

## Cambiare il mondo una teoria alla volta

## Changing the world one theory at a time

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This article is based on a keynote speech that was prepared to be delivered at the Conference of Italian TA Associations, due to take place 6th & 7th March, 2020, in Rome. The theme of the conference was “‘E pur, si muove’: l’AT in un mondo che cambia”’. The theme of that conference (which, unfortunately, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, was first postponed and then cancelled), and the thesis of this article take their inspiration from the phrase “E pur si muove”, which is attributed to Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), the Italian mathematician, physicist, and philosopher. He is said to have muttered it in 1633 after the abjuration he made in response to being found “vehemently suspect of heresy” (of heliocentrism) by the Roman Catholic Inquisition. The statement represents a recanting of his original abjuration and, thus, may be understood, symbolically, as

one of resistance, and indicative not only of the importance of scientific method but also of independent and critical thinking and methodology. In the context of a world that is constantly moving and changing, this article explores how transactional analysis (TA) theory needs to change with regard to its fundamental concepts of transactions, ego states, psychological games, and life scripts. The article also includes a short coda which includes some words delivered at an event that took place in December 2020 to acknowledge the cancellation of the conference.

**Keywords:** Galileo Galilei; change; uncertainty; innovation; method; methodology; theory.

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Figure 1. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). (Wikipedia)

abstract

Questo articolo si basa su un discorso programmatico preparato per essere pronunciato alla Conferenza delle Associazioni Italiane di AT, che si è tenuto il 6 e 7 marzo 2020 a Roma. Il tema della conferenza era “E pur, si muove’: l’AT in un mondo che cambia”. Il tema della conferenza (che purtroppo, a causa dello scoppio della pandemia di coronavirus, è stata prima rinviata e poi cancellata) e la tesi di questo articolo traggono ispirazione dalla frase “E pur si muove”, attribuita a Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), matematico, fisico e filosofo italiano. Si dice che l’abbia pronunciata nel 1633 dopo l’abiura fatta in risposta al fatto di essere stato giudicato “veementemente sospetto di eresia” (per l’eliocentrismo) dall’Inquisizione Cattolica Romana. La dichiarazione rappresenta una ritrattazione della sua abiura originaria e, quindi, può essere intesa, simbolicamente, come una resistenza, indicativa non solo dell’importanza del metodo scientifico, ma anche del pensiero e della metodologia indipendenti e critici. Nel contesto di un mondo in continuo movimento e cambiamento, questo articolo esplora come la teoria dell’analisi transazionale (AT) debba cambiare rispetto ai suoi concetti fondamentali di transazioni, stati dell’Io, giochi psicologici e copioni di vita. L’articolo comprende anche una breve coda che include alcune parole pronunciate in occasione di un evento tenutosi nel dicembre 2020 in seguito alla cancellazione della conferenza.

**Parole chiave:** Galileo Galilei; cambiamento; incertezza; innovazione; metodo; metodologia; teoria.

## The challenges of our times

The first part of this article offers some brief comments on what the conference organisers identified as the challenges of our times, that is, rapid change, uncertainty, and innovation (AIAT et al., 2020).

### Rapid change

I would say that TA is concerned with change. After all, we analyse transactions not as an intellectual exercise but in order to understand consistent patterns of affect, behaviour, and cognition (which we tend to think about in terms of ego states), and to understand how these get maintained (through psychological games) and where those patterns come from (in terms of life scripts). In the European Association for Transactional Analysis (EATA, 2014) *Training and Examination Handbook* Section 8 (on the CTA written examination), change is referred to in all fields:

- In counselling – in terms of the requirement to “Conceptualise how and why you are effective and with which interventions you stimulate the problem solving or change in client/client system” (8.2.3, p. 5), and, later, how the candidate evaluates change(s).
- In education – also in terms of evaluating changes due to the candidate’s intervention, and having criteria by which they evaluate change and/or development.
- In psychotherapy – also in terms of evaluating changes in the patient/client; also, one of the questions in the psychotherapy field is: “What the psychotherapeutic change mean to you? [and] What TA concepts do you use to facilitate this?” (8.4.4., p. 15)

- In the organisational field – in terms of describing “the relationship between your interventions and changes in the client resulting from them” (8.5.3, p. 18), and, later, evaluating the changes due to the candidate’s intervention.

There are, of course, many theories that define change. In psychotherapy, concepts of change are often described in terms of the aims and goals of the particular approach, for example, consciousness and insight (psychodynamic, Freudian), detachment and identity (psychodynamic, Kleinian), individuation (Jungian), autonomy (TA), and so on (see Tudor, 2007). For the early radical therapists, therapy meant change, which they contrasted with adjustment (The Radical Therapist Collective, 1971). Given this focus on change, it always surprised me when therapists themselves appear reluctant to change and/or resistant to change, whether psychologically, socially, or organisationally. Perhaps the clue here is in the adjective and qualification “rapid”. Even those of us who are open to experience, fluidity (Rogers, 1961), and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) may feel that the pace of change and innovation is too fast. In response, it may be useful to think about change in terms of hungers (especially stimulus and incident hungers) and/or of regulation and dysregulation. Just as we might find it hard to cope and adjust to the rapid and accelerating growth in technology (Figure 2), so we might find it hard to deal with rapid social change, for example as a result of immigration (see Tudor et al., 2018).

