

# Lost in Translation: Neo-Bernean or Neo-Freudian?

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## **Abstract**

**This article offers a historical perspective and novel insights into the theoretical and organizational issues currently at play between the neo-Bernean and neo-Freudian schools in transactional analysis with the hope of fostering the ongoing preservation of theory and treatment diversity in transactional analysis.**

## **The Problem**

Somewhere, sometime, in the past 20 or more years, there has emerged a version of transactional analysis that seems alien to the transactional analysis that Eric Berne developed. People I know refer to many recent *Transactional Analysis Journal (TAJ)* articles as “tedious,” “boring,” and “irrelevant.” Many transactional analysts I have talked to rarely read it. They want articles written with Berne’s crisp style of vivid imagery, scientific diagrams, and the simple language of transactional analysis that attracted them to TA in the first place—a lively and popular TA that diagrammed the depth of human relationships and destiny, rich in the imagery of the games people play.

Instead, in the recent *TAJ* articles on psychoanalytic transactional analysis—in particular I refer to last year’s April 2005 *TAJ* theme issue entitled “Transactional Analysis and Psychoanalysis”—the writers focus on what Berne might describe as socially invisible “skull games,” that is, fantasies and imaginings, such as transference, countertransference, and now, “intersubjectivity in the transference field,” with a focus centered on the therapist and not on the people that the patients have to deal with in the real world or even in group therapy. A relational therapist’s “sweatshirt” might read, “Don’t talk about your outside world, talk about my countertransferences,” with the Thesis, “The door is locked, you can’t get out of here until we like each other.” If transference is properly interpreted in transactional analysis as

a crossed transaction in a two-handed game, or a three-handed game if we include the childhood scriptor’s forward playing game of “Let’s You And Him Fight,” would the relational therapist avoid this proper TA interpretation because it would be seen as an “intellectualization” interfering with the discovery of the true Self? To charges of “intellectualization,” Berne’s response was, “We respect our patient’s intelligence.”

If mutual intersubjectivity includes, as is suggested, having the patient help the therapist with his or her reality testing and countertransferences, who pays for the sessions? Usually a therapist seeks an outside therapist for help, not a patient. The Freudian psychoanalysts required up to 5 years of personal analysis to clear up their countertransferences because of the involved sensitivity of the sessions. I would like to see the written requirements for the neo-Freudians.

Granted, there is opportunity in new TA theory for the transactional explanation of this enhanced intimacy and trust in the therapeutic relationship and how it leads to a “cure,” and credit must be given to those who have approached this. But I would like to see more of it diagrammed and written up in the everyday language of transactional analysis. If this is not done, their work, to most of us, is “lost in translation.”

*The Real World.* Some relational therapists write of their existential philosophy and a new enhanced intersubjectivity that gently guides clients to the discovery of their inner Self. That sounds good. But these approaches, as written, appear to be self-limited goals in themselves. Often there is no reference to applying this discovery to the patient’s real world. Is it possible that the existentialist or constructivist philosophy behind this could rationalize that the therapeutic relationship *is* the real world, or that there is NO real world? Berne defined reality as something you can photograph and tape record. What we actually see in the *TAJ* is the unfortunate omission of over 40 years of well-established transactional analysis tools that, if

used, could result in game-free relationships and script-free lives for our patients in their real world. I have not seen the written theoretical explanation of why these proven tools are not needed.

*A Leap of Logic.* Is it assumed that if the Self gets discovered and transferences resolved, the outside relationships will then become game free without the further use of transactional analysis education, game, and script analysis? I do not see where this assumed leap into societal health and social-skills proficiency has been given a TA explanation and diagram. I would like to see it. Inner health does not necessarily translate into outer health. It is the *in vitro* versus the *in vivo* argument. Are we to assume that if you can relate to a well-paid and relatively sane professional in the control of an office closed system, you will then, automatically, be able to successfully deal with an unpredictable partner or business adversary in the outside world? Inner strength may not be enough. The assumption that the leap would just happen magically was the well-known criticism of the original psychoanalytic approach. Another legendary criticism of psychoanalysis was that if patients came in for apples, they were given oranges; they wanted help in the real world but were only given help in their childhood world and the transference world.

*One Size Fits All?* There are, perhaps, borderline and third-degree impasse therapy situations, or others, in which the transference approach works best, yet in most others direct therapy with transactional analysis works better, cheaper, and quicker. Most therapies taught today do deal with the real world; this includes cognitive-behavioral therapy, limited managed care brief therapy (with or without medication), group therapy, relapse prevention therapy, anger management and coping skills groups, crisis supportive therapy, family and couples' counseling, grief counseling, and others. Even psychodynamically trained therapists, when unobserved, will ask about the real world. The neo-analytic relational approach may be a luxury in the classic "ivory tower."

*Bonding and Attachment for Sale.* One wonders, how many patients would voluntarily purchase artificial mutual intimacy with an

expensive stranger in an expensive office? Or, after presenting a problem in the real world, how many then get a counter offer to spend their time focused on talking about their fantasies of the therapist? If they openly complained about a bait and switch, would they be labeled as having a "transference" problem requiring more therapy? The egocentricity of the therapy should be discussed in advance so the patient would be able to make an informed consent and demand apples for apples or move on. The checks and balances, with the boundaries explained, need to be written up and diagrammed in TA terms so we can know how that enhanced intimacy can stay professional and not become a self-indulgent affair as the intimate language could suggest. These ethical issues need to be spelled out in clear TA language, not obscured in the psychoanalytic insider jargon. Some complicated psychoanalytic paragraphs seem to require a machete and pith helmet to dig out what is going on. We need to see for ourselves what is happening, which is not entirely possible now.

*Two Treatment Goals.* Eric Berne offered two brilliant breakthroughs with regard to transactional analysis treatment goals; these may be more difficult for neo-analytic transactional analysts if they are working under the long shadow of Sigmund Freud.

1. *"Cure patients faster."* Analysis was time-consuming. Berne wanted to change that. To accomplish "faster," he simplified the treatment process by using Occam's Razor to whittle away the inessentials, naming and assembling shortcuts that cut through the lengthy process he referred to as a "Gordian knot." Earlier transactional analysts followed these principles with breakthrough theory and simplifying treatment methods. To the end of "cure," given the existing world in which treatment success was assumed to be unmeasurable, the pragmatist Berne devised a way to put the criteria of success into concrete terms, for example, a lonely person would make a contract to "get two friends that you can talk to on the phone each week." That was measurable. Berne mocked "making progress" in therapy as opposed to "getting the job done." He used the analogy of an airline pilot announcing that he was "going toward New York."

2. *“Is it a treat or a treatment?”* A “treat” was an approach that was too comfortable for the therapist and not necessarily a “treatment” that got the patient to his or her stated goals quickly. The love of philosophical approaches by the neoanalysts, as written, may be their “treat,” but it may not provide a treatment for the patient.

*Does It Work?* How do you measure treatment success? Is an effective form of transactional analysis being replaced by a less effective form of transactional analysis? Core TA requires objective contracts that can be measured so you can prove success, while the open-ended neo-analytic therapies do not. The superiority of core transactional analysis was demonstrated by Ted Novey’s (2002) transactional analysis research with 27 therapists and 932 clients internationally. This research won the 2006 Eric Berne Memorial Award.

#### **TA: The Early Days**

*Eric Berne’s Seminars.* Many longtime TAs have a built-in, knee-jerk aversion to the neo-Freudian approach because Eric Berne was so passionately antipsychoanalytic and programmed his followers to be of the same mind. He rejected his psychoanalytic roots saying, “I could have spent the rest of my life trying to disprove psychoanalysis, but I decided to invent TA instead.” He often smiled while saying, “We’re [transactional analysts] driving a brand new Mercedes while the psychoanalysts back East are still driving a Model T Ford.” For those of us in his Tuesday night seminars, the message was constant. Berne quipped that the psychoanalyst’s sweatshirt read, “We’re more serious than you are,” and ours read, “We have more fun than you do.” Analysts would say, “Yours is oversimplified,” and we would respond, “Yours is overcomplicated.” This was the early TA culture. Berne made fun of the cumbersome psychoanalytic titles with his own tongue-in-cheek lecture title, “Away From a Theory of the Impact of Interpersonal Interaction on Non-Verbal Participation” (Berne, 1971). Yet, in recent *TAJs*, there are articles with similar complex and convoluted titles.

