REFOUNDING TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS: DECONTAMINATING PERSONALITY

In memoriam Muriel James, transactional analyst & feminist, 1917 - 2018

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines a refounding of transactional analysis, a return to Berne, by subjecting the notion of identity to a decontamination. Berne's grounding of transactional analysis in psychoanalysis is reviewed in terms of his enjoiner that transactional analysts subscribe to Freudian doctrine, establishing a rationale for a postmodernist deconstruction of drama triangle positions, process and structural script analysis and the theory of personality. A decontamination of ego state theory is offered, followed by a realignment of the notions of the unconscious and attendant transference within a postmodernist transactional analytic definition of identity.

INTRODUCTION

The Lacanian analyst Jacques-Alain Miller recently mused that, "The most pertinent references are not always the most explicit ones, and no index of names will ever detect them. One would need an index of all that is not said: back-of-the-mind thoughts, cryptic allusions, resonances, and other *invisibilia.* Actually, I might just have a go at it one day …" (2016:191).

In putting the most pertinent thoughts on the side of the invisibled, Miller echoes the Freudian mantra that such representations are the domain of the unconscious, and that the psychoanalytic project comprises detecting and indexing such representations. This project, of course, is notoriously vicarious; for while we can rely on the unconscious to 'speak its mind' with no deference to our civilized manner nor reference to the burden of translation that language imposes, we cannot rely on any guarantee of success with regard to the task of detecting, let alone indexing. Unconscious representations wish, after all, to be expressed but not heard; the repressed may return, but only as a cryptic allusion.

Why have a begun a paper about transactional analysis (TA) with such a reference? Well, if Eric Berne is the father of TA, Freud is its grandfather, or at least its great uncle (once or twice removed, perhaps). Berne originally trained in a mid-twentieth-century U.S. translation of Freudian psychoanalysis and, though he forged his *radical psychiatry* in the fire of a resentful reaction to the deferral of his application to join the psychoanalytic club in the U.S., Berne's TA was also born and raised in the fertile soil of psychoanalysis, and so it is to Freud that TA owes its intergenerational birthright.

It is a birthright that Berne acknowledged to varying degrees. TA, he said in 1961 is a *preparatory* for psychoanalysis; it helps patients clean house, so to speak, so that they can properly engage with their analysis. By the time he had sketched his final work (Berne, 1972) he had evolved in this belief; he now asserted that script analysis, a particular species of TA, could do the job just as well as

psychoanalysis. While this turn in Berne's view is often cited as a turning away from psychoanalysis, Berne in fact never broke faith. He had been schooled in an old-fashioned Freudian ethic of interpretation (Berne, 1966) and never wavered in his assertion that such an intervention was the means *par excellence* by which script analysis, like psychoanalysis operated. In his final say on the matter he went even further in his declaration of allegiance to psychoanalysis:

"Script analysts believe in the unconscious … [they] subscribe to the doctrines of Freud in their entirety" Berne (1972: 399-400).

It seems to me that in his development of TA Berne intended to *update* the psychoanalytic process by making it more efficient. In this, Berne is, of course, not alone. In his so-called 'return to Freud', Jacques Lacan - Berne's contemporary across the ocean - insisted that he was only correcting contemporary misunderstandings of Freudian theory and its implications, though I think Jean Laplanche (1989) is rather more earnest in his own project of 'refounding psychoanalysis', in which he aimed to correct psychoanalysis' trajectory at the point at which it he saw Freud as going astray.

Well, it's one thing to believe in the unconscious, quite another to pen a comprehensive philosophical, theoretical and technical perspective upon it. Berne's belief in the unconscious is only *implicit* in his writing, and he never offered a way to carve out a place for it in his model of personality, nor a place for transference within TA proper, his model for analyzing social interaction, as I shall demonstrate later. Some transactional analysts since Berne have attempted to more explicitly account for the unconscious and its attendant transferential dynamics within these systems. Most notable in this regard are the Italian analysts Carlo Moiso and Michel Novellino, who founded a transactional psychoanalysis in the 1980s, a perspective that continues to develop today, though it has become side-tracked by the neuroscientific bent. More recently, the UK analysts Helena Hargaden and Charlotte Sills have further developed Moiso's original templates in a perspective on TA that borrows from the American relational psychoanalytic movement, amongst others. And while the latter accuse other perspectives, such as cocreative TA, of lacking a comprehensive model of the unconscious, we will see that neither transactional psychoanalysis or relational TA account for the unconscious either.

In Millerian terms, then, the unconscious has been invisibled within TA.

