

**January 2003 TAJ
Written for You
and Your Clients**

What do you expect from your *Transactional Analysis Journal*? This time you might be surprised! The January 2003 issue of our journal is written for a new audience: It is for you and your clients! Look it over carefully and see if you don't agree that the articles about psychotherapy, sexuality, spirituality, relationship endings, dreamwork, money, transactional analysis, education, and more would be useful to your clients, trainees, workshop participants, and even colleagues who might be interested in learning more about how transactional analysis can be useful to them and those with whom they live and work.

Enclosed with this issue of *The Script* is a special flyer that describes the January TAJ in greater detail and makes it easy for your clients to order copies for themselves or for you to order extras to make available to your clients, trainees, and/or colleagues. They are available now from the ITAA at \$10 each or \$8 each for 10 or more copies (postage included). Use the flyer to order now or make copies to leave in your waiting room, post on bulletin boards, or hand out at workshops. We hope you will find this special issue of the TAJ to be a valuable tool and would love to hear how you used it!

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Differentiation or Disintegration?

New ITAA Videotape Highlights Bader and Pearson's Work with Couples

BILL: Wow, I got both of you at the same time!

ELLYN: That's what happens at 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning.

BILL: Well, that's great for us. I'm glad to have the chance to talk with both of you, especially since the stimulus for this interview is the release of your new training tape for the ITAA "Transactional Analysis in Action" series. I think I'll start by asking a couple of questions that interested me from watching the tape, which is titled "Couples Therapy: Strategies for Treating Affairs and Passive-Aggressive Behavior." I think what stood out to me most from the tape was how pervasive the difficulties are for couples in the differentiation stage and how crucial the differentiation process is to the viability of long-term, healthy relationships. It is striking how hard it is for couples to differentiate.

PETE: And therapists! Many therapists are afraid of conflict and thus avoid the stress and tension involved in facilitating differentiation with a couple.

ELLYN: Many couples try to maintain a symbiotic relationship. They tend to stay stuck in a conflict-avoidant or hostile/dependent relationship, which are both forms of symbiosis. Differentiation is avoided for a lot of reasons. It is a high-anxiety/high-tension phase of a relationship. People have to come to terms with the reality that "we really are different people. You are different from who I thought you were or wanted you to be. We have different ideas, different feelings, different interests. We don't have an 'ideal' relationship." Many people experience differentiation as a kind of abandonment. There can be intense separation anxiety during this phase. It is hard for people to manage the tension and to face the crumbling of the symbiosis.

"The members of a truly differentiated couple are able to experience separation and self-responsibility and to work together and support one another."

Differentiation has two components. There is self-differentiation: "This is who I am and what I want." This refers to the development of an independent sense of self: to know what I want, think, feel, desire. Classical transactional analysis structural analysis is very good for this process, which is really a decontamination process. The second involves differentiation from the other. When this is successful, the members of the couple have the capacity to be separate from each other and involved at the same time.

BILL: That sounds very Winnicottian.

ELLYN: Yes, Winnicott, Mahler, it's a developmental perspective. It means a willingness to do a lot of self-management. It's really about the capacity for self-regulation and affect regulation.

PETE: In highly distressed couples, the solution is always for the other person to change so that I can get relief.

ELLYN: Yes, that's true. But Pete, before you go in that direction, let me finish my thought. Too many therapists confuse individuation with differentiation, so they misdiagnose the couple. One partner may say, "I'm doing my own thing." A new therapist may mistake that for differentiation and support that person as the healthier, more independent, more autonomous partner. But "I'm doing my own thing" doesn't necessarily reflect much capacity for differentiation. The members of a truly differentiated couple are able to experience separation and self-responsibility and to work together and support one another.

BILL: So differentiation is a crucial skill set both for therapists to understand and for couples to develop. It raises the question for me about how much emphasis is placed in the contemporary therapeutic literature on the mother/infant and attachment/attunement models. Doesn't that support couples' fantasies of an ideal symbiosis and inhibit differentiation?

ELLYN: Oh dear. We'd need three or four hours for that discussion. I can't turn that into a sound bite. Maybe we should take up that question—of when to promote empathy and when to encourage differentiation—in a different context, such as a conference panel.

BILL: OK. Or maybe another interview! Pete, you said a really interesting thing on the training tape about the uselessness of classic transactional analysis contracts in working with highly distressed couples, especially those with passive-aggressive dynamics.

PETE: You bet. After years of working with couples, I learned that the hard way. Passive-aggressive people strongly defend against identifying and describing what they want. They have been so severely disappointed so many times growing up, they despair of really getting what they want. That's the passive part of their personality. They are also angry about being/feeling deprived, and that's the aggressive/hostile part of their personality. Trying to get a contract from them at the outset of therapy is an exercise in frustration. This is what drives their partners nuts.

Highly distressed couples always have a very deeply embedded notion: The problem they have is that they think they shouldn't have problems! Just as insidious is the belief, "If my partner changes, we won't have any problems." It is similar to the belief of someone married to an alcoholic: "When my partner stops drinking, things are going to be OK." Success with these couples requires that each

partner accept responsibility and be accountable for his or her contribution to the problems. Part of the confusion is that at a Child ego state level, both people feel they are already far too responsible for the welfare of the other. They hear contracts for change from the therapist as the therapist saying, "It's your fault and you have to fix it." So you rarely get a clear contract for self-change. Most couples coming into therapy have treatment goals to reestablish the symbiosis, that is, most couples' goals are symbiotic objectives: "WE need to..." "WE think that..." "WE don't know how to..." The symbiotic invitation is in the "we." And, of course, WE need to change/learn really means "my partner needs to change/learn."



BILL: So what is the alternative to establishing a contract?

PETE: What I've learned is to start with the first phone call, before the couple is even in the office. I tell people on the phone, "I want each of you to think about three questions before you come in for the appointment: (1) What is it I need to do to be a more effective partner? (2) Why would doing those things be difficult for me? (3) How strong is my motivation for working on questions 1 and 2?"

I never ask, "Why are you here?" or "What do you want?" because each person will unload a litany of complaints about the partner—and then I'm stuck because I asked for it, and then I have to give them the bad news that they can't have what I just asked them for. Those are good questions in individual therapy. But in working with highly distressed couples, those questions are lethal.

BILL: How has working with couples influenced your use of transactional analysis?

PETE: Transactional analysis is still the most versatile way of looking at couples' relationships among the models that we've seen.

continued on page 7

Scripts on Writing with Advice from Eric

Aur thanks to Muriel James—who was suggested by our last contributor, Gloria Noriega—for offering the following piece about how Eric Berne influenced her writing. We will ask Muriel, in turn, to “tag” the next person to write for this column, but we also urge you to send in your vignettes about what Eric said to you, either in person or through something he wrote or said or did. Please send to Pam Levin at PO Box 1429, Ukiah, CA 95482, USA, or at perfectbones@pacific.net.