Berne was proud to have discovered the contrarian opposite of the dominant psychoanalytic

school. In the background of his creativity was the rebellious 1960s of hippies, cults, and revolutions. Berne’s San Francisco seminars met only a few blocks from the Haight-Ashbury district where this revolution was centered. Within those rebellious times, twentieth-century Californians discovered something new, the opposite of the tradition-bound nineteenth-century European psychoanalysis. Freud was propped up as the “straw man” whom we eagerly overthrew.

*I’m Young and I’m Free and I Don’t Need You.* If this was the rallying cry of the rebel 1960s when transactional analysis was born, the people we did not need were the psychoanalysts. They were “old school,” unimportant to the Age of Aquarius. Even the popular press ran articles denouncing the nineteenth-century psychoanalytic movement as expensive, time-consuming, and naïve on women’s issues. In that milieu, outside of the entrenched institutions, transactional analysis, gestalt, marathons, bodywork, primal scream, past-life regressions, NLP, RET, CBT, EST, LSD, and a host of new replacement therapies flourished. And Bob Dylan sang, “The times they are a-changing.” An age of therapists grew up with many having little interest in the outdated analytic concept.

But this dismissal was unknown to others, and the dying analytic institution was reborn with a self psychology movement and a two-person transactional interest in the therapy process that defied previous notions of “analytic detachment.” Two-person psychology was replacing one-person psychology. This was “new” and inspirational to the psychoanalysts. This transactional movement of the neo-Freudians may have been influenced by the widespread popularity of the TA multimillion copy bestsellers *Games People Play* (Berne, 1964), *I’m OK—You’re OK* (Harris, 1967), and *Born To Win* (James & Jongeward, 1971).

*Across the Pond.* In the early days of the eclectic spread of transactional analysis, second-generation pioneer transactional analysts who were charismatic and excellent trainers brought the inward and affect orientation across to Europe. Ego states were now redefined the old way as an inner phenomenon, citing Berne’s early postanalytic writings, which he had later

rejected. In his landmark script decision, Berne stated, "I could have spent the rest of my life disproving psychoanalysis, but I decided to invent TA instead." Berne's new-age California, antipsychoanalytic philosophy did not fully spread eastward. So, from New York, "across the pond" to Europe, a psychoanalytically oriented TA did develop. The Freudian straw man had reappeared as "the return of the repressed." Did TA get hijacked on a flight to Europe? Are we fighting a fundamentalist psychoanalytic insurgency? Is this "The Empire Strikes Back" and are we "going over to the dark side?" Are we staring at an "identity theft" by TA impostors?

*What's New?* So, in time, a newer group of TA therapists and trainers emerged, perhaps not realizing the TA history that psychoanalysis had been seen by many as the overthrown "old school." They believed that their two-person self-psychoanalysis was "new" and represented "innovation." This occurred to the shock of the original transactional analysts who could only see any neo-analytic movement as still "old": "If you teach an old dog new tricks, it is still an old dog." Repressed Freud is still Freud. It was still the same ho-hum arcane language of old Vienna. Berne was ahead of his time back then and is still ahead of his time today. Any tools our TA neoanalysts and relationals would employ seem primitive and old-fashioned compared to the decades of rich transactional analysis innovation and encouraged by the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Awards that preceded it. After all, relationships were the specialty of transactional analysis, not psychoanalysis.

*A New Language Was Invented.* In the 1960s, Berne was a pioneer developing an original new science of social games. He developed a seductive new "pop" language to secure it. This lively, simplified, everyday language was purposely and philosophically designed to draw people forward, out of their heads, into the here-and-now Free Child and Adult world of social reality. Berne, a pragmatic social objectivist, declared, "Reality is something you can photograph and tape record," pitting him squarely opposite to the prevailing subjectivist philosophies. The patient was seen to have three children standing behind him or her, not

diagrams or memories: a Free Child, Rebel Child, and Adapted Child. As children, each had his or her own functional (second-order) P, A, and C.

Freud was the antithetical opposite of the Bernean viewpoint. Freud too had developed his own seductive and compelling language, possibly derived from his hypnotic training, which drew people deep into their minds and into their memories of childhood, far away from here-and-now social reality. Freudians had their analysands meet four times a week to keep them in their past. Berne put his patients in group therapy to keep them wide awake in today's social reality.

Both languages were very important and designed to protect their cultures. As the son of a prolific psychoanalytic writer, I found it virtually impossible at first to be able to switch between the two opposite languages and philosophies while doing psychotherapy. I came from a psychoanalytic background in Washington, D.C., where my father, Ben Karpman, M.D., had studied with Freud and wrote extensively on psychoanalysis of criminals in the field that he founded, authoring 20 books and 200 articles from his base at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, a federal prison. He had founded the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute. My psychoanalytically oriented residency training at Georgetown (D.C.) included supervisors who were psychoanalysts and included my own two years of psychoanalysis. Thus, I was deeply steeped in that approach and would have become a psychoanalyst myself if I had stayed in D.C. (Karpman, 1995). The only triangle I would have known was Oedipal.

*Introduction to Transactional Analysis.* However, I moved to San Francisco with the Navy and was later teaching psychoanalytically oriented group therapy at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) when I met Eric Berne. I was intrigued by the new approach to group therapy and a new way of looking at social behavior. I was introduced to his Tuesday night meetings by Dr. Dusay. Transactional analysis was a brand new approach, it was the 1960s, and, of course, "the times they were a-changing." But as I studied transactional analysis, I found that any reading

I would do in the analytic literature would pull me back into the murky inner analytic world of complex verbiage and make it difficult to want to grasp the socially objective TA games and scripts. It was difficult switching back and forth between the two philosophically opposite approaches. I had to stop reading Freud in order to learn TA. The Freudian model focused backward to childhood *cause*, with the id as the motivator. Berne forwarded the attention to *effect*, with transactional strokes and payoffs as the motivator. Once during a discussion of early script motivations of obesity, Berne switched to eidetic social imagery and remarked that “people gain weight in order to block doorways.”

*Translating Freud.* I found that too much reading in the Freudian literature prevented a grasp of the socially descriptive viewpoint. Too much psychoanalytic reading became tempting, like the “lure of the deep” that deep-sea divers have to be wary of. One can get spellbound by analytic language and drawn too deep and lose the overview of what people do with their lives and with each other. Additionally, I have not seen it clearly spelled out how the psychoanalytic reading and amazingly long reference lists in the *TAJ* contribute to Berne’s mandate to “cure patients faster.” Possibly it may even result in many years of protracted therapy as it is with its parent psychoanalysis.

*Personal Therapy.* One should get TA training and therapy first and neo-analytic last in order to keep one TA foot on solid TA ground while the other is in the analytic verbal quicksand. It is possible that many of our neo-Freudian TAers may have had brief analysis first but did not stay beyond the “transference cure,” which could explain some of what we see.

If Freud was right brain, Berne was left brain, making for a difficult crossover. The switch was also from a past, affect-oriented approach to a current, behavior-oriented frame of reference. I think this crossover between two opposite but seductive languages is the issue behind what I see as the neo-Freudians reluctant incorporation of the transactional analysis social concepts in their writings. I think this difficulty in competing seductive languages lies behind the current disagreements.

