our ways of living and the evolution of technologies to engage such changes, might not transactional analysis similarly need to reconceptualize the notions of identity, selfhood and sexuality? Is it not time to evolve techniques that account for and address the panorama of today's lived realities? Surely this is necessary if TA is to remain a comprehensive theory of human nature and a potent practice for social and personal development in the postmodern worlds of the twenty-first century.

It is just such a rethinking that I offer in this paper, focusing on the question of the development, function and structure of identity. In the following paper, I focus on the development, function and structure of selfhood.

CLOTHES? WHAT CLOTHES?

In the light of these upheavals what might we make of Freud's metaphor; "a heavy overcoat woven of a tissue of lies"? On the face of it we could think of the conscious dissembling in which we engage when it comes to the nature and object of our desires, both to others (publicly) and to ourselves (privately). Does this act of denial not echo, in an inverted form, the quandary in which the famously deluded Emperor finds himself ensnared? The cautionary tale of "The Emperor's Clothes" was made popular in 1837 by the Danish author Hans Christian Anderson's reading of a German translation – "So ist der Lauf der Welt" – of a tale entitled, "El Conde Lucanor", included in Spanish collection of fifty-one such parabolic tales written in 1335, a tale in turn drawn from various sources such as Aesop and other classical writers and Persian folktales included in a tome penned by Juan Manuel, Prince of Villena (1282–1348). Evidently, such myths distill over time, coalescing to form the encultured codes by which our sense of identity is socially constructed (for a definition of the concept of social constructionism, particularly as this is distinct from constructivism, see my 2007a paper).

PROCESS SCRIPTS

TA offers a number of models by which we can scaffold our thinking about this construction of identity. In my 2004 paper I discussed how process scripts (Kahler, 1968, Berne, 1972) offer one way in which we can think about how the popular myths of a given culture provide a repertoire of ready-to-wear characters and storylines amongst which we choose to clothe the varying size and shape of our attempts to consolidate a sense of having a place in the world. A fitting in, perhaps, rather than a bespoke tailoring; either way an attractive fit that holds out the promise of recognition and belonging, of (ad)ressing the existential dilemma of structure-hunger, of forging

a currency for the economy of enjoyment, and ultimately of creating a sense of meaning and purpose to life through the rehearsal of such parables and the (re)production of their tragi-comic denouements.

The principles of process script theory have been substantially and productively developed by the narrative turn in postmodern humanistic psychotherapies (such as McAdams, 1993 and Freedman and Combs, 1996). One of the hallmarks of postmodernism, of course, is the acknowledgement that there always/already exists a shifting plurality of situated narratives – and, indeed, a lack of any grand or meta-narrative – by which we represent our lived experiences (an acknowledgement that is foreclosed by the reactionary political currents mentioned above). Little Red Riding Hood, for example, may still be compliantly/rebelliously running errands for her/his (m)other in the hope/fear of encountering a hungry/fed-up wolf, though the wolf may well have other fantasies in mind. Indeed, if the wolf wants to avoid getting knifed by a roaming Woody, s/he may do well to tuck their tale between their legs and steer clear of cruising under-aged Hoodies. And as for grandma, while s/he may harbour all sorts of ambivalent desires about the prospect of being ‘eaten’ by a hungry wolf, the promise of being (symbolically) reborn is a well-rehearsed fantasy dear not only to many-a society’s elderly. In the elucidation of the proliferation of such narratives that speak (to) our analysands today there awaits a fruitful ethnographic research project, one that would refreshingly contrast with the dead-weight of pseudo-scientific quantitative questionnaire-based research that comprises the current sanctioned if discredited zeitgeist.