It was in June 1979, at a conference of the Golden Gate Psychotherapy Society in San Francisco, that I incorporated Eric Berne into my Parent ego state as part of a New Parent I was designing and also began to comply with his instructions as an obedient Adapted Child.

“The other therapist interrupted with a sexist remark. Eric charged in like a knight on horseback and interrupted the scene.”

At the conference I was scheduled to present a paper, “The Cure of Impotency with Transactional Analysis,” when a well-known therapist, who had a different orientation than Berne, approached me. “Hey,” he said, “I see in the program that you’re going to present

next hour. I’ll bet you really know how to work a cure!”

Then, with a “Ha, ha,” and a smirk, he went into the large meeting room. I was due at the podium in five minutes and felt very uncomfortable. I wondered if maybe it was a mistake for me to be speaking on the subject. Then I saw Eric on



the other side of the lobby, went over to him, and told him what I was presenting. I asked if he would come in and listen and then give me feedback. He said, “Sure, I’ll do it.”

When I was introduced and started speaking, he took out a pen and small notebook he often carried in his shirt pocket to use when he had a new idea or when he wanted to remember to comment on something later.

When I was almost at the end of my presentation, the other therapist (known, but unnamed here) interrupted with a very sexist remark. Eric charged in like a knight on horseback and interrupted the scene. As we were leaving the

meeting room, he spoke to me with a very strong voice: “Muriel, get that published now, and keep on writing.”

Well, I’ve been so obedient to this part of his Parent ego state (remember, his mother was a writer) that 19 of my books have been published since that meeting at the conference. Seventeen of them are on transactional analysis and its applications. I have also contributed four chapters on transactional analysis to books compiled by other professionals and 20 of my articles, including the one mentioned above, are in my book *Perspectives in Transactional Analysis*, published by and available from the ITAA.

It appears that this conference event changed part of my script. I had never taken any writing classes and still haven’t. In 1964 I finished writing my doctoral dissertation in ancient history and vowed I would never try to write again.

But I do, and it’s not easy. However, I am working on four more books because the challenge of research and writing interests me. I also teach and coach others who want to write nonfiction. Wow! The power of Eric Berne’s directions to me!

What do you think? Maybe childhood scripting on specific issues changes with rescripting in later life when we add a new parent figure to the old Parent ego state.

As I think about this, three other parental figures I had come to mind. They never talked about writing, and I did not see them do it, but there were always lots of books around the house. It was not until a few years ago when I was doing some genealogy and family history that I discovered that on my paternal side of the family, both my father and grandfather wrote scientific textbooks. Strange but true, for the past eight years I have been doing “primary” research for a biography of my grandfather and how he founded the army dental corps.

On my maternal side, my grandmother, when she was in her seventies, wrote two memoirs. One was on growing up as a Nebraska pioneer in the 1880s, another was about her experiences when going to the Gold Rush in the Klondike. When terminally ill, she gave me what she had written and asked me to get it published. They are interesting, and it’s time for me to do that.



Back to Eric Berne and writing: Before he died, Grace, Eric’s sister, sent me some humorous material he had written in his student days and asked me to get it published. Maybe it’s also time for that too?

In conclusion, without awareness until today, part of my own writing script came from three parent figures I had as a child, as well as from Eric Berne, who is now in my Parent and Child ego states and reinforced my early experiences.

Whoops, I just thought of another way he influenced me. No time for that now, but what about you? Who do you still listen to internally with or without awareness?

Muriel James, EdD, TSTA, was a colleague of Berne and is a long-time member of the ITAA. She has served in many capacities within the organization, including as president from 1980-1981. She is the author of numerous books, articles, and book chapters and the recipient of the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award for her work on self-reparenting. She can be reached at 3644 Terra Granada #1A, Walnut Creek, CA 94595, USA, or by fax at 925-256-8527.

ITAA The Script

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Perspectives in Transactional Analysis

by Muriel James

Includes 20 essays covering a wide range of topics, including basic transactional analysis principles/techniques, fascinating accounts of Muriel’s own life and her relationship with Eric Berne, the drama of cultural scripts, techniques for personality structural change, spirituality and the human spirit, and special applications of transactional analysis in clinical and organizational settings. Previously published and edited for this volume, many of these papers are no longer available elsewhere.

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The Missing Parent

by Fatma Reid

In the 1960s, when I was a psychology student in the United States, visiting bookstores was as much fun as an outing. There were marvelous hardcovers, of course—handsome in looks and rich in content, but most of them too expensive for the student budget. As students, we used to rent second-hand books and only keep those we felt would have future reference use.

In the 1990s, when I went back to the States as a professional, I had both the money and the time to indulge myself in such excursions, but I ended up feeling disappointed to see how “serious” books had been overtaken by a multitude of a new type of book referred to as “self-help.” Out of curiosity, on each visit I would buy a couple of them and finish reading them on train rides. These colorful, affordable, easy-reading paperbacks seemed to have hit the market and obviously found a substantial reader population. What could have caused such a new demand? I wondered. Had psychotherapy become so expensive that these self-help books provided a kind of substitute road map for self-therapy? Or had the speed of life for people like the Americans made “quick fixes” more appealing than ever? Perhaps, I thought, good friends with common sense who would offer love and support at times of need were now a rarity in a competitive world.

As I went more closely through the five-step, seven-step, ten-step programs these books offered on how to build self-esteem, how to succeed in life, or how to get out of misery (more recently, how to survive a divorce), I could almost hear the voice of a caring and guiding parent in the background. These books seemed, indeed, to function almost as surrogate parents. When parents are missing, or when we go through periods of our youth when we need other people to hold up a “mirror” so we can see our mistakes or our strengths and possibilities for action, we often look for other adults in our extended family, school, or community. Today, as children increasingly outgrow their parents and parents

increasingly lose their primary role in their children’s upbringing or become lost in the background as children become central figures, these books may be fulfilling an increasing need for those who are now adults.

In 1989 I attended a Gulf Women’s conference in Bahrain. In one session I remember challenging those mothers who seemed to have turned over their parenting roles to imported Asian caregivers, convinced that their time was better utilized doing something other than mothering. At the same time, however, they were distressed over their children’s adolescent problems and felt that the major cause was the conflict between the cultural backgrounds of imported caregivers and family traditions of the Gulf. In addition, the fathers in these families played a distant traditional role, responsible mainly for the economic well-being of the family.

“I could almost hear the voice of a caring and guiding parent in the background. These self-help books seemed, indeed, to function almost as surrogate parents.”

