

Please complete front sheet

Course- Advanced Diploma in Psychotherapy

Name of Trainee: John Dray

Essay Title: A – Transactional Analysis (TA) essay. Some of the key concepts in TA provide me with a deeper understanding of myself and my relationships with others. Discuss with reference to at least three concepts from at least two authors explored during the TA module.

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Overall Score	72	Grade	Merit
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Date Received

2 ESSAY MARKING SCHEME Year 1 Only

Trainees Name: John Dray

Year: 1

1st Marker: Rosy Wood-Bevan

Date Marked: 27.07.23.

Essay Title: TA

Assessment criteria & 1 st Marker Comments	Marks
I find this an informative and engaging essay, weaving together a good account of the theory with your experience as a client in TA psychotherapy. You show that you are thinking for yourself and achieve a good balance between what you value in TA and how you experience its limitations.	
1.Organisation and Planning There needs to be a structured plan for the work with an introduction, development and conclusion. The work should address the essay title. A nice structure, interspersing theory and relevant experience. Clear introductory and concluding sections.	7/10
2. Argument and Application to Practice Own ideas will be developed and others included and referenced to show application of theory to practice and self-awareness. Where relevant, indicate further ways in which the themes could be developed. You give some good examples from your own experience of therapy and demonstrate that you are thinking ahead to how working with TA concepts may pan out with clients. Sometimes I feel your examples could be taken a little further and deeper and I am left wanting to know more...	18/25
3. Theory and Analysis Theory must be used to support the essay title. It must be critically evaluated and clearly linked to specific areas of application including self-awareness and own process. You provide a clear account of the concepts you choose, linking them well to other TA concepts and offering critiques both from your own experience and from within the literature. You make good links to your own process. I think you sometimes become a little too comprehensive, going sideways into further concepts without really explaining or illustrating them. I rather think that this is easily done with TA! You could also say a little more by way of introduction to locate TA within the field of psychotherapy.	18/25
4. Ethical and Anti-oppressive Practice Discussion of Ethical and Anti-oppressive practice and an understanding of the impact of intersectionality must be integral to the written work, reflecting the significance of such practice within psychotherapy. Reference can be made to ethical dilemmas, boundary negotiations, legal matters, personal transference phenomena and any other issues related to power dynamics. You raise some very pertinent questions and reflections in this section, considering AOP from a number of perspectives in relation to TA literature and practice. Again, you evidence independent thinking. In future it will be good to try to integrate this section into the body of the work as a whole.	10/15
5. Research and Referencing All work will be referenced and include a full bibliography.	

Harvard referencing system to be used throughout. Reference can be made to books, articles, journals and web links. Correctly referenced and a good bibliography. Theory mentioned in the introduction also requires some referencing.	8/10
6. Style and Presentation Assignments are to be typed and double spaced with pages numbered and named. Front sheets must be included. Marking will take into account spelling, grammar and adherence to word limit (+/- 10%) unless special dispensation has been agreed. Note 5 marks to be automatically credited for those writing in a 2nd language or with recognised learning needs. Correctly presented and well written	4/ 5
7. Reflection and Creativity The work demonstrates a good level of personal insight and a capacity to learn from experience. It provides an open and honest account of the learning process and an ability to reflect on how your own experience has shaped your approach to the work and understanding of the topic. You demonstrate well how TA is personally meaningful to you and has supported your development. You are also alert to its possible shortcomings in your experience	7/10
Total	72%
Grade	Merit

0 - 39% = fail, 40% - 49% = REFER; 50% - 59% = PASS; 60% - 79% = MERIT; 80 % + = DISTINCTION

2nd Marker Comments: General Comments required if grade agreed.

Grade agreed Between Both Markers? YES / NO

If NO, the 2 markers will discuss and may alter the mark to agree.

If the markers do not agree then the second marker will grade the essay and average grade will be given.

Average Grade if required.

See Handbook section 3, Policy 15 if you wish to appeal this.