DRAMA TRIANGLE POSITIONS

The drama triangle (Kahler, 1968) offers a useful way in which we can categorise the identity positions made available in these myths. This model has been fruitfully extended to accommodate a greater variety of categories, such as that of the Bystander (Clarkson, 1992) and here again further qualitative research may elaborate new categories that play a formative role in today’s matrices. For example, building on my discussion of the position of the Law from a Lacanian perspective (Kellet, 2006) does it not seem warranted to include such a position in today’s dramas? After all, the role of law-enforcement and legislative identities such as the police, judges and politicians have figured prominently in society for centuries. Now, it may well be that we can classify such roles along existing Persecutor (Prosecutor) or Rescuer (Defender) positions in any given situation – perhaps the Law could even at times be classified in the Victim position, such as in the current attacks on the judiciary by the right-wing legislature in Poland, or the case of the U. S. Supreme Court at the hands of obstructionist Republican Senators – but I am thinking more fundamentally here about the position of Authority, perhaps in the guise of the Expert to whom the parties who are gamely engaged frequently appeal for legitimacy. After all, as Berne (1964) outlined in a number of consulting room games (such as ‘Do Me Something’ and ‘Gee You’re Wonderful’) and as Allen (2003) has further elaborated, the analyst is often ostensibly enjoined to take up just such an expert position. And where the analyst colludes with such an appeal a familiar game sequence plays out with predictable payoffs that (re)confirm the identities in which the various players are invested.

Furthermore, the relatively recent rise of the politicisation of the psy-practices in Europe – a politicisation that has been disingenuously justified under the guise of pragmatism – has led many a psy-institution (such as the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) on a holy quest for an authoritative stamp of legitimacy; a stamp portrayed as the embossing of a kite mark, though it represents a symbolic act more akin to the branding of property, or that of a product. Since such a quest is situated in the wider dynamics of economics and power that reiterate the profiteering mantra of drug companies, as well as the multi-layered and deep-reaching currents of a rampant if not now-demented capitalism that grounds and forms social spending policies, is it not clear that the Law represents a non-reducible positional category that represents a defining role in today's discursive formations of identity?

The Schiffs' (1975) redefining hexagon characterises the various combinations of social and psychological levels that comprise differing identity positions made available in the service of games and scripts. These combinations are evident in our brief example of Little Red Riding Hood, since this myth acknowledges the possibility that multiple positions can be adopted at one and the same time, and that one position can be used as a ruse to hide another, something crucial to game theory and often most evident at the moment of the cross-up (Berne, 1964). Such a ruse is legislated by the Law, and the con and gimmick as well as the repetitive sequence of the game play must similarly adhere to the implicit and explicit rules of engagement laid down by a given society in order for the game to work (not least since crying foul forfeits the payoff, unless the cry is itself the payoff). The reinforcement of racket feelings (English, 1971) as well as core script beliefs (Erskine and Zalcman, 1979) that are claimable by all parties at the end of play are similarly situated – as Berne (ibid.) so clearly elucidates in his account of the social advantages of games – so that game theory also reveals something of how identity is organised and how it functions.

STRUCTURAL SCRIPT THEORY

So too does structural script theory, as I argued in my paper of 2004. The original script matrix (Steiner, 1974) has enjoyed a degree of productive revision in, for example, Summers and Tudor's (2000) review incorporating a multiplicity of individually-relevant and socially-constructed axes such as gender, sexuality, race and class, etc. And though these axes rely upon bipolar stereotypes, time will tell the extent to which this represents a modernist nostalgia at the heart of Summers and Tudor's model in contrast to the enduring power of such stereotypes within postmodern mythologies. Will, for example, the 'straight-gay' axis predominate amongst so many additional categories such as asexual, bisexual, bondage, sado-masochistic, straight, trans and queer? It may be, after all, that for a given identity the most formative dimension inscribed is 'bisexual-queer', thus incorporating centers of gravity that can hardly be characterised as opposing. Again, the postmodernist turn has deconstructed such traditional "reversible complementarities" challenging their "apparent immutability" (Benjamin, 1998, pp. xiv and xvii respectively). Indeed, given the plurality of parental figures that have formed families for many decades, is it not long overdue that we consider multiaxial configurations of three or more centers of formative influence; for example, straight (first mother) – bondage (father) – trans

(second mother)? The permutations are potentially inexhaustible. In this way, a postmodernist structural script theory would need to account for multiple non-oppositional dimensions of situated influence.

Thus, both functional and structural script theories offer a map by which we can plot how the patriarchal values and norms of the Cultural Parent (Drego, 1983) are communicated to the infant, refracted through the lens of the frames of reference of significant (m)others (Schiff et al., 1975) via injunctions (Goulding and Goulding, 1976) and drivers (Kahler, 1974). Of course, script and counterscript messages too evolve over time, and vary from culture to culture (as Tudor, 2008, has highlighted, for example) and so here again we find the need for ongoing research in order to anchor theory in lived experience.