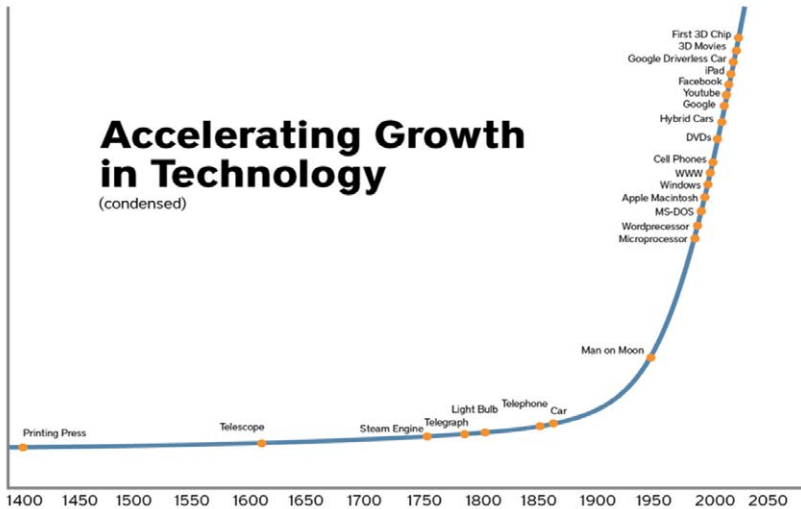


Figure 2. Accelerating growth in technology (Harleman, 2019)

Although I have lived in two different countries other than the one I was born in and have, for the most part, enjoyed the stimulus and challenge of being a foreigner and an immigrant, I can also appreciate that people who are indigenous to the country might feel overwhelmed and dysregulated by what they might regard as “too many” immigrants, especially as many of the causes for migration and the plight of refugees lie beyond national borders. This is especially the case for those countries, such as Aotearoa New Zealand, in which tangata whenua,

the indigenous people of the land, were colonised and, within a few years, outnumbered by European immigrants (see Figure 3) and alienated from the land (see Figure 4).

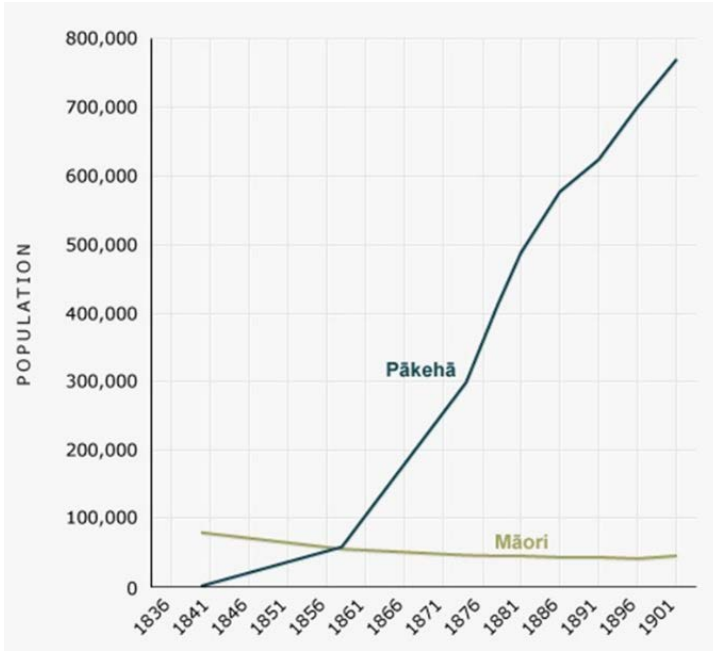


Figure 3. Māori and European population numbers, 1838-1901 (Ministry for Cultural Heritage, 2014)

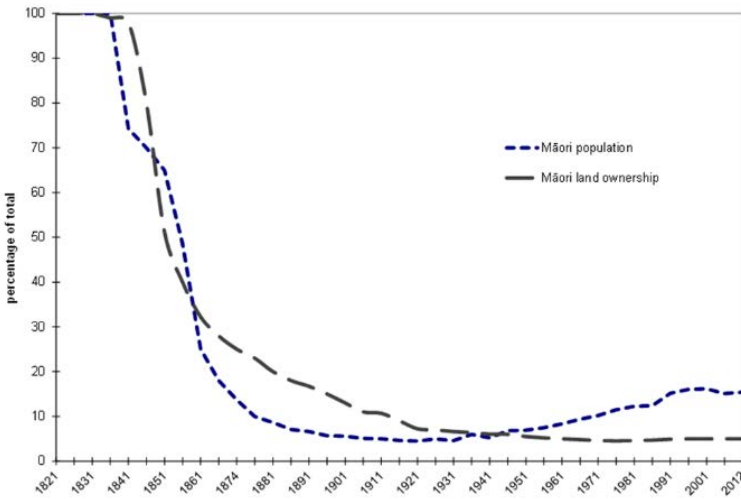


Figure 4. Māori population and land ownership, 1821–2012 (Treaty Resource Centre, 2008/2019)