In New York in 1994, I participated in a series of UNICEF-NGO joint group meetings examining “the missing father syndrome.” Not long before these meetings, Sylvia Ann Hewlett (1993) had issued a report showing the ill effects of the missing father in Anglo-American societies, highlighting young unwed motherhood, rising violence, substance abuse, and lower SAT scores of adolescents. Later, several other books were published on the subject, one of which was dramatically titled *Fatherless America* (Blankenhorn, 1995). All the reports in our meetings, from many different cultures, showed the importance of the father’s presence in the family—with one exception. Mothers did better parenting without abusive fathers around, especially those

who were physically abusive to their wives and children as well as economically irresponsible.

Working mothers once universally carried guilt for not spending enough time with their children. Relief for their troubled consciences came later when psychologists introduced the notion of “quality time,” the idea that what mattered was not how much time mothers spent with their children, but how enjoyable, meaningful, and fruitful the time was when they were together. “Quality time” was the remedy for many women’s conflicts over being good parents or satisfied professionals.

I recently began a workshop group in Istanbul with young mothers of children aged 3 months to 3 years. The premise of the group is that if the first three years of life are well supported, other critical periods in life will present fewer pitfalls.

In particular, there will be fewer problems during periods such as adolescence and even later adult years related to issues such as authority relations, sharing instead of dominating or selflessly submitting, socializing instead of withdrawing, and trusting instead of mistrusting.

In the first session, as a warm up, I asked how the women felt about the break in their careers to take up mothering responsibilities. Only two out of ten were working mothers; the rest had stopped working at their previous jobs. All the women had completed their higher education. Much to my surprise, these mothers, with one exception, expressed feelings of uneasiness that they verbalized as “guilt” for not using their education and energy in a profession. I shared with them my Gulf Women’s Conference experience, hoping this would challenge their attitudes about parenting.

For career women in Turkey, grandparents are still invariably the mother substitutes, although there has been a rise in short-term imported nannies for some families. The long-term consequences on children’s development of having several short-term nannies will be seen in the future. Hopefully, this trend in Turkey today will result in less damage to youth than has the prevalence of missing fathers in industrialized nations.

The challenge for Turkish culture will be to keep up with the times without losing sight of family values and to continue using extended family members for childcare, such as grandmothers who lovingly take care of their grandchildren without making themselves the target of criticism for “smothering” the young. The challenge will also be to provide ways that people can learn new parenting skills. This is an especially great need for the next generation of Turkish fathers, who want to be more actively involved with their children early on but lack working models from their past because their own fathers were distantly involved in parenting. The challenge for the young educated mothers is no less: to consider taking a pause from their careers, if they can, especially during the first three years of life, and to regard the time put into parenting as the best investment of their lives.



*Fatma Torun Reid, MA, is a Regular Member of the ITAA and a psychotherapist, trainer, and consultant who lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey. In 1979 she founded ASAM, the first private child and family counseling and therapy center in Turkey. She also did pioneering work in Jordan, cofounding the El Mawel Center in Amman in 1988. Her book, roughly translated from the Turkish as *Hurry-Up Moms and Forgetful Men: Selected Readings on Psychology in Everyday Life*, was published by Sistem Publishers in Istanbul in 2002. She can be reached at Sarigul Sok 15/5, Caddebostan, Istanbul 81060, Turkey; tel: +90 216 302 7598; fax: +90 216 363 3484; email: frreid@yahoo.com .*

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Nominations Sought for ITAA Officers and Trustees

The ITAA nominating committee is seeking nominations for the following positions:

OFFICERS (nominations allowed from any region and elected at large by all ITAA voting members)

Vice President of Operations

Vice President of Research and Innovation

Treasurer

REGIONAL TRUSTEES (only voting members from a given region may be nominated and only voting members from a given region will vote for the trustee to represent that region)

1 US/Canada/México

1 India/Asia/Africa

1 Central/South America

Nominations require the name and consent signature of the nominee (it may be yourself), the name of the person making the nomination, and the name of the person seconding the nomination. To be eligible for nomination, trustees may not have already served two consecutive terms of office in any position on the board. Position statements (charters) that describe the function and selection criteria for each of the officer positions are available from the ITAA office. Nominees are encouraged to read and understand these before accepting nomination.

Send nominations to John Parr, Nominations Committee Chair, c/o ITAA, 436 14th St., Suite 1301, Oakland, CA 94612-2710, USA; fax: 510-625-7725; email: itaa@itaa-net.org . The deadline for nominations is 31 May 2003.

ELECTION PROCEDURES: As per the ITAA bylaws (revised 1996), if there is no more than one candidate per position, there will be no ballot, and the results of the election will be announced in *The Script* newsletter. If there is more than one nominee for a position, a ballot will be mailed to all voting members within 60 days of the close of nominations. The deadline for return of ballots is 60 days from the date of mailing. The results of the election will be announced to the candidates within 30 days after the election results are determined and to the voting membership as soon as practical thereafter.

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We have recently received several bank transfers without any identifying information that would allow us to credit them to the correct person for the correct reason. When making bank transfers into the ITAA bank account, please make sure to include your full name, the ITAA account number (obtain from Ken Fogelman at the ITAA office), and what the payment is for (membership dues, books or videos, etc.). In addition, please email or fax the ITAA office with the same information (your full name, the amount you transferred, account number, reason for payment) in case it is not included with the information forwarded to us from the bank. If you have any questions, please contact Ken Fogelman at ken@itaa-net.org .

Robin Maslen Honored with Goulding Award

At the 16th Annual Australasian Transactional Analysis Conference in Perth, Australia, last November, Robin Maslen was honored by the Western Pacific Association of Transactional Analysis (WPATA) with the Goulding Award for Excellence. Since he was unable to attend the conference, the award was accepted for him by Valerie Redman, who read the following speech on Robin's behalf. Two of the WPATA board members, Valerie and Curt Fisher, then presented the award to Robin in person on 2 February in front of Valerie's training marathon in Adelaide. As stated in the WPATA Newsletter, "Congratulations Robin. [This award] could not have been won by a more worthy transactional analyst."

Dear Colleagues, Friends and TA Enthusiasts,
Please accept my apologies for not being present to accept the Goulding award.

My sincere thanks to the WPATA Board, the award committee, and the WPATA membership for the work in producing my nomination, arranging for the voting process, and for the granting of the award.

Thirty years ago I stumbled across transactional analysis at the Goulding's Mt. Madonna Institute in Watsonville, California, during my Churchill Fellowship program when I enrolled in a week-long workshop to find out about training correctional staff from institutions for

young offenders. I was shocked to find myself in a week-long therapy training program at a stage in my life when I had never heard of psychotherapy, let alone transactional analysis.