A TISSUE OF LIES

While sketching this paper I came across an article in the day's UK Guardian Newspaper (Rawlinson, 2016) that contained the following curious passage:

The father of murdered teenager Becky Watts has called for the death penalty for her killer, Nathan Matthews, saying he would carry it out himself. ... Asked by BBC Newsnight's Kirsty Wark if he wanted Matthews dead, Galsworthy said: "Of course. Without a doubt. That might shock a few people, especially people who know me because I ain't like that."

What are we to make of this dialectic; that Mr G is both like and not like 'that'? On the one hand, we could interpret Mr G's assertion as a contamination (Berne, 1961), one that warrants a Confrontation (Berne, 1966) with the aim of "correcting the patient" (Berne, 1961, page 50). But correcting him of what? That he cannot be both like and not like something? That one must be true and the other false? That human nature is, or should be free of such conflicts? On the other hand, Mr G is evidently already aware of his contradiction, counter-indicating a contamination (Kellett, 2003). A second interpretation of his words might then be that he is acknowledging that he has succeeded in fooling the people who believe they know him, that he is aware that they don't truly know him, and that, therefore, he alone knows the true nature of this 'what' he is like? Such an interpretation supports Freud's assertion of identity-as-lie – and perhaps also his explanation that such deception is deployed in response to the injunctions of a society that does not look favourably upon murderous desire, much less acts of murder – thus illuminating the possibility of a con by Mr G.

For example, we might consider that Mr G is attempting to persuade the readers of the newspaper via an ulterior carom transaction (Woollams and Brown, 1979) – readers who, in his mind's eye may very well assume the position of a Dr Phil, if not a Judge Judy – persuade his readers that his murderous desire is an understandably 'natural' aberration, that we should be sympathetic to his distress; that it is the murderer of his child who is bad, not Mr G himself. In this we see an oft-deployed strategy in which the Charged's admission of guilt to a lesser evil is

deployed as a sign of honesty, one aimed at persuading the Judge to accept a not guilty plea in defence against a greater charge.

The possibility that Mr G harbors a murderous desire thus refers us to the question of that which identity is constructed to hide, to something essential, perhaps, yet seemingly inadmissible. Such a referral ushers in the realm of the internal world, something that is more usually characterised by the notion of selfhood, and something which TA has hitherto conceptualised using differing models than those we have so far reviewed. One way, for example, by which TA accounts for the notion of an essential core to selfhood is in the concept of a 'true' or 'real' self, something that precedes identity, remaining essentially unaltered over time; true to itself. This a priori core is usually equated with an innate goodness; the inherent characteristic of the 'noble savage', a common identity position first popularised by John Dryden in his heroic play of 1672, 'The Conquest of Granada'. We can hear resonances of it in the notion of physis (Clarkson, 1992) and, as we shall see, in the valorisation of 'the self' proposed by certain relational TA traditions, amongst others.

Such a characterization sits uneasily alongside the notion of murderous desire, throwing into relief the pervasive influence of quasi-mystical values within many humanistic therapies. Furthermore, such a characterisation of a 'core self' is discordant with the principles of secular holism, the very philosophy that grounds humanism (see, for example, Pinker, 2002). We should not underestimate the confusion perpetuated by the misrecognition of these principles. It lies, for example, at the heart of a misrepresentation of OKness; for if we equate the OK position with an innate goodness we rely upon socially constructed values that are forged within situated economic, political, social and mystical discourses, producing norms that can hardly be taken as innate or fixed. Furthermore, this mischaracterisation of the notion of OKness underpins the psychological foundation of the Victim, representing a strategic petition for exoneration made by the Blaming Child (Kahler & Capers, 1974) to the Law, assigning blame instead to the 'bad' Persecutor, as we saw in our second interpretation of Mr G's claim.

Rather, a productive postmodern definition of OKness acknowledges that the OK position is neither 'good' or 'bad' though it is usually attributed the former value. Such a definition opens upon ontological questions that are surely at the heart of the analytic project. After all, might not a degree of separation from cultural norms represent an important criterion for a postmodernist TA definition of autonomy?