*New Theory.* Getting deeply immersed in the minute details of seductive analytic theory makes one less likely to think socially and to invent simplified transactional analysis theory by using Occam’s Razor. Future transactional analysis theory is the loser. Newcomers to the relational school have said that they did not find in transactional analysis the answers to what they were doing so they used the psychoanalytic answers. To that I say, if transactional analysis has not found the answer yet, then out of necessity invent your own script matrices, drama triangles, miniscript drivers, passivity lists, or redecision lists, theories, and methods as the inspired early transactional analysts did. This takes dedicated thinking, not taking the apparent easy way out and reverting back to nineteenth-century analytic theory and language, which will probably go unread in the *TAJ* anyway.

Even the creative application of psychoanalytic ideas, old or new, is still paying homage to the neo-Freudian past, not to the neo-Bernean future. Perhaps I may read in the *TAJ* an analysis or two of ego states, first and second order, that often is undiagrammed, but these do not result in crisp, original TA theory of breakthrough ideas, diagrams, lists, charts, and formulas written up in simple language for the everyday person in the transactional analysis style. That readable style is being “lost in translation.”

*Transactional Analysis, the 202, and the ITAA Are Established.* Eric Berne, with an eye to the future, knew that even revolutionary ideas could get lost over time. He was intuitive, read extensively, and quickly learned how to be a leader. He organized a support system. He wrote and lectured widely to spread his original new ideas and gain recruits to help him develop his ideas. He was a guru in the age of gurus. The runaway bestseller *Games People Play* (Berne, 1964) (over 100 weeks on the *New York Times* list) brought in many new therapists. For his followers, Berne established the weekly 202 meetings of the San Francisco Transactional Analysis Seminars (SFTAS). He offered free training and encouraged original thinking. The 202 brainstorming meetings developed new theories that would help us “cure

patients faster”—still the goal of transactional analysis treatment. Berne was a humorist and the meetings were entertaining, but he also “ran a tight ship.”

Something new was learned each week. Berne was original. He called the *DSM-IV* “The Standardized List of Putdowns.” We stayed entertained. There were opportunities for us. Claude Steiner once appeared on the Johnny Carson *Tonight Show*. I got to start the TA group in Hawaii because I was first to grab the invitation envelope. Usually Berne read from a recent chapter of his writing. Once, in his reading, he mentioned a possible new “mauve”-colored trading stamp, which I naïvely questioned from the audience. He smiled and put in the “gotcha:” “I put that in there to hook the ‘Blemish’ players.” He was demonstrating the hook and payoff of games. Language was central. Once I got kicked out of the seminar for twice using the passive, non-transactional word “identification.”

*The 202*. One of the cornerstone rules of our brainstorming 202 was that presenters were not allowed to “talk down” to the audience. To keep things equal and transactional, the presenter of a case had to first write a pertinent and unsolved theory question on the blackboard for the audience to help them solve, legitimately, Adult to Adult. The focus each week was on developing new theory rather than on having an “interesting evening” and “bright ideas.” The goal was to get the job done each week and get it published.

For a permanent record, Berne taped each session and established the *Transactional Analysis Bulletin (TAB)* with himself as editor. This resulted in an immediate spreading of new ideas with the quick reward of a professional article in print. He gave us ways to defend transactional analysis against the dominant psychoanalytic establishment. He gave us a rallying theme, the core belief that “the Free Child is the most important ego state and the rest of the ego states are set up to protect it.” This playful tone was reflected in his *Transactional Analysis Bulletin* as it was in the weekly seminars, which were always followed by lively group discussions, or intimacy experiments, or stroking groups, or competitive frog jumps to

determine the next officers, or field trips for the “jumpin’ up and down parties” at the Spaghetti Factory. This fun base, consistent with the philosophy of the 1960s, helped contribute to the attendance, which approached 30 each Tuesday night in his home. Some people also kept coming because it was a good place to meet people, and they ended up learning something.

*The ITAA*. For long-term stability, Berne set up the International Transactional Analysis Association with organizational hierarchies, a set of rewards of various levels of professional titles, and the financial and intellectual opportunity to spread out internationally, teach, and lead. Many other contemporary psychological movements did not preserve themselves. His friend and colleague, gestaltist Fritz Perls, who spoke at our seminars from time to time, wanted no permanent establishment to preserve his theoretical beliefs. Other unprotected approaches faded as “fads,” even though they would still be powerful today if the representatives had set up enduring structures to preserve them.

### **Preservation of the Early Transactional Analysis Culture**

Although Eric Berne wrote prolifically, much of his philosophy, ideas, and scientific thinking did not appear in print. Those of us who met with him weekly in the 202, some for 10 years, saw the need to preserve what we knew of him and what he taught. Some records included:

*Audiotapes*. With an eye to the future, Eric Berne had taped, by date, each of the Tuesday night seminars in San Francisco. Immediately after Berne’s untimely death at age 60 in 1970, Claude Steiner collected these tapes and made them into archives now kept by the ITAA, with some archives housed at UCSF in San Francisco. Some need to be remastered.

*The Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award (EBMSA)*. After his death, to preserve Berne’s wish for the continuing scientific development of new ideas, I requested—and it was voted in—the establishment of an annual Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award, with an engraved plaque and \$400 prize money. The award had strict criteria for scientific originality in

transactional analysis theory and was voted on by ballot by the membership. Later, in 1994, this was changed to the Eric Berne Memorial Award in Transactional Analysis to allow for research and applications of transactional analysis. A list of the winners is available on the ITAA Web site at [www.ITAA-net.org](http://www.ITAA-net.org).

*Biographies.* There were many writings describing Berne’s personality, relationships, and methods, most notably the humorous and thorough biography *Eric Berne: Master Gamesman* from interviews captured by Elizabeth and Henry Jorgensen (1984). Claude Steiner, Vi Callaghan, Pam Levin, Muriel James, Fanita English, and others have recorded memories of Berne, many of which have appeared in *The Script* newsletter. There was a short movie made of him for the Public Broadcasting Service in the United States (once available through the ITAA). Several photographs are available.

*Selected Articles.* As an original “grandfather” in TA, I was deeply involved in what was the core of transactional analysis and how it fit into the psychotherapy community. I felt I needed to write what I knew over time into five articles for the *Transactional Analysis Journal*:

1. *The ABC’S of Hooking the Reader’s Child* (Karpman, 1972). I wrote this article to spell out and preserve the crisp, simple transactional analysis writing style that Berne envisioned. I recommend reading it in order to clarify the current difficulty of incorporating a neo-analytic language into the transactional analysis mainstream. Some of the ABCs included: A is for Active verbs and B is for Brevity. Each has a brief descriptive paragraph, as in “D is for Discovery of an uncharted field, not for another detail in last year’s yield.” Some others include: H is for Handles, I is for Imagery, M is for Martian, N is for New, O is for Occam’s razor, P is for People, Q is for Quotes, U is for useful, V is for Vivid language, and so forth.

2. *The Bias Box for Competing Psychotherapies* (Karpman, 1975a). This article is my favorite one, written in 1975, and places transactional analysis theoretically in a logical framework with the other psychotherapy disciplines of the time. One’s “free choice” of therapy

approaches is not determined by which therapy is better or worse but by script decision. In the Bias Box (Figure 1), the script quadrant of the country, the institution, the available trainer, and the trainee determines one’s choice of disciplines. The bias shows up eventually when one announces that one has “chosen” the professionally best discipline.

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	SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE
FUN	Gestalt	Transactional Analysis
SERIOUS	Psychoanalysis	Behavior Modification

Figure 1  
The Bias Box (Karpman, 1975a, p. 108)

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Transactional analysis belonged in the Fun, Objective quadrant. Psychoanalysis belonged in the Subjective, Serious quadrant. We can see that early transactional analysis and today’s neo-analytic transactional analysis are in diametrically opposite quadrants, which is the problem being addressed in this article. Gestalt was in the Fun, Subjective quadrant, and cognitive-behavioral was in the Serious, Objective quadrant. The article includes a variety of 14 other Bias Boxes, illustrating most possible quadrant switches and combinations, including the merging of transactional analysis and psychoanalysis, as relevant to the topic today.