REFOUNDING TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

I am no prophet - and here's no great matter (Eliot, 1917:15)

Lest my conclusion sounds like a prelude for a new TA model of the unconscious, let me head of any disappointment at this point and say that I do not offer a TA translation of unconscious dynamics here. Why not? Because that would be like reinventing the wheel; it is simply not necessary to do so since psychoanalysis has developed comprehensive structural and functional models of the unconscious, models that can be productively used alongside TA concepts, as I have illustrated elsewhere (Kellett van Leer, 2011). What I do offer is a template for a refounding of TA, *à la* Laplanche, or a 'return to Berne' (*à la* Lacan) - the Berne, that is, who maintained that transactional analysts are Freudians at heart – a refounding that makes space for what has hitherto been invisibled.

To be relevant, to speak meaningfully in, of and to our lives, analytic theory and practice must evolve (Barnes, 2005) otherwise there is a danger that theory assumes the status of a dogma that becomes fossilized as an illusory 'truth', one that is defended with a fundamentalist blind faith in such a way as to preclude the analytic project it is meant to serve (Kellett, 2007c). In this eventuality, a refounding is called for, one in which hindsight affords us the opportunity to recognise earlier missteps that need retracing in order to restore a theory's relevance and potency. Just as Laplanche asserts that Freud went astray, I argue that Berne and developments in TA since him have not only failed to account for unconscious and transferential dynamics but have distorted fundamental TA models in the attempt in such a way as to lead TA into a *cul de sac*.

The developments in TA of which I speak are grounded in the alignment of psychotherapy theory and practice with pseudo-scientific models such as behaviorism and the current fad of 'evidence-based' psychometrics. Critiques of these models are well-known – I would cite Bentall's (2003) comprehensive review, along with Davies' (2013) disheartening exposé as amongst the more essential if gruesome reading – so much so that even 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 deferral to such scientism. Nonetheless, the delusion of such models continues to contaminate TA, as can be seen for example in the theory of personality adaptations (Ware, 1983, Stewart and Joines, 2002) a model based uncritically upon the DSM.

Such models take no account of the unconscious; indeed, they avidly disavow such a notion. Given this, in empiricism's own jargon, such models are not *valid* in the field of psychotherapy since they do not measure the variables that comprise human subjectivity; *they are, in other words, not fit for purpose*. Furthermore, these models have been pressganged by governments, as well as psy-industries such as pharmacology and health insurance into regulating the concept of 'wellness' in the name of a profit that masquerades as economic pragmatism. Such a zeitgeist offers no possibility of articulating the dynamics of the unconscious, but only further techniques by which it is delegitimized and invisibled.

To the extent that this context exerts an external *pull* that regulates much of psychotherapy today, it also calls up a corresponding internal *push* from within psychotherapy communities that colludes with such a demand. This push finds its roots in an anxious and/or narcissistic *desire for legitimacy,* a drive that hitches a ride on the back of the myth of scarcity that spawns a paranoid competitiveness. This push-me-pull-you symbiosis results in the trumpeted regulatory promise of a proven body of knowledge and technology that seduces the desire of practitioners and clients alike; the desire, that is, for the comfort of an imaginary lack-less sense of mastery. Here, Freud's eventually-abandoned mantra that the ego can tame the errant gallop of the id is taken up with a zeal that disavows the reality of our existentially divided subjectivities, thus foreclosing those most pertinent of resonances.

If the modernist paradigm has been usurped in this way by a rampant capitalism, then we must turn to another paradigm that is fitting for the purpose of engaging with the invisibled. I pointed out above that Miller's words echo the Freudian understanding of the unconscious, yet do they not also refer us to the postmodernist Foucauldian notion of the periphery, that population of peoples, ideas, of forms of life that rings the dominant master discourse of social order(ing)? From this perspective, the most pertinent references are those that are marginalized and pathologized; *othered*, in other words.

Since postmodernism recognizes that other(ed) discourses are pertinent, something the master discourse is forged to silence - just as psychoanalysis recognizes that the unconscious speaks the truth, one that consciousness is forged to let lie – then postmodernism can be aligned with psychotherapy to advocate for the unconscious.

If we are to return the unconscious to TA – or, perhaps, return TA to the unconscious - in order that Berne's radical project can be refounded to speak to the vicissitudes of our contemporary lives, then a *postmodernising* of TA is called for.