PERSONALITY (AT SEA)

Mr G's confession raises a third possible interpretation; that he recognizes a conundrum whereby he himself cannot account for the shock that may be experienced by the people he believes know him – a knowing that, presumably, is in line with the way in which he believes he knows himself – indeed, perhaps he himself is shocked. Some interesting questions arise in the light of this interpretation; in what ways, for example, might it be possible to know Mr G's hidden desire? Is

there a real Mr G that can stand up and be (ac)counted? What is this 'that' that Mr G claims he is (un)like? And, for that matter, what is this 'I' that is not like that? It would seem that here we are again referred to the realm of the internal world, and so it is into this domain that we must now venture further.

Many have argued, and continue to believe, that Berne's (1961) theory of personality represents the TA model par excellence that accounts for the questions raised by this interpretation of Mr G's claim; that the ego state models that have anchored TA theory since its launch – these tripartite circles that emboss our institution, and without which some fear TA would lose its own identity – remain a comprehensive and pragmatic metaphor by which we can understand the development, function and structure of selfhood. It would seem, then, that ego state theory represents a mighty ark to which TA has entrusted the preservation of its various creatures.

Cast from an American (re)vision of Freud's (1923) second topology of the 'apparatus of the soul' – the Es, Ich and Über-Ich, the Latin translation of the second term of which Berne adopted in naming, in identifying his model – Berne proposed a number of differing ego state models and refitted these several times, sometimes with the intention to refine, sometimes to clarify, sometimes to rebalance; either way a process of renovation that has given rise to well-documented philosophical, theoretical and practical contradictions. Berne professed a well-intentioned if, with hindsight, naïve hope that advances in the so-called neurosciences would demonstrate the physical modularity of ego states – thus proving his model seaworthy – a hope that has not only failed to float, but indeed appears dashed upon the rock of our current insights into brain functioning (insights, that is, as such they may be somewhat optimistically termed). And so, as these models have gone on to be variously developed, the resulting contradictions have replicated, multiplied and amplified, like cracks in the hull of a ship.

Some of the larger cracks in ego state theory are the result of the inconsistencies within the so-called 'three ego state model' that provides common ground for the classical, cathexis and redecision traditions, as well as inconsistencies between this model and the so-called 'one' or 'integrated ego state model' that rather less consistently underpins the psychodynamic, integrative and cocreative traditions. These two models – let us call them type A and B respectively – are at odds over developmental, functional and structural issues. For example, while type A models ascribe an arbitrary linear timeline to the formation of ego states (the infant is born as Child) type B models do not (all three ego states are embryonically present at birth). This gives rise to a number of significant problems, including that type A models assign all functions developed up to an arbitrarily-defined chronological age as the property of the Child, whereas type B models assign various arbitrarily-defined 'well-integrated' functions developed at any age as the property of the Adult, and only similarly defined 'fixations' as the property of archaic ego state units.

Now, this arbitrariness of definition is a manifestation of the contingent nature of socially constructed values, as we have seen, whereby what is determined as functional (OK) or pathological (not-OK) is defined according to socio-historical norms, reflecting little more than

the authoritarian ideals, imperatives and injunctions of a given culture. Furthermore, as we have also seen, the definition of function as either positive or negative, integrated or fixated is a product of the seemingly immutable complementarities that characterise the modernist fantasy. And so, yes, we are already sailing in muddy waters – if not rough seas – but the point that I wish to stress here is that such theoretical confusion with regard to which ego state we are concerned represents a fundamental design flaw in the integrity of ego state theory according to its own internal logic, one which too many-a supervisor or trainer attempts to circumnavigate with the tired crow’s-nest hail; “which model are you using?”

Attempts to patch these cracks have resulted in the opening up of various holes, such as we see in increasingly complex, graphically distorted topographies, of which the acrobatic contortions that result from the Schiffs’ attempts to represent the structure of psychosis are amongst the more creative examples. By far the more commonplace attempt to re-ballast our listing ego state models has resulted in the telescopic kaleidoscoping of ego states whose complexity continues to baffle many a student and practitioner today, while at the same time providing a distractingly compelling and bafflingly durable debate of dubious practical worth. Ironically, perhaps, the source of this cascading seems to be Berne’s (1961: 52–54) passing reference to the concept of a near-infinite regression of historical ego states in support of his metaphor of personality as a stack of bent pennies. In this we see a bewildering multiplicity of ego states that attempt to account for the effect of trauma (Berne’s original intent) or the specious development of certain arbitrarily-ascribed functional capacities (such as the spin spun by Levin’s, 1988, power cycles). The more common type of ego state proliferation, however, involves the splitting of existing states, a sub-structural cascade exemplified by the first split in the Child as a consequence of Steiner’s (1979) ‘Pig Parent’, and a fracturing further compounded by the Gouldings’ (1976) attempt to graft the Gestalt concept of the impasse onto a mix of functional and structural type A ego state models.