This adventure changed my life and started my missionary zeal to introduce transactional analysis across Australia. From that inauspicious beginning, I was fortunate enough to eventually become the president of the International Transactional Analysis Association and so now have many friends in the TA networks around the world.

Bob and Mary Goulding, and many others from their faculty, visited Australia and New Zealand many times in those early days to help train those of us interested in transactional analysis. Those were exciting times, and most of us TA therapists were only one or two pages ahead of our clients as we embarked on a steep learning curve. This process led to my lifetime friendship with Bob and Mary; I visited their Mt. Madonna home and workshops many times and also hosted them in Adelaide on their visits.

The Gouldings, probably more than any other transactional analysis trainers, have promoted the magic of TA, the art of good therapy, and the techniques for establishing nurturing training environments. Even today, Mary, in the twilight years of her life, has sold her home in San Francisco and is now a global citizen trav-



Robin Maslen (right front) accepting his Goulding Award for Excellence from Valerie Redman and Curt Fisher (middle and left front, respectively) on behalf of WPATA

eling around the world spreading her positive-ness and caring human concern for the underdog.

Many have followed in Bob and Mary's footsteps in the promotion of transactional analysis, but probably none more than the White family here in Western Australia and their many colleagues. They have seen to the promotion of all the goodness from the Gouldings, to the establishment of WPATA, and to the eventual acceptance of transactional analysis in Australian academic circles.

So, it is with much pleasure and a large amount of humbleness that I gratefully accept the Goulding Award and all that it conveys. It will be a constant reminder of my deep friendship with Bob and Mary and the often-taken-for-granted value of transactional analysis theory and practice. I send my warmest regards for all of you who carry on the transactional analysis learning adventures in this region of a very troubled world at such a critical time. Thank you all so much.

ITAA/USATAA/IMAT Conference
6-10 August 2003 ■ Ciudad de Oaxaca, México

INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS CONFERENCE CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE ANÁLISIS TRANSACCIONAL

Check the updated conference website for more information about the program, registration, and hotels: www.taconference.com

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (Includes coffee/tea breaks and opening Mexican party)

Registration fees:		Additional fees:
Now	Onsite	
Regular..... US\$265	US\$300	■ Preconference Institutes and TA 101 in Spanish: \$95 US each
Student..... US\$150	US\$175	■ Saturday night parade with Guelaguetza Party and dinner: \$30 US
		■ There will be a minimal charge for the children's program.

All language groups can register by visiting the conference website at www.taconference.com or by following the instructions in the January-February *Script*. In addition, those paying in US dollars may use the form below. For questions about payment in US dollars, contact Gaylon Palmer at 916-863-7096 or email gaylonlcs@comcast.net

Payment in US dollars: If you pay by check, make payable to "New Beginnings-Mexico '03 Conference" in US dollars through a US bank. You may also charge to VISA or MasterCard (not American Express); indicate total amount charged, including a \$10 fee for each credit card transaction. Mail the completed form below to Gaylon Palmer, 11622 Fair Oaks Blvd., Suite 103, Fair Oaks, CA 95628, USA, or fax to 1-916-863-7098.

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If you are a member of the ITAA, you can now list books you have authored or coauthored on the ITAA website at no cost! Books should be about transactional analysis or a related subject. To be listed, please send the following information to Elaine Francis at elaine@itaa-net.org :

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A Complete Reference Database to the Transactional Analysis Literature

TA DATA 4.0

This database includes about 14,000 keywords covering the *Transactional Analysis Bulletin* (1962-1970), the *Transactional Analysis Journal* (1971-2002), essentially all books (not pamphlets) on transactional analysis published in English from 1947-2002 (120 books), and 450 journal articles from the APA PsycINFO database covering abstracts from some 1300 journals worldwide (1967-2002), including 290 research article references to transactional analysis and 143 research dissertations. The system includes three search programs, all of which can output to the screen monitor, the printer, or to file storage. TADATA 4.0 is provided on two 3½-inch 1.4 megabyte disks or on a CD disk in IBM-compatible format. Two megabytes free hard disk space are required. Standard price: \$60 for ITAA members, \$70 nonmembers, which entitles the purchaser to register as a user and to obtain updates for \$15. ITAA members whose dues are set using the TAlent system can have the price of this product prorated on the same basis as their dues. For further information, contact the ITAA, 436 14th St., Suite 1301, Oakland, CA 94612-2710; phone: 510-625-7720; fax: 510-625-7725; email: itaa@itaa-net.org. Copyright © 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003 Theodore B. Novey, PhD

Transactional Analysis Thriving in Germany

by Jan Hennig

We are happy to present the following article as the next in our series about what is going on in transactional analysis communities in various countries and regions around the world.

Transactional analysis in Germany is closely connected and held together through the German TA Association or DGTA (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Transaktionsanalyse). Founded in 1975 in Berlin, it has grown steadily ever since. Currently, it has more than 1400 members and holds an annual conference that draws 400–600 participants. In addition, there are yearly conferences for members in the educational field and for those in the organizational field, each of which draws 100–200 participants.



“Transactional analysis and TA training are blossoming in Germany. The DGTA has over 1400 members and holds an annual conference that draws 400-600 participants.”

In spite of our rather disappointing experiences with trying to assure a good place for transactional analysis in terms of legislation related to psychotherapy in Germany, transactional analysis and TA training are blossoming here. Also, the other fields of transactional analysis applications (e.g., education, organizations, counseling) are seeing increasing success here and are attracting more members. In fact, in the organization of DGTA, the four fields of application each have a separate section with considerable autonomy while still under the “roof” of DGTA. Cooperation among the sections is still important, and transactional analysts feel the connection (as it always was) as a bond across the borders of different professions.

The growing success of transactional analysis in all of Europe—a process in which EATA (the European Association for Transactional Analysis) has played a large role—has, in the last few years, fostered increasing contact on all levels (individual, professional, organizational) between people who are interested in transactional analysis. It has enhanced the exchange and fruitful cooperation over boundaries of language, nationality, and belief systems. A good example of this kind of exchange is the first European transactional analysis trainers’ meeting, which will be held this coming July in Malmö, Sweden; already about 100 PTSTAs and TSTAs from Europe have registered, with more doing so each day. They will be gathering to exchange information and

experiences about training issues and processes and for examining together.

This growing contact between transactional analysts in Europe as well as the large numbers of experienced trainers (we have about 80 German-speaking PTSTAs and TSTAs alone) and well-known transactional analysis authors in Germany has also led to fewer workshops with teachers from overseas and a growing sense of self-esteem among German transactional analysts. International contact with transactional analysts worldwide is still important to many DGTA members, but we now also have a large, lively, and active transactional analysis community whose members have almost no contact internationally and are aware of the international contributions more as the “history” of transactional analysis.