3. *The Parent Percolator* (Karpman, 1975b). As an original “grandfather” in the ITAA, I had a deep involvement in the early formation of the ITAA, serving as vice-president twice and on the board of trustees 11 years; first ongoing TAJ editor two years; founder of *The Script*

newsletter; and a member of various other committees and chairpersons. What was a concern in 1975, under Dr. Dusay's presidency, was the eventual takeover of the Free Child organization over time by the Critical Parent, a seeming inevitability in organizations. This is illustrated in my Parent Percolator diagram (Figure 2).

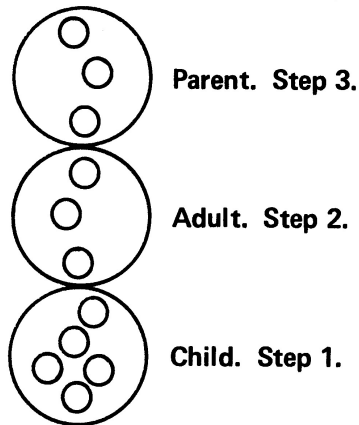


Figure 2  
Parent Percolator (Karpman, 1975b, p. 365)

The prediction was that beginning organizations start out in step 1, flush with Free Child energy percolating enthusiasm, creativity, and optimism; then this energy naturally percolates up to the Adult, step 2, to take care of business; but eventually the hard working Critical Parent takes over the reigns, shifting the culture and membership to the Parent top circle, step 3.

*A Parent Takeover?* The current concern among the original TAers is that psychoanalysis and its derivatives will bring in this new Parent tone, foreign to early TA. This language would introduce long five-to-seven syllable insider jargon words without social imagery such as “projective identification,” “psychodynamic,” “countertransference,” “counter-cathexis,” and now “intersubjectivity.” Boring long words are designed to keep the mesmerized Child from interrupting and keep the Critical Parent in control. Most dogmas have an irresistible appeal to the Critical Parent. Big

words give the illusion of importance. The larger the word, the more it is respected. If it sounds important, it must be important. But isn't it a smokescreen from the Wizard of Oz with Freud behind the curtain? The fear was that the articles would carry the seductive “con” of importance via complex analytic language and a voluminous Parental scholarly list of references, most all of them pointing to old-school psychoanalytically oriented authors, not to our modern transactional analysis authors. I believe that for therapy success, neo-Freudian therapies may certainly sound profound but are not as effective. Simplified transactional analysis may not sound as profound, but it is more effective.

*Hyperlanguage.* Which words get the point across quicker, easier, and make the meaning more available (and easier), Berne's name of a game like “I'm Only Trying To Help You” or long-winded wording like the repetitive and obfuscating “ossified meta-psychological epistemological phenomenology,” the likes of which we are finding in the *TAJ*? The pragmatist Eric Berne would ask about the wording, “Which cures patients faster?” We can look at the love of dense philosophical hyperlanguage as only somebody's day hobby and unrelated to Berne's final criteria of “is it a treat or a treatment?” Unfortunately, obfuscating hyperlanguage is often permeating the journal so that you cannot tell what the therapy is actually doing.

*Bye, Bye, American Pie.* As the percolating energy inevitably bubbled upward and Parental influence increased, the new neo-Freudian TAers became concerned over the lack of acceptance by the dominant and entrenched psychoanalytic institutions, which, in some cases, actually controlled scarce money and licenses and prestige. They saw themselves as missing out on a piece of the professional pie. Early TAers were rebellious separatists, did not need the institutions, and wanted nothing to do with the moldy old-school professional pie, except perhaps the holding open of the option of rebel infiltration one day. One recently heard Parental solution was a call for a “serious” and “scholarly” and “professional” *Transactional Analysis Journal* (read: a boring analytic journal that



could lose the other half of our American membership—as the song goes, “Bye, Bye, American Pie”).

*Approval Hunger?* The original TAers, of course, see this professional cop-out as betrayal by our Adapted Child wannabes and selling out with their “Please Me” driver to play a Psychoanalytically Correct game of “Me Too” to get acceptance from the daddy analytic institution (who could care less—and incidentally are being replaced by cognitive-behavioral therapists while we watch). Perhaps the copycat Oedipal position is “maybe if we look like them, they will like us, and we will be important daddies too.” Sadly, I have heard from several sources that the appearance of our *TAJ*—and also whether we make individual articles available for free downloading on our ITAA Internet Web site—would be determined not by our own original identity, but by how the old-school institutions do it—a far cry from the independent spirit of early TA.

*Martian.* It does not matter that among the post-Freudians since Berne there has been a shift to a more transactional, object-oriented, self, and relational psychoanalysis. As the saying goes, “If it walks like a duck, looks like a duck, and talks like a duck, it is a duck.” The classic TA “Martian” would know our journal was now neo-Freudian, not neo-Bernean, just by counting the big words and references. Transactional analysis grew popular by inventing a simple, teachable psychology that everyone could understand. Now transactional analysis would once again be only understandable to psychologists.

4. *The Politics of Theory* (Karpman, 1981). Here I wrote a warning of how an organization could get corrupted by power plays among the various schools of theory. We are now trying to avert that between the neo-Freudians and the neo-Berneans. In the article, using my perspective of 11 years on the board of trustees and many official positions, I drew up a worst-case scenario of a gradual “coup” with the emergence into power by a dominant discipline, with others dropping out by attrition.

The ITAA has already suffered one major battle between two schools: the super-Star Wars between the heads of the Cathexis and

redecision groups with the resulting loss of a large share of our membership at the time. Organizational power plays happen over and over elsewhere and will happen again here. Recently, Albert Ellis was ousted from his own rational emotive therapy organization he founded. In another example, in the fledgling days of Apple computer, the founder Steve Jobs was ousted. Both eventually returned. Shifts happen. But in TA now do we have an “enemy within” attempting to oust Eric Berne from the discipline he founded?

5. *Notes on the Transference Papers: Transference as a Game* (Karpman, 1991). In this article I offered detailed contrasts and comparisons offering a transactional analysis way of interpreting the analytic process, that is, asking if transference analysis is “social-level psychoanalysis,” or can we define a “transference position” similar to a script position, or “what else needs to be said about transference in the next 100 years that has not already been said in the past 100 years?” Just as Berne gave a fresh perspective on many classic fairy tales, modern transactional analysis could offer a fresh perspective to many classic Freudian fairy tales. As an example, transference and countertransference can now be seen as crossed transactions or set-ups for games with catchy names and payoffs suitable for diagramming.

6. *Other Articles.* There have been other *TAJs* with the transactional analysis and psychoanalysis theme. Earlier I mentioned the July 1991 *TAJ*. The reader can also look up the pro-transactional analysis articles in the April 2003 *TAJ* core concepts issue, particularly the article by Leonard Campos (2003) referring to transactional analysis as a growing tree with roots and branches, and the April 2005 *TAJ*, particularly the article with Michele Novellino debating Claude Steiner (Steiner & Novellino, 2005) with Claude’s quote, “The appeal of this approach (i.e., transactional analysis) was that it had shed all of the arcane and murky language of psychoanalysis in favor of clear crisp language” (p. 111).

#### **How to Merge Transactional Analysis Theory with Neo-Freudian Theory**

*Transference Games.* In game language,

transferences may not only passively emerge out of the classic peeled-onion process but could be actively planted by a patient to hook a therapist. One of the desired payoffs could be to get the unwary therapist to “act out in the countertransference.” The sequence of moves would follow the rules of Berne’s Game Formula G, with the con, gimmick, switch, cross-up, and payoff, and for the personal Internal and External Psychological and Social advantages. A relentless negative transference game of “Blemish” and “Furthermore” could be played to keep the therapist on the defensive and not tuned into the script switch that will come in the future, at a first-, second-, or third-degree level.