This fragmentation of ego states has reached sinking point in arguably the most populist of current traditions in TA, the relational tradition, and so it may be worth our taking a moment to look a little more closely at some of the perspectives that identify with this tradition, not least since a number lay claim to represent a model of selfhood.

THE DISSECTED SELF

Hargaden and Sills’ (2002) model of ‘the self’ attempts an integration of structural and functional classical type A models of personality, further compounding the Gouldings’ confounding, and resulting in a model that shines a blinding spotlight on the Child while leaving both Parent and Adult in the dark. This results in a compression of type A ego state models into the Child under the guise of second and third order structural categories, and it is into this collapsed star that Hargaden and Sills transplant Stern’s (1985) organs of selfhood, stitching in an idealised ‘core self’ that we critiqued above. In order to compensate for the consequent problems of mixing OK and not-OK functions, they then dissect this hybrid Child into six body-parts within which pathology is further quarantined. It is thus difficult not to conclude that Hargaden and Sills create the

fragmentation they seek to explain with the assertion that it is this dismembered Child that is the seat of selfhood.

It seems that at least one source of the popularity of this model owes itself in large part to the enduring appeal the notion of an idealised core self holds for many, and one can hardly wonder at this since the promise of such a core may well come as something of a relief in the shadow of this Frankenstein's monster. Yet such a notion also appeals to a powerful wish that we are, at our core, wholly good; a wish that finds an ally in the misrecognition of OK-ness, as well as the persecutory enjoyment of the Victim that we reflected upon above. And while, as we have acknowledged, the wish to believe that we are good at heart is hardly confined to TA, any such wish is a flawed bedrock on which to ground "a theory of personality and a systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change" as we are repeatedly reminded. Rather, building upon such wishes leads to straw houses built of sticks; houses that, as any little pig knows, offers only the semblance of robustness.

We shall return to the question of this wish later, since it is important to understanding the drive to identify. For now, suffice it to say that this wish lies at the heart of other, though not all, relational TA models, such as Fowlie's (2005) fairy-tale of childhood. Here, the child-as-noble-savage is more or less traumatised by the mother's narcissistic and/or sado-masochistic neglect, a shameful wounding that results in the child hiding away their innate and valorised 'true self', one that Fowlie accommodates through the construction of yet another quarantined enclave within the Child, though one that, this time, functions more like a protectorate (requiring considerably more paper to graphically represent). Fowlie's consequent attempt to explain confusion ends up confusingly conflating deconfusion and integration, and in its idolisation of infancy and complementary demonization of motherhood her model falls foul of the charge of pathologisation. Ultimately, both Hargaden and Sills as well as Fowlie confound the concepts of 'personality' and 'selfhood' in such a way as to eclipse the possibility of elucidating the distinction for which Mr G's words call, and so we must look further afield for a productively working theory.

AN OAR WITHOUT A BOAT

As the seat of selfhood, Hargaden and Sills assert that their Child is the origin of a variety of transference dynamics. This follows from their adoption of Moiso's (1985) attempt to account for a number of Freudian transference dynamics using a type A ego state model, an attempt that is itself premised on a common misinterpretation of Berne's model of transactional analysis proper. Berne had originally proposed that certain crossed transactions can be used to map those more common transference dynamics he had learned about as a trainee psychoanalyst. Since crossed transactions involve social-level transacting – transactions, that is, that are in awareness and that, therefore, cannot by definition be transference – Berne quickly (if quietly) dropped this assertion. In its stead, he turned to the notion of ulterior transactions and, for a while, seemed to hold out the hope that these offered a theoretically congruent account of transference dynamics. However, Berne clearly demonstrated that ulterior transactions are also forged in

awareness; the salesman, for example, whose well-rehearsed ulterior angular snare so artfully hooks the envious housewife fully intends the deception he perpetrates (Berne, 1961). Indeed, we could say that he makes it his business, one that is literally at the heart of his sense of identity ('the salesman'). Thus, Berne counters the possibility that transactions on either the social or ulterior level, either in or out of awareness could possibly account for the transference. The models of transference developed by Moiso, as well as Hargaden and Sills ignore this impossibility, and thus erroneously deploy transactional analysis proper in their attempts to delineate the dynamics of the transference.