## Uncertainty

In a recent article on co-creativity, I identified uncertainty as one of the qualities of co-creative therapeutic relating (Tudor, 2019). In that article (which was first published in Italian), I made the point that, while life is uncertain, much of the literature on therapy focuses on trying to make things certain; for instance, by defining terms and conditions, and defending them by institutionalising practice and theory. Certainty is also a way of maintaining dogma and dogmatism (see Tudor, 2007, 2018). One example of this in TA is, I would say, a certain overemphasis on *the* contract. While the *process* of contracting is important, trying and even insisting that clients define what they want, what they want to feel, what they're going to do to get it, etc., and, moreover, in 50 minutes(!), appears a modernist attempt to control the complex (and postmodern) world of emotions and relationships. Indeed, from what we know about working with traumatised clients whose thinking and emotions are compromised, what is therapeutic is to get them to a point where they can think about what they might want from a subsequent phase of therapy. This is a good example of the necessity to update our theory.

By contrast, Jacob Moreno (1946/1964), the founder of psychodrama, thought that in order to enter new territory a person had to be able to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity; and, in a rare article on the subject, and influenced by Martin Heidegger and Ilya Prigogine, Gordon (2003) has developed a psychology of uncertainty that supports the impermanence of being. In this psychology, non linearity, indeterminism, unpredictability, and chance are the basis of life and relationships; as he put it: "the universe is an emergent, self-organizing system of exquisite complexity, continuously evolving within an interpenetrating web of cocreative relationships" (p. 103). Writing in TA about uncertainty, Cornell (2007) offered the following useful summary: "Uncertainty and doubt inhabit the domain of the tensions between the familiar and the different, between Self and Other" (p. 13). I agree – and would extend the domain of tensions between I and you (singular and plural) to include that between I and you and "they" or them, which, in his last book, *What do you say After you say Hello?*, Berne (1972/1975) identified as the third-handed life position.

The objection to certainty has some resonance with Heisenberg's (1927) uncertainty principle which, dating back some 90 years, states that the more precisely the position of a particle is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be known – and vice versa. This strikes me as particularly useful in supporting uncertainty and challenging ways in which some therapists attempt to determine the location of the particles that are the client/person, and fix them; for instance, in terms of certain categories of personality (i.e., ego states), and alienated and alienating diagnoses, rather than focusing on their momentum and, I would say, their new relational possibilities (Tudor & Summers, 2014).

Understandably, uncertainty can be anxiety-provoking, not least for the beginning practitioner. A good example of this is with regard to ethics, in response to which many practitioners react by looking to "rules", in an attempt to be certain and right, when, in reality and in practice, we often have to deal with uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity. Some professional associations respond by increasing the list of rules and extending the scope of their regulation, often in the name of protecting the public (for a critique of which, see Tudor, 2011/2020);

others by developing codes or frameworks of ethics that acknowledge complexity. For example, as part of its process of applying ethical principles – autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and interdependence – to effective decision-making, the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP, 2018) suggests that the individual “Consider the need to accept the complexity of the situation (i.e. [that] there is not one solution, the context is what makes a situation complex).”

### **Innovation**

Innovation (from the Latin *innovatus*) means to introduce as new, to renew, and to restore. It also carries the sense of bringing in new things and altering established practice, and herein lies the challenge. Whilst we have all benefitted from new ideas and practices in education, health, and technology in agriculture, building, food, health, transport, etc., we will all also have stories about a manager or a politician bringing in new things apparently for the sake of it, which, again, can be dysregulating. New is not necessarily better, just as old is not necessarily right – and old or older people are not necessarily wise. In an article on the challenge of innovation in the context of sustainable development, Vollenbroek (2002) argued that: “Innovation does not automatically lead to societal progress as is implicitly assumed in *technology push*-oriented policies” (p. 215). He went on to suggest that the assumption that it does is an inheritance of the Enlightenment, that is, the belief that science will automatically lead to a better quality of life, and argued that “The strive for sustainable development needs an approach towards innovation that can be characterised as *society pull*: [that is] the society has to decide which (balance of) economic, ecological and social goals are to be met” (Vollenbroek, 2002, p. 215). Of course, this present- and future-oriented perspective raises questions about how society decides, and how people organise. A personal example, which influenced my own psycho-political development, was the political group in which I was involved in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which was very influenced by Italian politics of autonomy, and which supported movement groups especially of feminists, black, gay, and disabled activists, and identity politics (Big Flame, 2020). I am also interested in the role that social media played in the Arab Spring (2010–2012), and that those who are taking leadership about the climate emergency are young people.