*Know All the Games People Play.* All the fundamental games in *Games People Play* (Berne, 1964) will still apply as time goes by because they are universal. Neo-Freudian therapists should review them regularly, because those 100 games certainly present a far more diverse behavioral monitoring system than anything found in the psychoanalytic literature. The variety and style of relationships are clearly the expertise of TA and not of either the early or of the modern psychoanalysts. All the games are distinctively separate and relevant. And their understanding would also keep the relational/neo-analytic work within the social-level transactional analysis system.

Game analysis can offer solutions to some of the more puzzling transferences and countertransferences that come up in the office setting. Patients can play a wide variety of control games, such as the double-bind game of “Corner” where all of the well-meaning therapist’s choices would backfire. A hard game of “You’ll Have To Take Me As I Am” can wear down the therapist into backing off from the original contract—if there is one. The feelings game of “Greenhouse” can con a sympathetic therapist into not confronting some necessary TA games and scripts. Unchallenged “Do Me Something” games by too many patients can set up a burnout situation for the therapist.

A hypnotic office game of “Archaeology” could take the treatment digging so far back into the distant childhood and for such a long time that current reality gets lost. New games

by the therapist can also be invented, such as the time structuring “Let’s Watch Our Body Language This Month.” The anally fixated patient of Freudian lore can play a stuck-on-the-potty game of “Try and Collect” on any Adult cooperation, frustrating the treatment flow. In playing the “Ain’t It Awful” game, the racket feelings from the patient’s Adapted Child could lure the well-meaning therapist into a Rescue game of “I’m Only Trying To Help You” with a “Try Hard” driver, followed one day by the inevitable switch. Knowledge of the games give the therapist an added tool for being on top of what is happening, for example, if enhanced intersubjectivity is becoming enhanced enmeshment.

Psychoanalysis itself may be a long-term expensive Good Game of “Guess What I’m Thinking.” Here an undeclared analytic silence would create a sensory-deprivation scenario leading to altered states and dependency on the therapist. This then encourages fantasies and transference guesses from the patient, which are then properly interpreted 4 days a week over many years of the expensive “complete analysis.”

*Self-Monitoring Tools.* In addition to ego states and games, the available TA literature is rich in tools for self-monitoring behavior. It is what transactional analysis does best. Analytic models should only be used as a last resort. The egogram provides a wonderful tool for correctly reading the patient’s ego state array, which is usually misread during the countertransference days. All three drama triangle roles of Persecutor, Rescuer, and Victim can be moving at once in both the countertransference and the transference, in both the psychological inner triangle and the social outer triangle of the therapist and of the patient. The Cathexis school’s four passivities and four discounts provide excellent tools for monitoring the treatment process when the Adult-to-Adult therapy process is stalled. And perhaps best, the five miniscript drivers are excellent monitoring tools for the therapist’s countertransference behavior, for example, if the therapist is Trying Hard to Please the patient with Perfect relational or integrative therapeutic intimacy. Someday both parties could wind up stuck in

the get-nowhere-with or other quadrants in Ernst's (1971) OK corral.

*Defense Mechanisms.* The dozen or so Freudian defense mechanisms can use a fresh transactional analysis look. The mechanism of idealization may be the Peasant's admiring game of "Gee You're Wonderful, Professor" setting up the envy switch. Neo-analytic mirroring and twinship may be our published game of "Me Too."

All the defense mechanisms need a here-and-now voice, because in the transactional perspective, there is a real person inside there talking. The unconscious is not an entity or repository but some of the person. The therapist is not a "transference object" but a person. The one you love is a person, not an "object relation." This cold, dehumanizing psychoanalytic language, referring to people as objects, has no place in transactional analysis and should not appear in the *TAJ*.

Freud put a Dreammaker in the unconscious writing the dreams. Transactional analysis can put a person in the unconscious too. In defense mechanisms, for example, the voice of suppression may be speaking to the therapist, "I have to keep this hidden from you"; the voice of repression may be saying, "Sorry, I've made that permanently forgotten to be never reexperienced." The therapist can ask that inner voice if it is playing a game of "Try and find me if you can." The inner voice of intellectualization may be saying, "If we talk intelligently, we won't feel anything"; substitution, "Look here, not there"; reaction formation, "If I'm very good, you won't know how evil I am"; and resistance, "Try and make this meaningful, ha ha." This current perspective on the Freudian language is necessary to finally have the neo-Freudian TA synthesized with the neo-Bernean TA and not have both "lost in translation."

### **What Is Neo-Bernean and What Is Neo-Freudian?**

*Waiting for New Theory.* In my reading I see the many thoughtful and sensitive relational, integrative, and neo-analytic articles in which the transactional analysis ego states are mentioned and studied carefully. Integrative therapy offers "inquiry, attunement, and involvement."

Therapies offer "empathy and relatedness in the interpersonal transference field." Some include bodywork. Some articles go into detailed second-order splitting structures, beyond what the developmental transactional analysis analytic schools had done. I see the promise of new horizons open up in the therapeutic relationship. There is excellent new theory being written by many fine therapists, and these previous examples certainly do not apply to all, but what I do not see are enough simple, new transactional analysis diagrams and breakthroughs that can add new meaning to our current transactional analysis theory. Nor do I see a language understood by the Child that would give us relief from the archaic ponderous language used by the Parent.

*An Unfulfilled Promise?* Where are our new decontamination diagrams, borderline personality diagrams, or innovative new relationship diagrams, or others that are as yet undrawn? New boundary-line diagrams to protect professional intimacy are out there waiting to be discovered. Where is the new way of doing relational game analysis and script redaction? The early schools in transactional analysis incorporated other approaches. But they all provided TA with social-reality diagrams or well-thought-out lists with vivid imagery of what people do. I would like to see more of that type of synthesis. For example, I would like to see the progressive evolution of the relational approach happening over these three stages:

- First-Stage relational therapy would use long, important-sounding analytic words and long tables of references of important-sounding analytic authors.
- Second-Stage relational therapy would use established TA words and a TA table of references.
- Third-Stage relational therapy would discover original TA theory and not need references.

*Discount or Defiance?* What I see missing in the neo-Freudian articles I read is a respectful reference to classic social-level transactional analysis and its derivatives. I see reverence in the game of "Gee, You're Wonderful Otto Kernberg," but no "Gee, You're Wonderful Eric Berne." Berne's transactional analysis

seems to be getting marginalized. Transactional analysis has always been proud of its eclecticism and ability to absorb new ideas. Schiff's Cathexis work used Freudian regression work; the Goulding's redecision work used serial gestalt two-chair methods; Kahler's miniscript work, and other schools, all made ample reference to transactional analysis. But this is mostly missing in the neo-Freudian writing. The others all had the "look and feel" of TA that the neo-analytic and relational work does not. There often seems to be almost no respectful attempt to fit into the TA mainstream, perhaps deliberately, perhaps even bordering on defiance. Psychoanalysts had a reputation for being smug and impervious, which I hope is not carrying over here. Berne once said, "You can tell a patient is getting better when they start using your language." That incorporation of TA language is not happening. If it did, the best of both these therapies would not be soon "lost in translation."

*Diagrams.* I see written pages spent on detailed second- and third-order analysis of the Child, but rarely are there any new diagrams to help the reader. I have seen detailed, philosophical microdissections of ego state theory and detailed philosophical theories of the Freudian unconscious, but with no talk of real people. I wonder why the Kohut and Kernberg and self and intersubjectivity transactions, plus object relations theory, have not been put into everyday language about what real people do. Why aren't they thoroughly diagrammed as fresh new transactional analysis theory? It takes work and time to think it through and come up with fresh diagrams and sequences. A new version of Berne's relationship diagram is needed to visualize the enhanced intersubjectivity. As a discipline for scientific thinkers, Berne often said, "Don't say anything that you can't diagram." He also said for theorists, "Don't say anything that has ever been said before." Contrast that with the endless rehashing of known analytic theory in the *TAJ*.