The German scientific transactional analysis journal, *Zeitschrift für Transaktionsanalyse*, has been published quarterly for 20 years now. Currently, it features more and more high-quality articles from German and European authors, thus stimulating interest and discussion. A quarterly newsletter, called *Info*, provides information, news, and advertisements for and about the members.

The transactional analysis culture in Germany is shaped to a high degree from bottom to top. The nuclei are the many training groups of different trainers, in which the main attraction is not only the professional training, but also the basic transactional analysis axiom of “I’m OK, You’re OK” and the interpersonal contact, social awareness, and high ethical standards. These help to interest people in transactional analysis even if they gain no direct professional advantage in the sense of accreditation and so on.

Activities in the professional groups (conferences, short meetings, local small conferences organized by training institutes, etc.) bring together people with an interest in transactional analysis with their colleagues in the field.



Participants listen to speaker at the 2002 DGTA Conference in Hof, Germany.

Through successful cooperation among the trainers in DGTA and the visible, practical “living of what we preach,” the many different “minicultures” meet each other with respect and use the contact to grow and widen their horizons. For instance, in the yearly DGTA conference, professional groups and lay people alike find presentations that are of interest to them.

I believe that the organizational structures on which DGTA is based—which are constantly changing and adapting to new developments—give all kinds of groups within the association enough autonomy to feel free and to develop according to their own needs while at the same time providing them with support and contact with others. This is true even though, of course, we also have fights and difficulties with each other and do not always manage to solve problems as constructively as we would like.

In my view, one of the most important events for the transactional analysis community in Germany is the annual trainers’ meeting, which has been held for almost 20 years now.

At this gathering, German-speaking PTSTAs and TSTAs meet for three days for discussions, teaching, learning, and examining together. This leads to constant exchange and the solving of conflicts in theory, practice, application, training methods, ways of defining new concepts and challenging old ones—in short, to a living and constantly developing transactional analysis community in Germany that is reflected in the still-growing interest in TA here and that draws new and old members into the organization.

Jan Hennig, Dr. Med., is a Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst in DGTA, EATA, and the ITAA and a psychotherapist in private practice in Johannesburg, Germany. He is currently president of DGTA, treasurer of EATA, editor of the EATA Newsletter, and a member of the ITAA Board of Trustees. He has also served as president of EATA. He can be reached at Kapellenstrasse 3, 63867 Johannesburg, Germany, or by email at JanHennig@t-online.de.

DEAR DR. S

by Carol Solomon

Dear Dr. S.,

My sister, who is 50, is dying from lung cancer. Three years ago, when she was first diagnosed, they gave her six to nine months to live. She has beaten the odds, but now the cancer has spread to her brain. She was not a smoker, and we are all shocked and heartbroken that this is happening. I’m so worried about my 15-year-old niece. She refuses to talk about the fact that her mother is going to die and is trying to carry on with her teenage life as usual. I think she’s totally in denial and that we should force her to go to therapy. She refuses. What should we do?

Loving Aunt in Chicago

Dear Loving Aunt,

I’m so sorry that you are facing the loss of your sister.

No, don’t force your niece to go to therapy. She may be using denial to help herself get through the most difficult event of her life. Sometimes denial can be a good thing. Let your niece have her “normal teenage life” now. I imagine she needs the support of her friends and the involvement and distraction her regular activities provide. Allow her to savor having her mother alive right now—there will be plenty of time in the future for

her to deal with her mother’s death. When your niece meets the hospice staff, she may become more open to participating in a grief group after her mother is gone.

I send my warmest wishes to all of your family.

Sincerely, Dr. S.

Dear Dr. S.,

My life has finally gotten to a place where I can slow down a bit and not work quite so hard. I enjoy reading the newspaper in bed for an hour every morning before I get up. But I can’t shake the guilt I feel and the nagging thought that I should get up because I am just “wasting time.” Any ideas?

Worked Hard Enough and Long Enough

Dear Worked Hard,

One of my favorite songs is an old Shaker hymn called “Simple Gifts.” It starts with the words “‘Tis a gift to be simple, ‘tis a gift to be free, ‘tis a gift to come ‘round where you ought to be.” It sounds to me as if you have found a way to enjoy one of life’s simple pleasures. As a way to help yourself stop the Critical Parent voice in your head, put a little more effort into making your first hour of the day a pleasure. Make it more festive. Use a pretty tray, make your

favorite coffee or tea, buy a wonderful breakfast treat, and bring the whole thing in beside you as you read the paper. Try using your Nurturing Parent to say things like, “You’ve worked hard, you deserve a rest” or “What a wonderful way to relax” or “What a fabulous way to start the day!”

*Wishing you many peaceful mornings,
Dr. S.*

And, to Worked Hard, one of my transactional analysis colleagues offers this advice: Block out equal time for Parent, Adult, and Child interests daily and weekly.

Transactional analysis colleagues from around the world are encouraged to contribute their ideas to this column. Let me hear from you! Write Dr. Solomon at 3610 Sacramento St., San Francisco, CA 04611, USA, or at drcsol@pacbell.net.

CLASSIFIED AD
Straight-shooting computer repair guy.
Jim Cooley/Computer Closet.
415-642-1651

Perspectives on the 2003 USATAA Gathering

USATAA in Jamaica

by Fanita English

The 2003 annual "Gathering" of the USA Transactional Analysis Association (USATAA) took place in Port Antonio, Jamaica, from 4-12 February. As in previous years, we stayed at Frenchman's Cove, the beautiful property owned by Grainger Weston. After working hard every morning, we enjoyed late lunches on the beach and swimming in the ocean and the adjoining river.

In appreciation of his long-time support for USATAA, this year we honored Grainger with the "M & M" Award at a special party. Established by Mary Goulding and Muriel James, who donated money for an annual award, this honor is acknowledged with a trophy cup filled with M & M candies. Previous honorees include Muriel James and Morris and Natalie Haimowitz.

Like last year, we also had foreign participants in addition to our US members: five from Canada, one from Germany, and a number from Jamaica. They were helpful in offering "outside" perspectives on our domestic concerns about how to rejuvenate broader interest in transactional analysis in the United States, and we hope to implement some of the proposals that were discussed during our time together.

In addition to lively presentations by our members, Abe Wagner offered a two-day workshop primarily for the benefit of about 20 Jamaican professionals who previously graduated from an extensive course organized by Val Chang. That course was offered over several years via weekend "modules" taught by a series of advanced ITAA members. It was gratifying to experience the enthusiasm of the Jamaicans for transactional analysis. This model of training was so successful that we discussed the possibility of extending it to other communities.