The challenge of innovation for us as transactional analysts is to assess whether our theory and practice is fit for purpose – which is why I think that, when we introduce or advocate new theory, it behoves us to justify altering or adding to established theory practice (see Tudor, 2008), although this doesn’t mean that we won’t get into trouble for doing so(!), (for a commentary about this, see Tudor, 2017). So, drawing on the definition of innovation, I propose that we need new, renewing, and restorative thinking to meet the challenges of today’s and tomorrow’s society, a “TA *tomorrow*”, as it were. In this, I think (as I often do) that we can draw on Berne himself. Despite his own social conservatism, Berne appreciated independent thinkers and independent thinking. For instance, in *Principles of Group Treatment* (Berne, 1966b), he cited Karl Abraham approvingly in this respect, and Berne (1962) himself advocated “the ‘Martian’ approach” (p. 32), which, for him, represented a way of thinking without preconceived ideas. In a later commentary on such thinking, Hostie (1982) referred

to such thinking as “that impertinence which prompts extremely pertinent questions” (p. 169). Whilst this was very much part of Berne’s own style, and that of early discussions in TA, my experience of current TA is that there is relatively little Martian thinking, speaking, or writing.

So, in response to these challenges, I think we need to be (more) reflective, independent, and Martian, and, I would say, critical, courageous, and active.

The second part of this article represents these attitudes or psychological postures in what I say about how I think TA theory needs to change, not only in the context of the past 70 years of psychological theory, but also a changing and complex world, with regard to its fundamental concepts of transactions, ego states, psychological games, and life scripts.

## Changing the world one theory at a time

Some therapists – and I am talking more about psychotherapists and counsellors here than educationalists and organisational consultants – appear reluctant to advocate or talk about changing the world, though, when pushed, might claim to be changing the world one client at a time. For me, and I think for the world, that’s too slow. We don’t have the luxury of time to help people to think and act more collectively and altruistically. For this reason and others, I agree with the focus on groups as advocated by the radical psychiatrists and by Claude Steiner in the last workshop he conducted at the World TA conference held in San Francisco in 2014 (Steiner & Tudor, 2014), and I agree that as an international community we could develop a stronger worldwide social action and human rights programme. Commenting on this over 20 years ago, Muriel James (1998) wrote of the international TA community that:

We have not developed a strong enough caring collective New Parent. Perhaps we need to accept something from our old Parent, Eric Berne. He claimed that the ethical person would crusade against the Four Horsemen – War, Pestilence, Famine and Death. (p. 281)

One part of how we do this is through critiquing and developing theory; and in this second part of the paper, I offer just one example within each of what are considered to be the four fundamental pillars of TA of theories that we need to change in order to change or expand our thinking about and for our changing world.

### Transactions

The original definitions of a transaction comprising a stimulus and a response (Berne, 1972/1975; Woollams & Brown, 1978) and being a “‘unit’ of social action” (Berne, 1972/1975, p. 447) are based on a mechanistic metaphor of communication. Influenced by both humanistic contributions to the therapeutic relationship, and by the relational turn within psychoanalysis, a number of transactional analysts, including Michele Novellino, Carlo Moiso, Judith Barr, Diana Shmukler, Richard Erskine, Ken Woods, Graeme Summers and myself, James and Barbara Allen, Bill Cornell and Frances Bonds-White, Helena Hargaden and Charlotte Sills, and Ingrid Lewis (see Cornell & Hargaden, 2005), have been part of a

movement in TA which may be summarised as “from transactions to relations”, which is the title of a book edited by Bill and Helena and published in 2005 in which those authors appeared. In the past 15 years this movement has continued and is often referred to as “relational TA”, though there are some differences as to precisely what is meant and encompassed by this, and those of us who are associated with this approach to TA use slightly different language to describe different aspects of theory and practice – see Hargaden & Sills (2002), International Association of Relational Transactional Analysis (2009/2020), Fowlie and Sills (2011), Tudor and Summers (2014), and Hargaden and Cornell, (2019). However, whatever our differences, I think most of us would agree that the language of process is more accurate and useful in understanding relationship – and, I would emphasise, *relating* – than the language of mechanics.

I’m sure that many of you will have noticed that I began this four-part review of TA with reference to transactions instead of the more familiar order that begins with ego states. This is because I’m a constructivist and, therefore, think that discourse creates systems and not the other way around (see Allen & Allen, 1997). Whenever we begin our thinking or teaching about TA with ego states we are, in effect, stating and assuming a particular system from which discourse derives, and a particular way of looking at the person and at personality. Of course, ego state theory was developed in a specific country at a specific time – which is another reason why we need to question the relevance and applicability of theory (see Tudor, 2022-in preparation).



Figure 5. Claude Steiner and the author – disagreeing! Sheffield, UK, 2008. (Photo: Louise Embleton Tudor)

My colleague and friend Claude Steiner, who was a mechanic and not a constructivist – so we disagreed about most things (see Figure 5) – used to say: “Transactional analysts analyse transactions”. I agreed with Claude about this, and for that reason, would place transactions and our various ways of understanding about ways-of-being-with each other at the heart of TA. So, whereas Berne (1970/1973) wrote: “Parent, Adult, and Child ego states

were first systematically studied by transactional analysis, and they’re its foundation stones and its mark. Whatever deals with ego states is transactional analysis, and whatever overlooks them is not” (p. 223), I suggest that transactions were first systematically studied by TA, and *they’re* its foundation stones and its mark. Whatever deals with transactions is TA, and whatever overlooks them is not. Moreover, when referring to transactions, I would acknowledge Steiner’s (1981) contribution to an understanding of power and his view (with which I also agree), that “every transaction has political consequences, every message has a meta-communication, a message about the message” (p. 171).