This fundamental error at the heart of Hargaden and Sills' model is further compounded by their omission to give any account of the unconscious itself; so that, like an oar without a boat, it is not at all clear just what it is that is transported. Without the anchor of the unconscious these models perpetuate Berne's failure to account for the unconscious, for while I have previously pointed out that Berne's failure-as-refusal belies a potentially vengeful project of disavowing the unconscious in deference to a naïve conceptualisation of an idealised autonomous *Jeder* (Kellett van Leer, 2011) – apparently erasing his debt to father Sigmund, just as he attempted to (re)author his own identity through changing the name he inherited from father David – it is true that Berne (1972: 399–400) asserted a lasting and unambiguous faith in the dynamically repressed unconscious and other Freudian orthodoxies, and a belief that transactional analysts would be aligned with his US-seasoned Freudian schooling; "script analysts believe in the unconscious ...[they] subscribe to the doctrines of Freud in their entirety."

It is one thing to believe in the unconscious, however, and quite another to craft a comprehensive model that accounts for its development, function and structure.

Where transactional analysts have attempted to account for the unconscious using ego state models and transactional analysis proper as templates, we find only a widening of the cracks with which we are becoming alarmingly familiar. Following on from Moiso's folly, for example, Novellino's (2003) attempt to bequeath the unconscious to the Adult results in a number of incommensurabilities for both types of ego state models. With regard to type A models, Novellino's proposals conflict with Hargaden and Sills' relegation of selfhood and attendant dynamics of transference to the Child. This is not, in and of itself a problem, given our critique here, but this contradiction does raise the spectre of a transference not grounded in the unconscious, or an unconscious communication that cannot be regarded as transference; something that Novellino concedes, representing a significant and, it seems to me, unjustified alteration of Freudian orthodoxy, not least since it is one that is more in line with Jungian mysticism, something Freud explicitly and (in)famously rejected.

Regarding type B models, Novellino's proposal appears to contradict the principle of integration that is a defining feature of such model types, since the proposal that the Integrated Adult contains within it something unavailable to awareness, and thus unintegrated, threatens to render the concept of the integrating Adult meaningless. It is possible that this contradiction indicates that our concept of the notion and mechanisms of integration is in need of review,

something that may well be warranted not least since one of Freud's principle characterisations of the unconscious is that it resists integration, resists being known, something which is crucial to its insistent persistence, something that, incidentally, anchors Berne's (1961) third rule of communication. It is this hallmark of the unconscious that announces its arrival on the scene with such fanfare, and so if we recognise this ghost in the machine as a property of the Adult, we would need to fundamentally evolve our definition of integration and our construction of its role as a formative function within type two ego state models.

Those models that fare better in their accounting of the unconscious and emergent transference dynamics do not attempt an over-simplified transplanting onto Berne's theory of personality. In Little (2004) for example, we find reference to the Fairbairn's creative if somewhat monolithic model of selfhood, a reference that Little uses to inform a critique of existing ego state theory and develop some eloquent alternatives, such as the concept of ego state units. Unfortunately, however, this concept cannot stretch to patch the holes currently threatening to sink the ego state model. Little (2006) also offers some carefully observed elaborations of certain categories of subjectivity, such as that of the "pathological narcissist", although this adherence to such personality stereotypes as described by pseudo-medical paradigms belies an all-too frequent and toxic contamination of the body-philosophic of TA theory. Critiques of these pseudo-medical paradigms are, of course, well-known – I would cite Bentall's (2003) comprehensive review, along with Davies' (2013) disheartening exposé regarding the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual as amongst the more essential if gruesome reading – critiques that, like the causes of climate change, it is now so irrational to deny that even the psychiatric establishments in the US (the National Institute of Mental Health) and the UK (the British Psychological Society) have publicly claimed to have given up their addiction to such scientism. That, of course, we will have to wait and see, for neither history, either organisation's collusion with pharma-industry, or their avowed investment in so-called 'neurological research' inspires confidence. Certainly, the cultural delusion of the notion of generalizable personality types continues to contaminate TA, something that can be seen for example in the theory of personality adaptations (Ware, 1983, Stewart and Joines, 2002). Any continuing reliance upon this and other such theories is akin to joining the band that played on the sinking Titanic, and so the theory of personality adaptations is nothing more than a fatal distraction from our discussion here.