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POSTMODERNISING TA

Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways? (Eliot, 1917:14-15)

Attempts at such a postmodernising of TA were evident by the 1980s, championed by the likes of Barbara and Jim Allen and Bruce Loria, and continued by such as Graeme Summers and Keith Tudor, to name a few. The aim of these analysts has been primarily to integrate social constructionist and narrative principles within TA, and though they do not comprehensively address the enigma of the Freudian unconscious, their research is grounded in the postmodernist ethic that informs my project of *indexing such invisibilia as the notion of the unconscious and its attendant dynamics by subjecting transactional analysis to a postmodern transactional analysis*, in the spirit of Laplanche's refounding.

Since Berne designed TA first and foremost as a theory of personality, and since we are returning to Berne, I follow in his footsteps and begin this project by looking at the process of an historical contamination of the theory of ego states, and then offering a decontamination of this model. From this refounded foundation I reframe a three related TA models – process and structural script theory and drama triangle positions – in order to sketch out possible trajectories for a future postmodernist account of personality that offers a promising realignment of these modes of investigation while leaving room for the dynamics of the unconscious.

I AIN'T LIKE THAT
When I first started indexing the invisibilia haunting TA's model of personality, I was struck by the following passage in article in a daily UK newspaper:

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." (Rawlinson, 2016).

What are we to make of the dialectic that Mr G is both like and not like 'that'? 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, 1961:50). But correcting him of what? That he cannot be both like *and* not like something? That one claim must be true and the other false? Furthermore, Mr G is evidently already aware of his contradiction, counter-indicating a contamination (Kellett, 2003).

A second interpretation of his words might be that Mr G is acknowledging that he has succeeded in fooling the people who believe they know him, that he is aware that he has pulled the wool over their eyes and that, therefore, he alone knows the true nature of this 'what' he is like. This interpretation implies that such deception might be 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 (Berne, 1964). In the light of this interpretation, Mr G offers us an example of our desire to hide something that we feel is inadmissible within our given social context.

For example, Mr G may be attempting to persuade the viewers of the programme on which he is being interviewed via an ulterior carom transaction ostensibly directed at the interviewer (Woollams and Brown, 1979) – viewers 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. Such claim rests upon the rationale that some murder is legitimate, not least as a punishment for illegitimate murder; an eye for an eye.

The possibility that Mr G harbors a murderous desire that is 'not him' also refers us to the question of that which identity is forged to hide, perhaps to something essential that is not easily socialized. One way by which TA accounts for the notion of such an essentialist core is via 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 the relational TA tradition, amongst others. Evidently, however, such a characterization of a core self cannot accommodate the notion of murderous desire.

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. This me-but-not-me phenomena resonates with the notion of the unconscious, characterized by Laplanche (1999:65) as, "an alien inside … put inside me by an alien". How, then, does TA account for this otherness within personality?

THE CONTAMINATION OF PERSONALITY

TROUBLE AT SEA: THE PROBLEM WITH EGO STATES

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's theory of personality proposes a number of differing ego state models. It is worth stressing at this point that Berne did not employ the first of the Freudian topographies – the unconscious, preconscious and conscious – and as we know, Freud was clear that the two topographies do not map onto one another. Berne went on to profess a hope that advances in neuroscience 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 understanding of brain functioning.

There is some acknowledgement within TA that 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 schools, as well as inconsistencies between this model and the so-called 'one' or 'integrated ego state model' that somewhat less comprehensively underpins the psychodynamic, integrative and cocreative schools. 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 and goes on to develop first Parent then Adult capacities) type B models do not (Parent and Child are embryonically present at birth in the Adult, from which they progressively split-off as a defensive strategy for accommodating trauma). 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 'fixations' as the property of archaic ego state units.

In part, this arbitrariness of definition is due to the contingent nature of socially constructed values, whereby what is determined as functional (OK) or pathological (not-OK) is defined according to the situated socio-historical norms of a given culture. Yet the definition of function as either positive or negative, integrated or fixated is a product of the immutable complementarities that characterise the modernist fantasy, as we saw earlier. Such theoretical confusion with regard to which ego state we are concerned represents a fundamental design flaw in the integrity of ego state theory – or cracks in the hull - according to its own internal logic.

Attempts to patch these cracks have resulted in increasingly complex topographies, of which the acrobatic contortions that result from the Schiffs' attempts to represent the structure of psychosis are amongst the more creative examples. (I argue elsewhere - Kellett van Leer, in press - that structural psychosis cannot be represented using an ego state model). By far the more commonplace attempt to re-ballast our listing ego state models has resulted in the kaleidoscoping of ego states in the guise of a structural ordering whose complexity continues to baffle many a student and practitioner today. The source of this cascading is 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 multiplicity of ego states that attempt to depict the effect of trauma.