Sadly, Lyman Rigby, our dedicated USATAA Coordinator, suffered an accident in the fall and, although partly recovered, was unable to attend the Gathering. Our thoughts and good wishes were with him, and we missed his dedicated involvement. Nevertheless, as a group we experienced the Gathering as an invigorating success and voted to hold our next one in Jamaica 31 January to 7 February 2004. Do make a note of the date; you are all invited!

Fanita English, MSW, is a Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst, ITAA Vice President of Development, and Pacific regional representative for the USATAA. She has authored articles in several languages and twice received the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award. She can be reached at One, Baldwin Ave. #516, San Mateo, CA 94401, USA, or at fanitae@aol.com.

A Well-Kept Secret

by Suzanne Wilson

I remember reading in the November 2002 *Script* Pam Levin quoting Berne about writing: "Here's the secret to writing....You apply your backside to the seat of a chair and you don't get up until you've written something." It's time now for me to write and say "thank you" for making my first experience with the USATAA Gathering an unforgettable event.

From the beginning, Shirley (Jaeger) and I had a grand adventure. We almost missed the plane from Miami to Kingston, and yet while waiting for Becky (Jordan) and the taxi, we laughed and enjoyed the beautiful Jamaican weather. The laughter was only a taste of things to come.

The accommodations at the villa in Jamaica were so serene that we almost thought we had "died and gone to heaven." No telephones, no television—it was so peaceful to be surrounded by nature, including the beach and the tropical vegetation.

While I had an idea of the format of the Gathering, my expectations were far exceeded. I was delighted at the offerings that stimulated my thinking and learning: dreams, negativity, transactional analysis and the law, creative process, escape hatches, process groups, contracting, and memory, not to mention Abe Wagner and the Jamaicans joining with us for both learning and play at the beach party. The laughter throughout the week was a delight to my soul. On the beach and during "play time," the conversation was stimulating. Even though I was quiet most of the time, my brain was constantly at work. What a delightful group of folks with whom to laugh and learn!

I had a great time at the USATAA Gathering this year. And as my grandmother was fond of saying, "The Lord willing and the creek don't rise, I'll be back."

Suzanne Wilson is a licensed professional counselor in Tennessee and a participant in the training program at the Southeast Institute for Group and Family Therapy. She is married with two children and five grandchildren. She can be reached at Mind and Body of Brentwood, 229 Ward Circle, Suite B-21, Brentwood, TN 37027, USA, or by email at suwilson@bellsouth.net.

Close to Berne's Ideal

by Joachim Karnath

Last autumn when I asked Fanita English to recommend interesting meetings of the international and American transactional analysis communities, she suggested the USATAA Gathering in Jamaica. Jamaica in February—I admit that sounded wonderful. And it was—in more ways than I expected.

First of all, it was a great opportunity to share time on both the professional and the personal levels. As a completely unknown person, I felt totally welcomed and accepted, beginning with the friendly email conversation with Dianne Maki about registering for the Gathering. This feeling of welcome continued when I met Ray Quiett and Emily Ruppert in the arrival area at Kingston Airport in Jamaica—my first USATAA contacts—and later the whole group at Frenchman's Cove.

It was easy to become part of the group. The open-space technique—a tool for working with bigger groups that was developed in the States and is quite popular in Germany—was introduced at the Gathering by Val Chang. This technique is based on the idea that the breaks are the most productive parts of conferences, so let's focus on them! It provides space for people to do what they want and usually results in a self-stimulating flow of presentations, small workshops or lectures, and discussions. It is quite appropriate to an event such as the Gathering and worked very successfully in Jamaica. While I did not learn much new about transactional analysis, I learned a lot about how other professionals work with transactional analysis in their fields, and that was inspiring—and still is.

Working in and with multicultural groups is one of my personal goals, and I got a lot of new ideas about such work through Felipe Garcia's presentation and communications with the Jamaican members of the group. I also appreciated talking with other participants about their daily business and living, and I got a much clearer impression of the genuine multicultural society of North America than I had

before. For example, I learned that the various versions of US-American English spoken in various parts of the United States may sound quite different from each other, as does Canadian-English.

A good deal of the talk and discussion during the Gathering focused on questions such as "Should we meet again in Jamaica?" and "Is there any future for USATAA?" In a group with Laurie, Fanita, Lucy, Felipe, and Jon, I got more impressions about the serious situation facing USATAA and the lack of advanced members in the United States who are committed to the development of the organization.

We continued this discussion in my presentation about organizational scripts; we talked about the parents of the organizational "person" of USATAA and the partly confused messages of the parents to the child. We didn't finish this discussion, and I don't know what the results will be: whether USATAA will continue to exist and live vitally or whether it will die. I, for one, would feel much regret if this time in Jamaica were the last. I urge others of you who might be able to attend such a gathering to take advantage of the opportunity to live in such a transactional analysis community and to get, in the process, an outside perspective on your own organization and your own professional life.

I appreciated the hospitality of USATAA in Jamaica. Maybe a primary purpose for the Gathering at Frenchman's Cove could be both to bring together the American transactional analysis community and to meet transactional analysis people from other regions, such as Jamaica and Europe. Maybe I am being a little selfish to say so, but in some way it seems to me that the Jamaica USATAA Gathering is closer to the ideal of the ITAA's founder Eric Berne than the actual reality of the ITAA today. Let's talk about it—next year at Frenchman's Cove!

Joachim Karnath is CEO of CONTRACT KG, a consulting company in Karlsruhe, Germany. CONTRACT KG works in the fields of organizational development and human resource development. He can be reached at CONTRACT KG, Erbprinzenstrasse 4-12, D-76133 Karlsruhe, Germany, or by email at joachim.karnath@contract-kg.de.

Breaking the Communication Barrier

by Abe Wagner

At the annual USATAA "Gathering" this past February, 15 members of the Jamaican community participated in the day-and-a-half program along with approximately 15 others from Canada and the United States.

This was the second year that the Gathering had a speaker, and I was privileged to present "Breaking the Communication Barrier." The program began with a discussion entitled "Understanding Yourself and Others," which used an ego state model divided into blue (effective) and red (ineffective) ego states. This model was then further applied to explore OK complementary transactions (those between blue ego states) and not-OK complementary transactions (between red).

Discussion then turned to the integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic processes using information from the field of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Practical sugges-



Participants at the USATAA Gathering in Jamaica enjoy lunch on the beach

tions were offered for using these processes to improve communication, to help people switch from ineffective to effective ego states, and to improve teaching. Emphasis included understanding worldwide patterns in communication as well as strategies for eliciting a receptive ego state in another person.

Participants found the practicality of the approach created by combining these two fields of thought so appealing that several are planning to incorporate it into their teaching and counseling sessions as well as into their personal lives.