### Ego states

From what I have said so far, and from what I have written about ego states (Tudor, 2003, 2010), it is clear that I am sceptical of a given structure of ego states and of what Graeme Summers and I have referred to as the three ego model of health (in which the goal of psychotherapy, counselling, education or consulting is to develop or “grow” all three ego states) (Figure 6), preferring instead the one ego state model of health (in which the goal of TA is the ongoing development and expansion of the integrating Adult (see Tudor, 2003) (Figure 7).

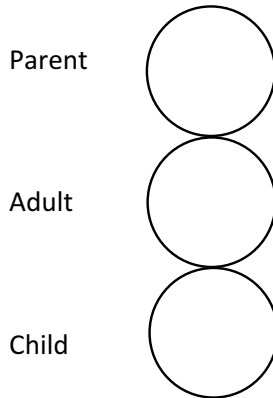


Figure 6. A three ego state model of personality and a three ego state model of health

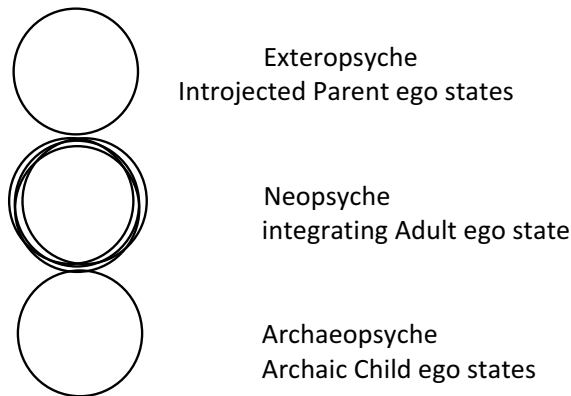


Figure 7. A three ego state model of personality and a *one* ego state model of health

I should say that both models derive from Berne’s (1961) work *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* (see Tudor, 2003, 2010) (a reading and perspective which was another source of disagreement between Claude and me); and that the underpinning theory of integration, from Weiss (1950), Federn (1952), Glover (1955), and briefly, Berne (1961), and subsequently developed in TA by James and Jongeward (1971), Trautman and Erskine (1981), Erskine and Moursund (1988), Erskine himself (1988, 1991), and me (Tudor, 2003, 2010), is much more

consistent with contemporary models of the brain and of human development than is the three ego state model of health.

Another problem with the concept of ego states is its focus on ego, which, in turn, derives from ego psychology and its (over)concern with adaptation. In terms of “society pull” (Vollenbroek, 2002) and perhaps, more importantly, what we might think of as environmental pull, I think we need to change our root metaphor from ego to eco (Tudor, 2013), and, thus, from I and me to we and us (Tudor, 2016), changes which, I suggest, make (more) sense psychologically, socially, politically, and ecologically. Finally on ego states (at least for the time being), we can take inspiration from Galileo’s observation that “the earth moves” to support the view that things happen outside the realm and control of human beings and societies (compare Figures 8 and 9).

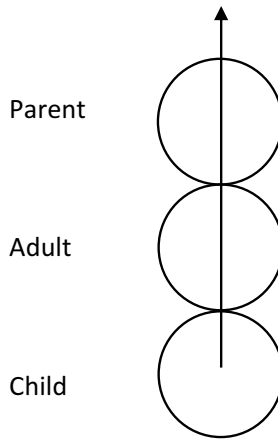


Figure 8. Physis – in the three ego state model of personality and three ego state model of health, with the arrow of aspiration originating in the Child ego state (from Berne, 1972/1975)

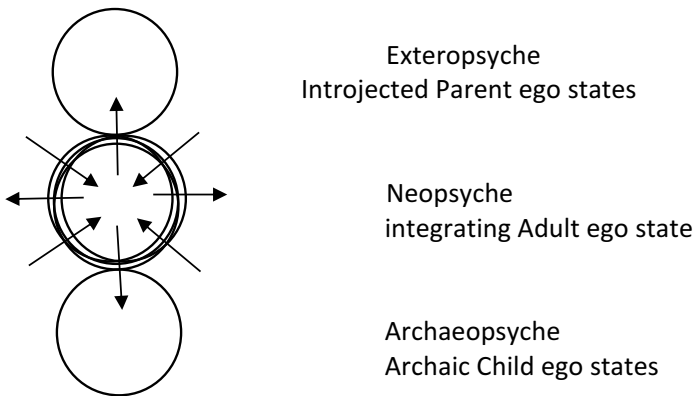


Figure 9. Physis in the three ego state model of personality and one ego state model of health, originating within and outside the individual

This view of physics also acknowledges the influence of the environment on our health, a perspective that has been evidenced in research into outcomes in psychotherapy for over a quarter of century (since Lambert, 1992); and that change that effects our health and well-being takes place as much outside the consulting room, classroom, or office as within it (see Figures 10 and 11).

Ihumātau is a Māori village, situated near Auckland International Airport. During the invasion of the Waikato area of New Zealand by British troops, the land was confiscated by the New Zealand government. It was predominantly used for farming until sold to Fletcher Building, a private company who planned to build private housing. A Māori activist group, Save Our Unique Land (SOUL) opposed this development and, in 2016, occupied the land. Supported by other groups, as well as individuals, SOUL's campaign has led to a recent decision by the government (in December 2020) to buy the land back from Fletcher's (see Came et al., 2019).