We appear to have reached the point where our ego state models of personality are floundering at sea. Well, this is hardly surprising. After all, to conclude on our nautical note what must now seem all too obvious; attempting to account for the notion of selfhood using Berne's ego state models of personality is like trying to contain the sea within a boat; the boat sinks.

IDENTITY DECONTAMINATED

If the crisis in ego state theory is, at least in part, the result of attempts to pressgang Berne's original model of personality to account for the kind of questions raised by Mr G's conundrum, if ego state models are too small and frail a vessel to navigate the undercurrents of the unconscious

and swells of the transference, then the concept of personality itself warrants decontamination, de-barnacled in order to sail less clumsily (Berne, 1961, p. 49).

Building on my proposal (Kellett, 2006) that ego states represent categories of function – ways of thinking, feeling and behaving (see also Kellett, 2007b) – rather than structural entities, is it not now clear that personality represents an emergent property – rather than an essentialist core – an emergent property that is anchored in the script, functioning as an adaptive strategy fashioned to (re)cover (from) the developmental traumas that Berne evocatively portrays as a stack of bent pennies? Is it not evident by now that personality is developed to create a good impression, to keep up appearances, to conjure up the illusion of a straight stack; all metaphors that allude to the ‘tissue of lies’ to which Freud refers in his remarks? As such, the notion of personality is surely akin to what I have previously referred to as a scar or a scab (Kellett van Leer, 2015b); an attempt at healing that belies an earlier wounding, an attempt in which we can detect the incorporation of the kinds of identifications referred to earlier; identifications deployed as sutures or stitches if not band aids or makeup designed to hold things together, to cover what threatens to reopen.

As such, the Bernian ego state theory of personality is properly aligned with those concepts mentioned above that offer productive ways of thinking about the function and structure of identity, not self, and the developmental processes of identification, not selfhood.

THE WILL OF IDENTITY

I suggested earlier that our motivation for identification, our will to identify, is rooted on the one hand in our desire for a sense of belonging, to structure time and purpose, to make meaning of our lived experiences. We have also seen how, on the other hand, identity serves the defensive function of disguising something of ourselves we regard as inadmissible in the light of the fallacy of an idealized, noble core self, a fairytale that hypnotizes us as is a moth by the flame. This is one way by which we have understood Mr G’s predicament; we cannot avoid recognizing that human nature is not pure, but we can turn a blind eye to this inconvenient truth, just as we continue to knowingly reject our collective and individual responsibilities for climate change.

Why is this; what fuels the drive to identify with an ideal ego that hauntingly mocks the tragicomic performance of identity? I have previously sketched out how, according to the Lacanian concept of the mirror phase (Lacan, 1949/2006) the phenomenologically fragmented infant yearns to be like the whole and seemingly-autonomous mirror image that the all-important (m)other joyfully attributes as being him or herself (Kellett, 2006). “Look! That’s you! That image of a little wo/man is your-self”. Motivated by the desire for a mastery that forecloses lack, a specular state that always/already incorporates a gratifying (m)other and expels all frustration, is it such a wonder that the infant gleefully seizes upon such a promising mirage, identifies with it, and inscribes this imaginary and gendered ego-ideal at the foundation of an identity born of and borne by a hall of mirrors?

Here we find one source of the wish I characterised above that we are, at our core, wholly good; whole, lacking nothing, omnipotently self-sufficient, reliant for our safety and satisfaction, our enjoyment and pleasure on no unreliable external source that might disappoint and enrage; that our house of straw really is a mighty castle built of brick, one that can withstand the sticks and stones hurled from beyond the ramparts, as well as those treacherous attacks that come without warning from within. After all, in order to disown our own murderousness – or any desire that spoils the image of ourselves we wish to see reflected – an act akin to murder must itself be enacted; we must kill-off our murderous desire, in other words, and this psychological murder is one source of the lack in being that develops as the infant grows, giving rise to a sense of guilt and an anxiety that our treacherously murderous heart will catch us out, as Mr G's hedging potentially indicates.