The next area of discussion explored strokes and structure. Positive strokes for "what you do" and "being you" were described as the key to establishing long-term rapport and as incredible tools for motivation. Constructive negative strokes for "what you do" were discussed as a sensitive and diplomatic means of confrontation, in this context referred to as "carefrontation."

Once again, transactional analysis and NLP concepts were combined to explore techniques for crossing transactions, referred to in NLP as pacing and leading. Simple, practical suggestions were offered for crossing transactions to resolve conflicts and establish rapid rapport.

Finally, I presented a model entitled "Transactional Leadership," a very effective model in which leaders/managers provide structure and strokes in direct proportion to the follower's need. Structure in this case is defined as the answers to "who, what, how, where, when and why."

The response from participants was so enthusiastic that I have agreed to return to Kingston, Jamaica, in September to train for large groups, including both nonprofit and corporate members.

The entire experience of being at the Gathering again was exhilarating. It was wonderful to be with old friends, to make new friends, and to be in the company of people who genuinely appreciate and love one another. I want to thank USATAA for allowing me the opportunity to present to people who are so dedicated to improving the lives of others.

Abe Wagner is an organizational consultant who lives in Denver, Colorado, and travels worldwide doing consulting and teaching. He can be reached at 10200 E. Girard Ave., #B230, Denver, CO 80231, USA, or by email at abewagner@compuserve.com.

Differentiation or Disintegration?

continued from page 1

Combine it with Gestalt methods, and there's no better foundation for working with couples.

ELLYN: Transactional analysis is the only system that combines intrapsychic and systemic thinking. We use a lot of TA, especially in helping people differentiate. It's so crucial to couples to avoid splintering and fighting.

BILL: We're back to the difficulties of differentiation.

PETE: All real growth demands that we surrender a certain amount of certainty. Highly distressed couples don't want to face that. We are saying to couples that they have to learn to tolerate insecurity and risk.

BILL: That's seems equally true, perhaps even more so, for the deadened couples, the ones who avoid distress, live in side-by-side, deadening companionship.

ELLYN: Yes, absolutely, these are the highly conflict-avoidant couples.

PETE: I tell couples who are afraid of change, "People don't drown because they fall in the water, they drown because they stay in the water." We don't talk about change. We talk about experimenting for a while. Just experiment and make some adjustments and see what happens.

ELLYN: When couples try something new, they don't get immediate reinforcement, so they go back to the old ways: "We tried it and nothing happened." We often use the metaphor of exercise. You don't see changes right away, and therapy is a form of exercise to develop emotional muscle—it takes time and practice.

BILL: So, what about your new book, *Tell Me No Lies*?

ELLYN: We wrote the book for the public, hoping that it's the kind of book therapists will give to couples to read to facilitate therapy. The book is about telling the truth, since so many couples' relationships are based on lies, both deceiving the other and self-deception. Everything from the little "loving" lies to big deceptions.

We also describe the "lie invitee," the partner who invites lies because he or she doesn't really want the truth or the responsibility for managing his or her own feelings: "I want an intimate relationship, just don't tell me anything I don't want to hear." We've written about the pressures for self-deception and deception of the other. A good example of this process is what we hear all the time in our training workshops when someone finds out that his or her partner is involved with Internet porn. Internet porn is rampant—so accessible, affordable, and secret. When one member of a couple finds out that the other is involved with it, he or she typically says something like, "Tell me you won't do it again." Such individuals don't use these things, these points of deceit and distress, as a catalyst for change in the relationship. "Promise me" just invites the other person to hide out. It's an invitation to lie rather than talking to each other about what's really going on.

BILL: Besides the new tape and book, what else are you doing professionally these days?

PETE: We're excited about and would like our colleagues to know that we're taking all the material we've learned over the years in working with couples and putting it on our website (www.couplesinstitute.com) so that people can use it at home or in their ongoing therapy. It's not completely done yet, but it will be soon.

BILL: That sounds great. Thanks for talking with me so early on a Sunday. It's been an interesting conversation.

Ellyn Bader, PhD, and Peter Pearson, PhD, are the founders and codirectors of The Couples Institute in Menlo Park, California. Both are long-time members of the ITAA and have served in various capacities in the organization. Ellyn was president of the ITAA from 1984-1985. They can be reached at 445 Burgess Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025, USA, or by email at drebdr@aol.com.

To order the new ITAA tape of Ellyn and Pete's work, "Couples Therapy: Strategies for Treating Affairs and Passive-Aggressive Behavior," please see the announcement on page 8.

International Transactional Analysis Conference

Bangalore, India

30 July-1 August 2004

Organized by the
International Transactional Analysis Association

and the
Centre for Holistic Integrated Learning and Development

Supported by the
Members of the Indian Transactional Analysis Community

Theme: "Celebrating Differences"

DATES

Preconference Institutes: 28-29 July (Wednesday-Thursday)

BOC Exams (CTA and TSTA): 29 July (to be confirmed with the BOC)

Conference: 30 July-1 August (Friday-Sunday)

Training Endorsement Workshop (TEW): 2-4 August (to be confirmed with the TSC)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The scientific program committee invites proposals for workshops, research papers, or posters from transactional analysts and other professionals and practitioners. Please design your presentations in keeping with the conference theme of "Celebrating Differences." Proposals in all fields of application (e.g., psychotherapy, counseling, organizations, and education) are welcome and should be no more than 200 words. Please enclose a resume of no more than 100 words describing the presenter(s). Presenters who are selected will be required to send a detailed paper/article on their presentation at a later date to be included in the conference proceedings.

Please furnish the following details on the cover page of your proposal:

1. Name of presenter
2. Name of copresenter(s), if any
3. Credentials of all presenter(s) (TA certification and other)
4. Title of the presentation
5. Nature of presentation (workshop/paper/poster)
6. Duration: workshop (1.5 hours/3 hours/6 hours); papers (40 minutes)
7. Seating arrangement (circle/theater/other)
8. Audiovisual aids needed (board/flip chart/OHP/LCD projector)
9. Group size limitations, if any
10. Any special care/protection needed for participants. If so, how will that be taken care of?

Deadline for submitting proposals: 31 October 2003

Watch future *Scripts* for details and updates on venue, registration, accommodations, tours, and the program.