*Language.* The language Berne demanded had to be understandable by a "Midwest farmer, an MIT professor, and an 8-year-old child." The complex existential analytic language we are seeing in the *TAJ* would only be understood

by one: the MIT professor, provided he was interested. We need to see the neo-Freudian writing understood by all three.

*A Fifty-Percent Therapy?* I would like to see articles in the *TAJ* teaching us how to do the wonderful one-on-one inner work suggested by relational, integrative and neo-analytic therapists. And then see this followed up with the next step: the psychoeducational, experiential, and cognitive-behavioral objective outer work of transactional, game, and script analysis for the patient. In other words, work the other side of the coin, too. Berne filled in what was missing in the dominant inner-oriented psychotherapy field of his day. He brought us the unexplored social other half of psychotherapy. Psychoanalytic, neo-analytic, integrative, and relational therapy are all still on the same subjective fantasy side of the coin. On the other side of the coin are the objective reality therapies and transactional analysis. Neo-Freudian therapy appears to be one-sided and cover only the psychological inner fifty percent of the patient's subjective imagined emotional world, while ignoring the social outer fifty percent of the patient's objective rational real world. If the inner and outer were both included, then the heart of transactional analysis would not be "lost in translation."

#### **Are Transactional Analysis Core Concepts Being Used?**

What I hoped to see in the neo-Freudian articles I read was the use of and reference to accepted neo-Bernean concepts in transactional analysis. Almost entirely ignored were the ideas of earlier Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award winners, voted in by the ITAA membership, with most of them included in today's transactional analysis canon.

*A Dumbing Down of Transactional Analysis?* In the entire April 2005 issue of the *TAJ* on transactional analysis and psychoanalysis that I am referring to (I have not seen this current issue), I saw minimal mention of familiar transactional analysis basics such as script, counterscript, and episcript; the 13 redeisions (Don't Want was added as number 13); the five miniscript drivers; the stroke economy; sweat-shirts; family coat of arms; duplex and ulterior

transactions; time structuring; measurable contracts; options; drama triangle; rackets and racket system; the four discounts and passivities; redefining hexagon; frame of reference; trading stamps; rubberbands; games and pay-offs, OK corral; egograms; relationship diagrams; and many, many other rich ideas, all omitted. No other school of transactional analysis that I know of leaves out so much. Are they left out of the training? The exclusion of these leads to a “dumbing down” of transactional analysis. I wondered if micromanaging this intimate new therapy eventually develops a therapeutic tunnel vision that excludes all of these useful concepts. Could “cocreative” constructivist therapy become a “cocoon creating” constructivist therapy?

*Our Mission.* In that April 2005 *TAJ* theme issue on transactional analysis and psychoanalysis, only one article had any diagrams, and that was sent to the back of the book. Eric Berne’s injunction was, “Don’t say anything that you can’t diagram.” Over recent years, that too seems “lost in translation.” I would offer this: If it does not have diagrams, it is not transactional analysis. Without simplified diagrams, names, lists, and formulas, we would lose our important founding drive to scientifically objectify human relationships that the scientist, Eric Berne, envisioned as his mission and goal in creating transactional analysis.

*Identity Theft?* Perhaps the true core concept in transactional analysis is Berne’s original list of four phases in transactional analysis—(1) structural analysis, (2) transactional analysis, (3) game analysis, and (4) script analysis—followed by most of the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award winners voted in by the membership, and some recent others. Was there a Golden Age of TA with its explorers and brainstormers, charting new insights into human motivation, which is being left behind in error? From what I read, the neo-Freudians seem to do only structural analysis decontaminations, some do office transactional analysis in the transference work but do not call it that, and omit the classical transactional analysis game and script analysis. The cherished “look and feel” of TA (perhaps a legal copyright issue) is in danger of being redefined and lost to a new

wave of existentialist based neo-Freudians and self psychologists.

*What Would Berne Say Today?* An outsider, or “Martian,” reading the recent *TAJs* would declare, “This isn’t transactional analysis, this is psychoanalysis.” Berne always welcomed an eclecticism that extended his goal of objectifying social psychology. Of course, this was in the 1960s, before the writings of self psychology and intersubjectivity became well known in the analytic community. From my personal knowledge of working with him for 6 years, he would definitely have accepted any expansions of TA’s reach, including the explorative sensitive one-on-one therapy work of integrative, self psychology and TA-based transference analysis (the Cathexis regression work at the time was also analytically based). But from what I know of him, he definitely would not have accepted the “look and feel” of psychoanalysis. What would he do then? Berne would surprise everyone and promptly come up with a new diagram or two that would solve the problem and “cut the Gordian knot,” as he would say.

### **Preservation of Ongoing Transactional Analysis Diversity**

*Recording History.* There is a history to the preservation of great ideas over time. On the larger scale, we can still read about Greek history, biblical teachings, early astrology, Aristotle and Einstein and other milestone scientific writings, Shakespeare and Tolstoy and other great literatures. We can still read them long after their authors and teachers have passed on because they were recorded, and more importantly, they fit into a structure that maintained and protected their availability.

On an individual scale, for examples I’ll use four works all dealing with fate. *The Rubaiyyat* survived because it was rediscovered hundreds of years later and translated into memorable verse. Nostradamus’s 1000 quatrains survived because they were clearly recorded and eagerly referred to in later centuries. Leonardo da Vinci gave us artistic collectibles, and his amazing scientific versatility included predictions of future machines. But all three were important people of the courts and royalty of the time that

contributed to their work being preserved. Psychic Edgar Cayce had his 14,000 readings all recorded at the moment by a stenographer while he was in a temporary trance with no later memory of what he said. That one single person was responsible for the preservation of his visions today.

The aforementioned four great individual contributions were all recorded and fit well into an ongoing structure that maintained their availability. We can only imagine how many other great ideas and movements in history were not recorded. I mentioned earlier that many of the original therapies invented at the time of Berne were recorded but not preserved. Where are those books now? The teachers eventually retire, and the libraries eventually replace their books with newer, possibly lesser ones. Economy steps in to be a factor.

Transactional analysis has a similar need to preserve and maintain its rich history of theory. Published new theory should (a) improve transactional analysis or (b) add to transactional analysis, but not (c) replace transactional analysis (e.g., by psychoanalysis). An alleged recent neo-Freudian TAer quote that “we are the new and you are the old” created fears of an intent to completely replace current transactional analysis schools (social level, redecision, Cathexis, miniscript, and others) with the so-called “new” school with its multiple varieties of psychoanalysis. This is an invitation to a competitive new game of “mine is better than yours,” with obvious financial and influence advantages at stake for the winner—and a split in the membership.

*Eclecticism Always Welcome.* I need to underline that transactional analysis has always been eclectic. No Bernean is holding back progress as is claimed. Berne was always open to synthesizing transactional analysis and would be today. Early *TAJs* had issues devoted to transactional analysis and other schools. The redecision school welcomed gestalt, the passivity school welcomed analytic regression stages, and so forth. The analytic and relational spin-offs continue the eclectic tradition. The current shouting I hear is that the Berneans do not welcome the neo-Freudians, and the neo-Freudians do not welcome the Berneans. Trainers who

wanted to champion “the newest and best TA” could try to paint Berne and his followers as obsolete for personal advantages and not have to learn and include social-level games and scripts in their teaching.

This is the perception at times. It is a win-lose competition. Neither is right. Transactional analysis could end up with a thesis (TA) and an antithesis (neo-analytic) without the synthesis, with the advantages of each “lost in translation.”

### **The Top Ten Threats to Diversity in Transactional Analysis**

Preserving diversity is a particular interest of mine, evidenced by my originating the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award and drawing up the tight scientific guidelines; my innovation as first ongoing *TAJ* editor in sending reporters to TA conferences to capture new ideas that may not otherwise be written up; and my quoted *TAJ* highlight box (Karpman, 1981), which reads, “And TA, that great amoeba never dies as it incorporates each new movement and adds structure, protection, and strokes to each” (p. 70).