Script theory recognizes that such infantile narcissistic wishful fantasies not only persist throughout adulthood, but indeed underpin our ongoing sense of identity. Narcissus, of course, famously saw the promise of such an apparently utopian self-sufficiency in a watery reflection, one from which he could not tear his gaze. And just as Narcissus' reflection is filtered, distorted by the water, so too does this mirror lie. The infant's riven internal sense of impotence and dependency – so evocatively depicted by cubist portraiture, perhaps – contrasts starkly with the promise of wholeness and mastery the mirror appears to reflect. Since this ideal image is gendered in accordance with the mother's cry, one that mirrors the embodied imago as anatomically male or female, the misrecognition of bipolar opposites as innate, essentialist categories is inscribed in the misalignment of gender with the equation of having or not having a penis. It is with and in this determination that the infant turns to that which the mythical mirror of Snow White represents, see(k)ing a reflection that hypnotically captivates the infant's desire. Alas, even as it does so, the mirror also captures something of our searching longing, ultimately betraying our wish to witness a reflection of the loveliest in the land, a beauty that is forever elsewhere, the very thing, perhaps, that Rembrandt's melancholic gaze appears lost upon in his haunting self-portrait of 1658.

We can hear echoes of these Lacanian tropes in Berne's (1957, 1966) notions of ego image, and group imago. These visual images, these hologramatic imagoes are projected from our desire to disavow any fundamental, existential sense of not-OKness. We present these images as identification, embossed on ID cards and passports, stamped upon titles and roles, branded by rank power; all rights and rites of passage that belie the will to be some(coherent)body, one that counts (to refer to Satir's ubiquitous principle that Berne translated into his motto of OKness). And since, as we have seen, identity is both public and private, forged at the interface of the internal and external – do we not, after all, “prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet”, as Prufrock sings (Eliot, 1920/1982, p. 14)? – identity is regulated by an interactional, trans-actional strategy in which we all collude, one aimed at getting what we want while hiding what we want, hiding that we want, that we are wanting.

Identity, then, is “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury” (Shakespeare, 1599 – 1606/1984, Act 5, scene 5, lines 26–7), though, as we have seen, it hardly signifies nothing. Yes; identity is an

illusion, and the notion of the 'real' self represents little more than a yearning for the tormenting comfort of an imaginary ideal. Yes; the "tissue of lies" from which the cloth of our identity is woven represents a denial not in the service of the defence of some vulnerable true self, but a denial of the disturbing reality that such an idealised and idolised self is a conceit. But the cloak of identity is an opiate fashioned to anaesthetize the melancholy that insists in the face of our lack (Butler, 1997) cloaking that about ourselves which, as Mr G's conundrum so vividly illustrates, is found wanting. And this is something, and a something that a postmodern transactional analysis is well-placed to research, conceptualise and engage.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

We have interpreted Mr. G's claim that his desire for the death of his daughter's murderer does not equate with her murderer's desire as a commonplace denial in the service of maintaining the illusion of the identity he has established for himself and others, and this has helped us to understand and illustrate some important aspects of the notion of identity. But it would be rather arrogant to claim that our interpretation covers the whole story (as, indeed, it is to claim of any interpretation) and so there are a number of loose ends left here and there. For example, we noted that Mr G explicitly implies that he knows what he is like, that there is something about himself of which he is certain; something that knows. And in dismissing the notion that this is something innate or 'good', we have acknowledged that it is related to the something that would shock Mr G's acquaintances, and that may very well shock Mr G himself; the murderous desire that he disavows, of which he asserts he has rid himself, killed off; a desire, in other words, beyond identity that is experienced as more fundamental, more 'true to itself', more insistent. And since we have now decontaminated the ego state model of delusions of selfhood, it is clear that the notion of selfhood is the property of something elsewhere.

Such an insistent persistence characterises the ways in which the Freudian unconscious is manifest, and so, if we are to construct an account of this selfhood-as-elsewhere, the loom we will need to weave such threads as we have left hanging at this point is one that will have to be able to account for the unconscious and the transference in ways that we have found current TA theories of selfhood unable to do so. A frame, that is, that can do justice to Berne's assumption of Freudian orthodoxy, and that can accommodate a postmodernist TA theory as we have begun to expound here; a frame that can account for the development, function and structure of "such stuff as dreams are made on" (Shakespeare, 1610-11, Act 4, scene 1, lines 156-7), as well as – I might add – the stuff from which nightmares are made on.

And so, it is to this account of selfhood that I turn in the following paper in this series.

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