Figure 10. The Ihumātau protest, Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand 2016-2020

The Sardines were formed by a group of young people in Bologna. This independent initiative called on citizens to gather in their local piazzas with homemade placards of the eponymous fish, which, in this context, symbolises solidarity, pacifism, and opposition to divisive and violent politics. According to Mackay (2020), "The Sardines are not here to save the old left. Instead their task is more foundational: to rebuild a culture of political participation, and demonstrate to Italy's sceptical population that grassroots politics and activism can yield results."



Figure 11. First "Sardines" demonstration, Pizza Maggiore, Bologna, Italy, 2019 (Source: Wikipedia)

Although it may appear heretical for a transactional analyst to suggest that our understanding of the psychological world does not revolve around the ego, I take comfort from the Galileo's mumbling to say "*It moves outside and beyond the ego*" – and, in any case, if I am found to be heretical, I can think of worse fates than to be confined to house arrest in Arcetri!

### Psychological games

Transactional analysis is a social psychiatry if not a social psychology and nowhere is this better represented than in Berne's theory of psychological games. In *Games People Play*, Berne (1964/1966a) wrote:

Theories of internal individual psychodynamics have so far not been able to solve satisfactorily the problems of human relationships. There are transactional situations which call for a theory of social dynamics that cannot be derived solely from consideration of individual motivations. (p. 59)

Of course, the transactional analysis and game analysis of social dynamics often reveal the internal psychodynamics of the individual players, and I think we could use game theory much more in analysing the social dynamics of our times in order to understand both social and individual dynamics. For instance, Brexit (which should more accurately be referred to as an English and Welsh exit as a majority of voters in both Northern Ireland and Scotland voted to remain in Europe) cannot be understood without reference to the social dynamics of the British Conservative party and its deep ambivalence about the European Union since its inception, and, more particularly, to the rivalry between David Cameron

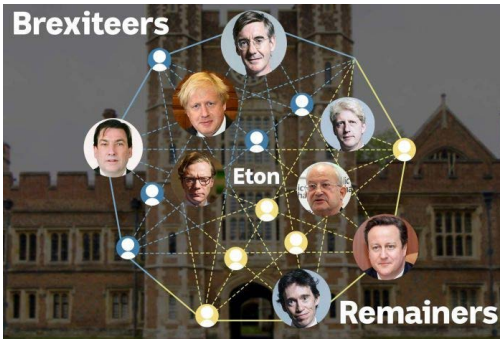


Figure 12. A snapshot of old Etonians involved in the Brexit process (Source: ABC News)

and Boris Johnson who were classmates at Eton, an elite public (that is private) school in England. As one commentator put it: “Understanding Brexit involves understanding Eton” (Weedon, 2019) – and, I suggest, the British class system, whereby a ruling elite expects to and, with very few exceptions, does rule (see Figure 12). As Robert Verkaik (2018), the author of the book *Posh Boys: How English Public Schools*

*Ruin Britain* put it: “[Brexiters] are the ‘Little Englanders’ who have tried to portray themselves as outsiders, [but who] very much are insiders and a product of the establishment” (cited in Weedon 2019). The key here is the insider–outsider dynamic and, while I have very little sympathy with posh boys claiming outsider status, different parts of the British establishment and politicians in both major parties have certainly played on the uncertainty, doubt, and tensions between the familiar and the different, Self and Other, us (British) and them (foreigners). Moreover, in the context of British politics, in which decisions are generally made through general elections and there is almost no tradition of national referenda – with only three taking place in 100 years of parliamentary democracy and 700 years of parliament (in 1975, the United Kingdom European Communities membership referendum, in 2011, the United Kingdom Alternative Vote referendum, and in 2016, the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum – even having a referendum was, I would say, a psychological game.

In order to understand such games and their dishonesty – and Berne (1964/1966a) stated that every game is basically dishonest – we need to understand and process the social and individual dynamics of oppression in all its forms and complexities (see Roy & Steiner, 1988); for instance, the working class white man who feels resentful of and then nurses a hatred for the immigrant woman who takes what he regards as “his” job – as well as the posh boys who fuel such

tensions. Again, Steiner (1974) and the radical psychiatrists had and still have something to offer us in their analysis of “power plays”.