The most common type of ego state proliferation, however, involves the assignment of *function* to a sub-structural cascade ego states, in direct contradiction to Berne's oft-repeated warning that function should not be conflated with structure. The first such conflation is exemplified by the second-order split in the Child as a consequence of Steiner's (1979) 'Pig Parent', a fracturing further compounded by the Gouldings' (1976) attempt to graft the Gestalt concept of the impasse onto type A ego state models.

This fragmentation of ego states has reached tipping point in arguably the most populist of current schools in TA, the relational school. Here, Hargaden and Sills' (2002) model of 'the self' perpetuates the fallacy of combining the structural and functional, resulting in a model that shines a searchlight on the Child while leaving both Parent and Adult somewhat in the dark. Their model telescopes type A ego state structure into the Child thrice over, then transplants into this compartmentalised ego state

Stern's (1985) functional organs of selfhood, including an idealised 'core self' that we critiqued above. This compartmentalised sub-structure is then used to compensate for the consequent problems of mixing OK and not-OK functions by *further* quarantining what is regarded as pathological (technically creating a fourth order, though this is not explicitly acknowledged). While the authors offer this model as a way to conceptualise the fragmentation of selfhood that they claim is the common zeitgeist, the model rather seems to generate the very phenomenon for which it seeks to account.

THE PROBLEM WITH TA PROPER
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Berne had originally proposed that certain crossed transactions can be used to map those more common transferential 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 transferential – 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 transferential dynamics. However, he clearly if inadvertently demonstrated that ulterior transactions are also forged in awareness; the famous salesman, for example, whose well-rehearsed ulterior angular snare so artfully hooks the poor housewife, fully *intends* the deception he perpetrates (see 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 *sales*man'). *Thus, Berne rules out the possibility that transactions on either the social or ulterior level, either in or out of awareness could possibly account for the transference.*

As the seat of selfhood, Hargaden and Sills assert that their Child is the origin of a variety of transferential dynamics. In order to justify this claim they draw upon Moiso's (1985) attempt to account for a number of Freudian transferential dynamics using a type A ego state model, an attempt that is itself premised on a common misinterpretation of Berne's model of TA proper.

The models developed by Moiso, as well as Hargaden and Sills ignore this fundamental impossibility, and thus erroneously deploy ego state models in their attempt to anchor the notion of the unconscious, and TA proper as the oar that navigates the currents of the transference.

Similarly, Novellino's (2003) attempt to bequeath the unconscious to the Adult results in a number of inconmensurabilities 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.

Regarding type B models, Novellino's proposal contradicts 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, renders the concept of the integrating Adult meaningless. It is possible that this contradiction indicates that our concept of integration is in need of review; something that may very well be warranted not least since one of Freud's principle characterisations of the unconscious is that it resists integration. This resistance on the part of the unconscious is at the heart of its insistent persistence, and crucial to TA, not least since it anchors

Berne's (1961) third rule of communication. 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; another promising research project, perhaps.

Those models that fare better in their accounting of unconscious transferential dynamics do not attempt a transplanting onto Berne's theory of personality. In Little (2004) for example, we find an adoption of 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 patches, such as the concept of ego state units. It is unclear, however, whether this latter concept can plug the holes currently threatening to sink the ego state model.

We appear to have reached the point where our ego state models of personality and dynamics of TA proper are floundering at sea. Well, to conclude on our nautical note what must now seem all too obvious; attempting to account for the structure and function of the unconscious using Berne's model of personality and TA proper is like trying to contain the sea within a boat; *the boat sinks*.

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PERSONALITY DECONTAMINATED

If this crisis in the TA theory of personality 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 TA proper the swells of the transference, then the concept of personality itself warrants decontamination, de-barnacling (as Berne, 1961:49 coined it) in order to remain afloat.

The barnacles that need scraping off are, of course, the notion of the unconscious and its attendant transferential dynamics. As I said at the outset of this paper, TA need not remake the unconscious in its own image but rather accept Berne's enjoiner to "*subscribe*" to the notion and engage critically with the wealth of research that psychoanalysis produces in regard to this "doctrine".

The vessel off which the barnacles need scraping is, of course, our venerable ego state model of personality, since, once we have decontaminated ego states of the unconscious, there can be no danger of our erroneously attempting to account for the transference using TA proper; there are no transactions without ego states. Now, I think it's clear at this point that, even once the ego state model is freed of the burden of having to account for something for which it was not designed and is not fit for purpose, the model still demands further deconstruction in the light of the logical contradictions that my analysis above has revealed. I have heard it said that this project ideally requires collective input and collaboration, not least since the rifts in our models have developed as a result of ideas developed in relative isolation. To some extent this proposal is, of course, a venerable one; but does not such an *ideal* itself represent a modernist fantasy, to the extent that any situated consensus is in danger of posing as the authorative truth? After all, the postmodernist rejection of a single grand narrative and attendant recognition of a plurality of narratives surely warns us to avoid such homogenisation, and rather embrace the challenge of diverse perspectives.