EXAM CALENDAR

Exam	Exam Adm.	Exam Date	Location	App. Deadline
CTA Oral	COC	Apr. 10, 2003	Swansea, Wales	Jan. 1, 2003
	COC	July 5, 2003	Malmö, Sweden	April 1, 2003
	BOC	Aug. 6, 2003	Oaxaca, Mexico	May 6, 2003
	COC	Nov. 7, 2003	Lyon, France	Aug. 1, 2003
	COC	Nov. 14, 2003	Kappel, Switzerland	Aug. 1, 2003
	BOC	Nov. 21, 2003	Christchurch, NZ	Aug. 21, 2003
TSTA Oral	COC	Apr. 10, 2003	Swansea, Wales	Oct. 1, 2002
	COC	July 5, 2003	Malmö, Sweden	Jan. 1, 2003
	BOC	Aug. 6, 2003	Oaxaca, Mexico	May 6, 2003
	COC	Nov. 14, 2003	Kappel, Switzerland	May 1, 2003
CTA Written	All Regions (Non-Europe)	Your choice	Submit to Regional Exam Coordinator after paying \$50 fee to T&C Council	Your choice
TEWs	PTSC	Jul. 6-8, 2003	Malmö, Sweden	Mar. 6, 2003
	TSC	August 2003	Oaxaca, Mexico	April 2003
	TSC	August 2-4, 2004	Bangalore, India	April 2004

* COC CTA exam candidates who are doing the COC written case study must submit it no later than six months before the oral exam date. Details/application available from the COC Language Group Coordinators.

Note: Exams subject to availability of examiners/exam supervisors. BOC not responsible for expenses incurred when unavailability of examiners/exam supervisors causes exams to be canceled or postponed. To be an examiner for an ITAA/BOC exam, examiners must be at least a CTA for a CTA exam or a TSTA for a TSTA exam.

To arrange to take a BOC exam, contact the T&C Council, 436 14th St., Ste. 1301, Oakland, CA 94612-2710, USA. Note: COC people sitting for BOC exams must forward the equivalent of the EATA fee to the T & C Council office. **To arrange to take a COC exam,** contact your EATA Language Coordinator. Check with the EATA office or the EATA Newsletter for the name of the appropriate Language Group Coordinator. **TSC Training Endorsement Workshop fee:** \$395 payable in US dollars to T&C Council, c/o the T & C Council office, 436 14th St., Ste. 1301, Oakland, CA 94612-2710, USA. **COC Training Endorsement Workshop:** to take a COC TEW, contact the European TEW Coordinator, c/o the EATA office.

Upcoming *TAJ* Theme Issues

"GROUPS"

Guest Editors: Bill Cornell and Frances Bonds-White
Deadline for manuscripts: 1 June 2003

"EDUCATIONAL TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS"

Guest Editor: Trudi Newton
Deadline for manuscripts: 1 August 2003

Please follow the Instructions to Authors on the inside front cover of any recent issue of the *TAJ*. Send manuscripts to *TAJ* Managing Editor, Robin Fryer, MSW, at robinfryer@aol.com or send to her at 1700 Ganges Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530-1938, USA.

MEMBER'S FORUM

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

Dear Editor:

I want to address a misunderstanding that is commonplace among college freshmen and transactional analysts. It concerns the misuse of the term negative reinforcement.

The terms positive and negative reinforcement were introduced by B. F. Skinner in the 1930s. Since then they have had a clear and precise meaning in the discipline of psychology. Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a positive experience, while negative reinforcement is the removal of an aversive stimulus. Both types of events increase the probability of the behavior that precedes them. That is why we say they reinforce behavior. The animal model is that a rat will learn to press a bar to get food or to turn off an electric shock. Punishment and negative reinforcement are really opposites, since punishment is the presentation of an aversive stimulus.

When we make such a basic mistake, I believe we lose credibility with many of the people we want to take us seriously. As an academic psy-

chologist as well as a Certified Member of the ITAA, I hope that we can stop misusing these terms in ways that make us look foolish to tens of thousands of psychologists.

Art Hohmuth,
Ewing, New Jersey, United States

A PLEA FOR NO POLITICS IN THE SCRIPT

Dear Script:

My opinion is that politics should not be discussed in *The Script* for the following three reasons:

1. Politics, among other things, is a psychological game. Politics deals with the use of physical force, violence, and coercion and with the taking of money by force to use it to provide services. At its most ideal level, the role of the state is to ensure peace, to make sure that everyone complies with a set of rules of behavior, and to defend the members of a country from attack from without or within. When someone violates those rules, the government takes action to defend the victims and

punish or secure the perpetrators. By definition, all governmental behavior is either Persecutory or Rescuing. A government uses force to safeguard individuals from the use of force. No government can exist or function without the right and might and without the actual use of that right and might. When you talk about physical power, force, and coercion, you are talking about the elements of game behavior.

In contrast, in private organizations—be they for work, education, or play—members join voluntarily. Authority and power are social realities that can be dealt with in a straight way or by playing games. In voluntary associations you can talk about an Adult-to-Adult contract that includes authority, rules of behavior, and consequences, including the power to enforce rules.

Relationship with the state is not free or voluntary. There is not, and cannot be, Adult-to-Adult relations with or within a government. One can analyze transactionally political actions and behavior, but any opinion about the righteousness or wrongness of any political action is, by definition, a gamey transaction. War, of course, is a third-degree game.

2. Politics is based on some fundamental philosophical concepts. It is useless to discuss specific issues when the differences lie in the perspectives from which individuals are speaking. Those fundamental principles have to do with one's basic assumptions about life, liberty, integrity, and the proper relations between the individual and the state. These assumptions are not reached by reason but are the starting points of rational discourse. We take them for basic truths, not amenable to discussion, reasoning, or debate. Any attack on the political position of an individual is perceived as an attack on the very selfness of the person. Any statement about politics is offered as an undeniable truth because it relates to basic positions about life that are beyond question. We are all contaminated when we talk politics.

As an example, I can guarantee that some readers will feel personally attacked by what I wrote in the first paragraph of this letter. Some think that any use of force is wrong, some think that they have the God-given right to use force to coerce those who do not think as they do, and some will point out that by giving the explanation I gave I am engaging in the game I just decried. All three think that I am wrong and feel undeniably correct in telling me, as they certainly will, that I am wrong, which proves my second point.

3. *The Script* represents the collective profession of transactional analysts. It cannot, nor should it, take a position pretending to represent its constituent members on issues that are profoundly personal and beyond the boundaries of the profession.

For each of these three reasons, *The Script* should establish as a policy to abstain from publishing any material that deals with politics. For the three reasons together, I think it is imperative.

Melchor Batista,
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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International Integrative Psychotherapy
Association Conference. Contact: Alexis
DiVincente, 252 East 51st St., Suite 3B,
New York, NY 10022, USA;
phone: 212-758-2354;
email: IntegrativeAssn@aol.com

August 3-5, 2003: Oaxaca, Mexico.
Redeccion Conference. Contact: Janet Lee
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August 6-10, 2003: Oaxaca, Mexico.
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July 30-August 1, 2004: Bangalore, India.
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