### **Life scripts**

If games are what we see “up front”, life scripts are a way of understanding and mapping the back story of such dynamics and, as such, script theory needs to account for new and changing dynamics in our changing world. In his critical review of script theory, written over 30 years ago but still relevant (Cornell, 1988), Bill suggested that script, as presented in most TA literature, is “overly reductionistic and insufficiently attentive to the formative factors in healthy psychological development” (p. 270). In our work on script, Graeme Summers and I acknowledged Cornell’s work and made the point that such reductionism was especially ironic given the potential compatibility of script theory with constructivism (Allen & Allen, 1997). However, we went on to point out, that, if, with Allen and Allen (1995), we are to view scripts as constructive narratives which, like memories, are co-created in the present and projected into the past, then we need to reformulate much of our present understanding of script and script theory. Several points inform this critique (taken from Summers & Tudor, 2000):

- That traditional, linear, stage theories of (child) development have been challenged by writers such as Stern (1985): “It, therefore, cannot be known, in advance, on theoretical grounds, at what point in life a particular traditional clinical–developmental issue will receive its pathogenic origin” (p. 256).
- That script theory does not account for temperament and environment and the interplay between this and attachment theory.
- That scripts are co-created; Cornell (1988) referred to the (then) current developmental research which suggested that infants influence and shape their parents as much as they are shaped by their parents, and subsequent research in this field has continued to demonstrate this.
- That injunctions, programmes, and drivers/counterinjunctions are, equally, co-created and decided (in the way in which “decisions” are viewed within TA, that is, not simply cognitively), and thus only become part of a person’s script if accepted and “fixed” as such.
- That, despite the concept of cultural scripting (White & White, 1975), script theory, in one of its most popular and most often used manifestations, the script matrix, is, in its reference only to the two-parent heterosexual nuclear family, deeply culturally-determined, and significantly outdated.
- That a postmodern script theory suggests that we can have several stories about our lives running in parallel – and that we can choose between them. Allen and Allen (1995) put this well when they stated that “each person is entitled to more than one story” (p. 329).

For these reasons, Graeme Summers and I came up with the concept of the script helix (Figure 13), which can also account for the influence of gender fluidity, disability, and differential power dynamics, as well as the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

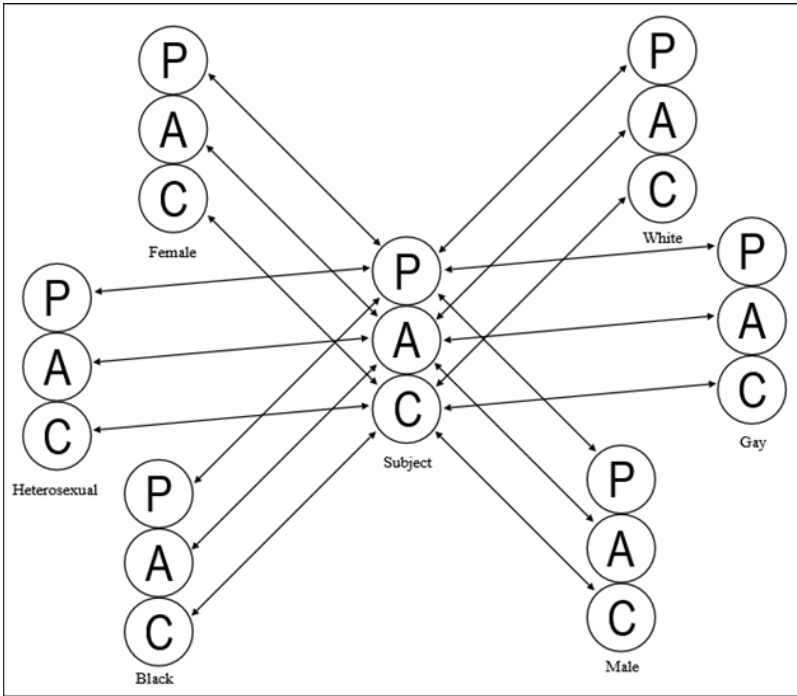


Figure 13. The script helix (Summers & Tudor, 2000)

Moreover, the stories we tell and write – for ourselves and others – will be based on motives encompassing survival; integration and adaptation; aspiration and actualisation; resilience, revenge, and rebellion; homonymy as well as autonomy; hatred, distrust and hopelessness as well as love, trust, and hope; and much more, all of which we need to be able to analyse and process with those with whom we work.

### “And yet it moves”

“And yet it moves” or “Albeit it does move” is a phrase attributed to the Italian mathematician, physicist, and philosopher Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), which he is said to have muttered after the abjuration he made in response to being found “vehemently suspect of heresy” (of heliocentrism) in 1633 by the Roman Catholic Inquisition. As it stands, the statement represents a subtle resistance to an oppressive power – and, in that case, one that was life-threatening.

In concluding this contribution, I’d like to draw out some threads from this historical or attributed phrase and moment, which, I suggest, are helpful for living in a world that is changing, and in changing the world:

1. It reasserts the practical and experiential reality of Galileo’s observation, and, as such, reminds me of the point Carl Rogers and John K. Wood made when

they wrote: “First there is experiencing, then there is a theory” (Rogers & Wood, 1974, p. 214). This reminds us to remain client-centred – and, hopefully, world-centred – rather than theory-centred; and invites us to think about the nature and purpose of theory (for discussion of which see Tudor, 2018).