Indeed, this embrace is something that Dianne Leupnitz (2009) illustrates in her holding of both Lacanian and Winnicottian analytic perspectives in her work. Such holding, she stresses, does not

represent an integration, which too often indicates an assimilation of one theory by another, thereby risking the very distortions we have seen made in the development of ego state theory to date. Rather, she urges a dialectic holding, one that produces a tension between perspectives or models, a tension that itself is generative and creative. It is an ethic that, after all, mirrors the psychoanalytic view that we ourselves are divided subjects, and that our creative productivity is a result of the tension inherent in our contradictory natures, as Mr G has obligingly illustrated.

In the light of our reflections above, we can certainly conclude that personality serves a number of contrary functions. For example, given that ego states represent *categories of function* – ways of thinking, feeling and behaving (Kellett, 2007b) rather than structural entities – the notion of personality can be seen as an *emergent property* – rather than an essentialist core – a property of the *script*, functioning as an *adaptive strategy* fashioned to (re)cover (from) the developmental traumas that Berne portrays as a stack of bent pennies. In this way, personality is *constructed* to create a good impression, to keep up appearances, to conjure up the illusion of a straight stack.

Such illusory allusions are reminiscent of Berne's (1957b and 1966) notions of ego image and group imago respectively; hologramatic images projected from our desire to disavow any fundamental, existential sense of not-OK-ness. 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-body. And since identity is both public and private, forged at the interface of the internal and external – do you not, after all, "prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet", as Prufrock sings (Eliot, 1917:14)? – personality is regulated by an interactional, trans-actional matrix in which we all collude (apart from those with a psychotic structure, in the Lacanian sense, who are tortured by the very fact that they cannot prepare such a face … but that is another story).

As such, the notion of personality is akin to what I have referred to as a *scar* or a *scab* (Kellett van Leer, 2015b) representing the sign of an attempt at healing that belies an earlier wounding, an sign in which we can detect the incorporation of the kinds of identifications that I referred to in Postmodernising Identity; identifications deployed as sutures or stiches, designed to hold things together, band aids or makeup to cover what threatens to reopen, *to keep at bay the return of the repressed*. Thus, the function of denial performed by personality is enacted not in the service of the defence of some vulnerable true self, but in denial of the disturbing reality that such an idealised and idolised self is a conceit.

This is one way by which we have understood Mr G's predicament; we cannot avoid recognizing that human nature is divided, though we can turn a blind eye to this inconvenient truth and console ourselves with the fallacy of an idealized, noble core self, a fairytale that hypnotizes us as is a moth by the flame.

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BEYOND PERSONALITY
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PROCESS SCRIPTS

TA offers a number of models by which we can scaffold our thinking about the construction of identity. I have previously 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 by which we choose to clothe the varying size and shape of our attempts to consolidate a sense of having a place in the world (Kellett, 2004). 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)dressing the existential dilemma of structure-hunger (Berne, 1961), of forging a currency for the economy of enjoyment, and ultimately of creating a sense of meaning and purpose through the rehearsal of such parables as *The Emperor's Clothes*, and the (re)production of their tragi-comic denouements.

Process script theory articulates how such myths distill over time, coalescing to form the 'encultured codes' by which our sense of identity is socially constructed (Kellett, 2006). One of the hallmarks of postmodernism, of course, is the acknowledgement that there always/already exists a shifting *plurality* of situated narratives by which we represent our lived experiences. Little Red Riding Hood (see Berne, 1972) 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 to digest. 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 elucidating 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 questionnaire-based research that comprises the currently sanctioned if somewhat 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 (Kellett, 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 recent attacks on the judiciary by the right-wing legislature in Poland, or the 2016 case of the U.S. Supreme Court nomination process 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.

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 illustrates how *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.

STRUCTURAL SCRIPT THEORY

Structural script theory can also be applied to the postmodern notion of identity (Kellett van Leer, 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 somewhat overdue that we consider multiaxial configurations of three or more centers of formative influence; for example, straight (first mother) – bondage (father) – trans (second mother)? Surely 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.

Both functional and structural script theories, then, 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.

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SUMMARY
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