Some of the following “top ten” threats are academic, some limit access, and some are political, but all could lead to selective obsolescence and loss of diversity, which is my concern here. The order of importance would change from year to year. In my opinion, as a first-generation Bernean, I’m concerned with:

*Threat #1: The Recent Call for a “Serious” and “Scholarly” Transactional Analysis Journal.* This seems to be the more urgent concern because it would open the door to the psychoanalytic Trojan Horse. This Trojan Horse would roll into the *TAJ* and out would pop the unwanted cumbersome language and long reference lists to psychoanalytic authors. These nineteenth-century Freudian conquerors would take over the “look and feel” of TA in the *TAJ*, somewhat similar to professional identity theft or to the pods in the movie classic *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (I was an extra in the remake). Their articles would showcase very important-sounding philosophical and analytic language with lengthy, important-sounding references to important-sounding analysts, but would not advance core TA theory.

At worst, a rush to the exits would then follow and lead to the eventual replacement of the neo-Bernean voting block with the neo-Freudian voting block and perhaps drive out the other half of the American TAers and others as article writers, as a voting block, and unfortunately, as ITAA dues payers. That dues paying loss would be at a time of the current ITAA financial crisis. Some of this may have already happened. I use the Trojan Horse reference to war because these theory conflicts have been referred to as a war from time to time. None of us want this divisive contest, having already gone through one ITAA theory war already and seeing what had happened. I write at length here to open up dialogue by identifying as many of the unspoken issues as possible.

If some see the purpose of the *TAJ* to be a “scholarly” journal, I see the purpose as to present new transactional analysis ideas and therapies in language that normal people would want to read.

*Threat #2: Core Concepts.* “Core concepts” started as an excellent idea to preserve the diversity of once-important TA ideas, but it became so controversial that it was officially put on the ITAA back burner. The problem was that “the few”—a single committee chairperson and a hand-selected committee—could decide for “the many” who and what was of importance in transactional analysis history. Appearances became important. People on the committee might be seen as having a personal investment in what was selected, even putting their idea at the top of the list of what was important. I was first concerned when I overheard one uninformed committee person say, “I’m not sure if redecision belongs in here.”

Another concern was that core concepts voting could become a popularity contest, a reward for the in-crowd, like the Hollywood Academy Awards. The worry, too, was that some schools of TA could lose their “popularity” and wind up on the trash heap of history only because the original trainers were not traveling anymore. Should a leader have to stay on the teaching circuit until they are 90 years old for their ideas to stay in favor? The criteria should be related to what has lasting depth and timeless validity. The committee discussions

were never posted or debated openly. If this core concepts idea resurfaces, the *TAJ* editorial board or the EBMA committee should do the selecting. But even then they would be seen as a respected but small committee deciding unilaterally what is important for us and what goes on the scrap heap. In actual practice, what happens is that well-trained members tend to pick their own core concepts that they use, as long as the diversity of choice is preserved and kept available.

*Threat #3: The Volume of Selected Articles from the TAJ.* The ITAA officially sells two books of selected articles from the *TAJ* by decade: one of articles from 1971-1980 and the other of articles from 1981-1990. These volumes were published for the economic convenience of the membership. But it could raise the same questions as raised by the core concepts debates, questions of committee inexperience, inadequate communications, arbitrariness, or favoritism. It could amount to an ITAA-mandated “core concepts.” Great ideas could be lost by attrition simply because of a lack of space in the book. Finances, not value, could dictate what becomes remembered. Looking into ITAA transparency, I do not believe that the criteria for inclusion was made public. It just happened. This may have been fortunate because it could have led to a lengthy “Uproar” game and never get completed. There was not a request for a vote by the membership as we do with other “awards.” Yet, getting into these books definitely ranks as a lasting “award.”

Who decided what articles got anointed and canonized? What were the criteria for why certain articles made the cut and others did not? At worst, with some articles left out and others left in, this selection can amount to an institutional control of what we are allowed to think, a de facto censorship, by limiting access to the remaining unfavored articles. Diversity can get lost. It was once said that with each step forward into the future, something of the past will be rediscovered. But the older articles will not be available for rediscovery. All five of my articles that recorded early transactional analysis and ITAA history listed earlier were omitted.

*Threat #4: Available Transactional Analysis Literature.* At TA conferences there are often bookstores (run by private individuals) that sell TA and related books. This raises the same question we see for the selected *TAJ* articles: the limiting of membership access to materials due to limits on available space. Some materials appear on the conference tabletops for browsing and others do not. This may be due to practical limitations on shipping costs. The preselecting of what is in inventory can be made by the personal preference of the shopkeepers, by member requests, by personal popularity, by trainer lobbying, or by what is selling this year and what is not. Important early TA books may be out of print and unfortunately have not been warehoused due to space limitations and overhead inventory costs. Ideally, we would have a long-term ITAA strategy for preserving the diversity of our intellectual heritage. Internet access to literature will be discussed below.

*Threat #5: The Training and Standards Committee.* Ultimately, this committee holds the keys to the preservation of ongoing transactional analysis diversity. In years gone by, following extended internequine squabbles, the training standards committee adopted a fair-representation policy saying all basic “schools” were important and needed to be studied and tested fairly in order to get to advanced membership. That welcome solution brought a sigh of relief at the time.

Yet it is possible in the future that a strong chairperson could declare, “Let’s bring this up to date,” and some important early work of transactional analysis would get dropped in favor of the newest bias. In effect, a new core concepts would resurface in another form. The selected articles needed to study for the exams would then change. The favored publications would then lead to a hierarchal shift in who is important and who is not in the ITAA. TA theory would be the loser. One solution is that the neo-analytic trainees be allowed to spend fair time with neo-Bernean trainers and demonstrate at exam time the ability to include social-level transactional analysis from all the different schools.

Unfortunately, very few notes with committee accountability are ever published in our

members’ *Script* newsletter, so it could take years for the changes to come to light, and it would be too late for debate. Another possibility is that a newly dominant school—perhaps neo-analytic or any other wannabe school that has climbed to favor—would be allowed to subdivide itself into a half dozen similar schools, gaining numerical advantage in the study list over the other schools. Some talk has already been heard in that direction.

*Threat #6: EBMSA and EBMA Awards.* Following Dr. Berne’s death in 1960, an annual Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award was established to encourage continuing new scientific theory in transactional analysis. Originally, members voted from a short list selected from nominations received by the *TAJ* editorial board. There were many incentives. In addition to the new prestige, a personal plaque was awarded plus a \$400 prize at the summer conference and the author was given space in the following January *TAJ* to write up his or her notes about the discovery. There was originally a vote to have a plaque kept in the office listing all the winners. The criteria for new scientific theory were very strict. In 1994, after a 6-year drop-off in nominations, it was changed to include both research and application of transactional analysis and was renamed the Eric Berne Memorial Award in Transactional Analysis. A list of the winners and their articles is on our Web site at [www.ITAA-net.org](http://www.ITAA-net.org).

The award-selection process is handled professionally with high standards. But potential problems can be envisioned if there was a sea change in the transactional analysis culture through membership attrition and emergence of dynamic new leaders, as has been discussed here. A change in the EBMA criteria or its very name change could follow, perhaps to the Sigmund Freud Memorial Award (SFMA). In that scenario, the submitted nominees for the award might come mainly from the same school, to be voted in by the same school membership or designated committee, from what is left of the general membership after attrition.