2. It reasserts the methodology that Galileo was advocating in the first place, which we might think about as empiricism. Along with existentialism, phenomenology, and humanism, empiricism is one of the philosophical traditions on which TA rests, and we know that Berne, from his experiments in intuition in the 1940s and '50s onwards, emphasised the importance of fine observation skills based on all the senses (see Berne, 1966b), skills which, I think, at best, distinguishes transactional analysts from many other practitioners.
3. It represents a resistance to dogma, fundamentalism, and the notion of universal truth, views I have been resisting and writing about for some years, not least in TA, and, while we don't have a Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in TA, there have been and are some colleagues who do think in terms of discipleship (Claude always introduced himself as a disciple of Eric Berne), canon (i.e., core concepts), belief, and faith. Both Bill Cornell and I have received correspondence from TA colleagues that borders on hate mail and, together with two other radical colleagues, we have been referred to by an eminent transactional analyst as “the axis of evil PC-four” in TA (PC presumably standing for being politically correct). Apart from being rude and unethical, this is a good example of a (political) meta-communication, and suggests that we should not take freedom of thought or expression in our community for granted.
4. It acknowledges that movement comes from outside, a point that supports a more eco- than ego-centric view of movement and change. William James (1842–1910), the first psychologist of modern times said that “Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives” (Goodreads, 2020). Whilst we know this to be true, it is not the only way of changing the outer aspects of our lives, our societies, and our worlds. Ageism, the climate emergency, colonisation, disablism, misogyny, poverty, racism, sexism, and violence are not going to be stopped in the consulting room, 'though I would argue that we may be able to make more impact on these issues in the classroom. These problems require structural and systemic social and political solutions which are supported by both transactional analysis and internal psychodynamics.
5. It acknowledges the importance of taking action, however small; in this sense, Galileo's muttered statement was better than saying nothing. Psychotherapy tends to privilege reflection over action, and taking action, let alone being an activist, can be pathologised as “acting out”. I'd like to change this and, inspired by Alice Walker's statement that “Activism is the rent I pay for living on this planet”, suggest a taxonomy of active behaviours, which parallel those of the four passive behaviours (see Schiff et al., 1975; Woollams & Brown 1978), all of which are based on accounting rather than discounting, are manifestations of an integrating Adult, and represent theory about action and active theory:

1. Doing something – in which psychic energy is used to integrate responses and thinking.
2. Response – making an appropriate response to the here-and-now stimulus and taking appropriate action.
3. Agitation – using energy in purposeful, goal-oriented activity, usually with others, based on Martian and critical Adult thinking.
4. Protest – taking action, usually with others, based on accepting appropriate responsibility, and an adamant engagement in thinking about and solving problems in the world.

### Coda: Changing theories, one world at the time

As I speak (write) this (in December 2020), I am aware of the loss of the 2020 Italian conference and of the opportunity to meet live and in person rather than live and online. I would also like to acknowledge the loss and disappointment that the conference organising committee has held, and to extend my sympathy and empathy for what they held over the 18 months (June 2019–December 2020). I also want to express my appreciation for your creativity in creating the online event (which took place on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2020), which I hope gave you some closure to that particular project, but which also fostered a bigger project of the seven Italian TA associations continuing to work together.

Now (in December 2020) and since, more than ever, as we face our changing world with more immediacy, I think that we need theory and practice that is more adaptable. We need theory that helps us deal with virtual reality. Just today (on the morning of the online event), I had an e-mail from a colleague refusing to review an article as she is “very opposed ... [to the view] that virtual meeting rooms should be considered a new reality.” We need theory that helps us think about the nature of the online communication and relationship, whether therapeutic, counselling, educational, or in the organisational context, especially those engagements and relationships that begin online. In short, we need theory that helps us do all aspects of our work, especially in the face of continuing uncertainty; for myself, this is one of my next projects: to explore the psychology – and philosophy and politics – of uncertainty, with a view to developing what might be considered as new competencies in uncertainty.

One of the points I make in this article is that movement comes from the outside: “Eppure, si muove”, it (still) moves. Reading that again, and reflecting further on the changes that we as practitioners, educators, etc. have had to make in response to the coronavirus pandemic, I realise that it is not so much that we change the world – which could be considered an anthropocentric heresy – but, rather, that the world changes us. In other words, the world changes us, one theory at a time. As an example, those colleagues who eschewed the possibility or reality of online psychotherapy have simply had to change their minds – or, presumably, to stop practicing. The logic of this, then, is that we need to revisit our theory – about human nature, and the nature of reality, communication, relationships, change, as well as the therapeutic space, frame, etc.

I am aware that, already in 2020 (and since), alongside all the personal change we have had to make, and the changes to our professional practices, there has



been an enormous amount of writing about the impact of the pandemic on therapeutic practice, as well as an astonishing amount of research conducted and published – all within (then) nine months! This includes a number of special issues of journals on the topic, including *Group Dynamics* (Parks, 2020), the *Journal for Psychotherapy Integration* (Callaghan, 2020), *Practice Innovations* (Koocher & DeLeon, 2020), and *Psychological Trauma* (Kendall-Tackett, 2020). The American Psychological Association (APA) has listed a lot of research in this area and has given open access to articles on the subject in journals it publishes (see APA, 2020). Moreover, a brief search (conducted in December 2020) found some 20 academic and/or professional journals advertising special issues on various subjects and topics relating to psychology and COVID-19 to be published in 2021, and it is clear that writing, research, and publishing in this area will continue to grow. However, as only three of these are focused specifically on psychotherapy (and counselling), it is also clear that those of us who work in these disciplines will need to contribute to research and thinking in this field.

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