*Threat # 7: Evolving ITAA Politics.* Some ITAA administrative developments could lead to a political “takeover” of transactional analysis theory and a diminishing influence of



Berne's TA. Current concern is that the neo-analytic European movement could come into permanent power by being in charge of the *TAJ*, *The Script*, conferences, and elected officers, followed by the American school and others dropping out further. Committee chairpersons could pick their friends, nominating committees could pick their friends, the *TAJ* editors could pick their friends, the EBMA and conference chairpersons could pick their friends, and special themes of the conferences and *TAJ* would be picked to attract the new thinking. There would be no plot, it would just happen, unnoticed. Diversity suffers.

Organizers of conferences could announce "themes" (as with *TAJ* theme issues) that reduce participation and increase exclusion. Last summer's conference theme "Freedom and Responsibility" had Parent overtones appealing to the more socially serious Parent contingent in TA but a turnoff for the Free Child. Rebelliously, I spoke on "Sex Games People Play" to (near triple) overflow attendance. The number of hours allotted and the times and rooms of the speakers could one day reflect the influence and preference of the organizers.

There is some worry that if a political shift occurs, Berneans might either write less for the *TAJ* or be accepted less for the *TA Journal*. An erosion of ITAA membership could follow, leaving, in essence, a modern neo-analytic "coup"—a triumph—and a new permanent voting block.

*Threat #8: School Wars.* The worst-case scenario would be that there could be another School Wars similar to what rattled the rank-and-file membership during ITAA mid-history, resulting in mass dropouts in membership. That was eventually settled both on a political level and by a membership agreement to accept Hedges Capers's suggestion that the ITAA be compared to a "three-ring circus" with plenty of room for acceptance of all the schools. At the time I organized a Members' Rights Committee to offer rights as an antithesis for the high-level political games we suspected. These ten Members' Rights were voted in by the board of trustees but reduced to "principles" to move away from legal concerns about "rights." There is a free copy on my Web site at [www.KarpmanDramaTriangle.com/articles](http://www.KarpmanDramaTriangle.com/articles).

The list was required to be published biannually in *The Script* but that has not happened. Lack of committee accountability and follow-through still happens in the ITAA, but quietly. I posted a satire of "top ten" trustees loopholes on the fate of submitted suggestions on my Web site.

*Threat #9: Transactional Analysis Journal.* Very importantly, the *TAJ* could affect ITAA history and ongoing transactional analysis diversity by policy changes. A growing Parent tone in the *TAJ* could decrease interest in submitting short, lively, social-level articles for review, such as those that were seen in the earlier *TAJs*. Members of the earlier schools, like myself, might not feel their new work would "fit in" anymore. I think very few original EBMSA winners have had articles submitted and published in the past 15 years. I published most of mine in our local San Francisco *Bulletin of the Eric Berne Seminar*.

This year I heard a complaint that the official call for theme issues in the *TAJ* is "controlling" and reduces the apparent space available for nonaligned original articles. Access gets limited. The waiting list grows long. The politically correct policy of blind reading might fairly favor the newcomers, possibly seen as outsider-Victims needing Rescuing, but inadvertently keeps older, major players in TA from submitting and risking the embarrassing rejection of articles. Elsewhere in the arts, in other competitions, people are allowed to sign their names or are invited. Judges are not assumed to be prejudicial as they are with blind reading. Famous old-timers are rarely invited to submit, or cannot include their name on their work, even though many TAers would want to hear of their latest work.

One of the *TAJ* editors also manages the membership *Script* newsletter, possibly representing centralized power in our media if too many representatives from the same school appear in both. There is no ITAA media oversight committee monitoring this. The very fair choice of Letters to the Editor we see also keeps diversity alive. But for the immediate and vigorous discussions of controversial theory, I recommend the members' Internet ITAA-Forum, accessible through the [www.ITAA-net.org](http://www.ITAA-net.org)

Web site. At any time, a hundred TAers from around the globe may be on board debating and contributing fresh new ideas, enjoying the freedom and immediacy of the Internet. Many of the points I address here were stimulated by Forum discussions. It is a valuable resource. Perhaps continuing education credit could be offered one day for participation. Unfortunately, committee members and chairpersons rarely use this valuable feedback resource and are not required to. There were talks to change that, but no follow-through.

*“Is TA a fixed theory?”* This was asked on the Forum, the reply being “No.” Our culture has always been eclectic. New mixes are always welcome. But new transactional analysis theory should be written up in the *Transactional Analysis Journal*, and new analytic theory should be written up in an analytic journal. The psychoanalysts would be no more likely to accept a predominantly transactional analysis article than we should accept a predominantly psychoanalytic article. But as analysts are making inroads into the TA world, we do not see TAers making inroads into the analytic world. I recommend that a more vigilant *TAJ* editorial board request rewrites to include more transactional analysis language, diagrams, references, and simple language about people.

If I could offer another *TAJ* solution to preserve the basic tone of transactional analysis, it would be a request in the editors’ “Guidelines for Writing” on the inside cover of the *TAJ* to mention Berne’s three principles:

1. “Don’t say anything that you can’t diagram.”
2. “Don’t say anything that has ever been said before.”
3. “What you write has to be understandable to an MIT professor, a Midwest farmer, and an eight-year-old child.”

*Threat #10: Internet Committee.* I saved this for last because I think it is our future. The worldwide antithesis to institutional control of reading material is to make everything free on the Internet. Closed governments oppose this. Power controls the flow of information. The ITAA should provide free downloads of individual transactional analysis articles. Not only would this be economically useful for our

transactional analysis trainees who may already be strapped with training costs, but it offers new developments in transactional analysis that are mostly unknown to the outside public, scholars, and students. Easy access could change that, possibly leading to increased TA popularity, membership, workshop requests, and referrals. Very few outsiders would buy articles by our publicly unknown authors compared to the many who would search what was freely available. The spirit of the Internet has always favored open access for everyone.

The ITAA needs to make all past *TAJ* articles, copyright approved, individually free for downloading, and not only as complete journals. When purchasing a complete journal, the buyer must pay also for all the articles they do not want. Individual articles should be available for free reading and downloading on the ITAA Web site at [www.ITAA-net.org](http://www.ITAA-net.org). There is overwhelming interest in this, but there was also high-level ITAA opposition. Some ITAA officers argued that we should sell the articles and journals even though we are solvent and the spirit of the Internet has always called for open access. Call it promotion. Some suggested a 2-year waiting period for downloads in respect for the paid membership. Again, as usual, there was no talk of a membership vote on this issue, which from my discussions, would be overwhelmingly in favor of free downloads.

Extra Internet funding could be covered at dues time by donating to a special Internet Fund. The few authors who wanted royalties and would not surrender their copyrights can just be left out of our professional history. Some professional journals offer articles for free, others do not, but what the old-school Parent institutions do should be of no concern to us. I talked to ten EBMSA/EBMA winners at the recent Edinburgh transactional analysis conference, and every one of them enthusiastically gave permission for their articles to be available for free downloading. Most of my articles are available free on my Web site. One attractive alternative is the excellent, newly available *TAJdisc* ([www.tajdisk.co.uk](http://www.tajdisk.co.uk)), a reasonably priced DVD that has full cross-referencing capabilities, but few on the outside would know about this.

### Summary

Knowing the extent of Eric Berne's antipsychoanalytic positioning may help to explain the divisions in transactional analysis philosophy currently. This article goes into the San Francisco 1960s culture at the time Berne developed his socially immediate, Free-Child-oriented, social transactional analysis, and how that can now clash with the more sober, inner, psychoanalytic Parent transactional analysis from Europe. The psychoanalytic TA is presented as a concern. The neo-Bernean and neo-Freudian cultures have opposite languages, with too much of the mutual understanding lost in translation. Too many of the basic transactional analysis ideas are missing in the neo-analytic articles. Some transactional analysis principles can get diminished as they get passed down from teacher to teacher until they too get lost in translation. The drop-off in American ITAA membership may be due to a perception that the *TAJ* is now complicated and irrelevant, with too few articles of the games people play and too many articles about Freudian transferences. There is a growing need to politically preserve the ongoing diversity in transactional analysis theory and practice.

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