1st Marker Signature:

Rosy Wood-Bevan

Date: 27/7/23

2nd Marker Signature:

Garthine Walker

Date: 28/7/23

Please use this document to write your essay. Start on the next page

A – Transactional Analysis (TA) essay. Some of the key concepts in TA provide me with a deeper understanding of myself and my relationships with others. Discuss with reference to at least three concepts from at least two authors explored during the TA module.

Introduction

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a powerful psychological framework that offers valuable insights into human behavior and interpersonal dynamics. TA is built on the foundations of Structural Analysis and Transactional Analysis. My personal therapy is TA, so to examine my understanding of myself and my relationships with others I will bring in aspects of my therapy. In my therapy, I have found the concept of Scripts useful. Consequently, in this essay I will introduce and explore Structural Analysis, Transactional Analysis and Scripts. The concepts within TA are tightly intermeshed, so I will link in many other TA concepts along the way. [Please reference statements and concepts here, as well as in your literature review below. Otherwise a clear introduction.](#)

Literature Review

Foundational documents of TA include the works by Eric Berne ([Berne \(1961/2011; \), Berne \(1964/1996; \), Berne \(1982; \) and Berne \(1973\)](#)). Much of this has been consolidated and developed in Stewart [and](#) Joines (1987). [Use ampersands within references but not in your body text.](#) In looking at scripts I will use the work of Steiner (2010) and R. L. Goulding [and](#) Goulding (1978). Some of the books by TA authors are addressed to clients, rather than psychotherapists (e.g. Harris (1979), Berne (1971), Joines (2023)). In some circles this has resulted in some devaluing TA as 'pop psychology'. [Ref to such circles?](#) TA has overcome this snobbery and continues to develop. I will look at authors who have added to TA in terms of redecision M. M. Goulding [and](#) Goulding (1979/1997), the relational Hargaden [and](#) Sills (2014), and personality adaptations Joines [and](#) Stewart (2002). [Clear summary of the literature you will be referring to.](#)

My Case

Case is a rather self-objectifying term. Could you find a different heading here? I am a 57 year old, cis-gender, queer, white male. I entered psychotherapy after the sudden death of my husband, six and a half years ago. Following his death, and trying to run a business, look after employees, keep food on the table, I found that I had increasing levels of anxiety. I decided to look for a private psychotherapist. I went ahead and contacted the therapist whose preferred modality happened to be Transactional Analysis (TA).

In discussion with the therapist I explained how I was aware that my relationship with my husband had been bad. I also discussed other relationships in my life and even my career choices. I recognised a repeating pattern, but I did not know what it was and I 'wanted to do relationships better'. We contracted to look at relationships.

Structural Analysis

Fundamental to Transactional Analysis (TA) is the concept of structural analysis. Berne (1961/2011, pp. 25–28) introduces the idea of 'ego states', which are divided into Parent (P), Child(C) and Adult (A).

"The term 'ego state' is intended merely to denote states of mind and their related patterns of behavior as they occur in nature" (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 26) "It will be demonstrated that Parent, Adult, and Child are not concepts, like Superego, Ego, and Id, or the Jungian constructs, but phenomenological realities;" (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 22). He then demonstrates by use of an example how ego states are different ways to behave and how those different ways to behave are based on where each ego state gets its information. Despite Berne's assertions, Stewart & Joines (1987, p. 10) compare ego states to Freud's model of Superego, Ego and Id! Good noticing!

The Parent ego state represents behaviour based on historical information gained from external sources, typically the parent, but also significant 'parental figures' such as teachers

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and even society. The organ by which this information is gained is referred to by Berne as 'extero-psyche' (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 28). Within the Parent ego state the Gestalt concept of 'introjects' - concepts that have been taken into the psyche whole, without being processed by the individual is similar to the TA idea of injunctions (Erskine, 2010, p. 6) [good link](#)

The Child ego state is that set of behaviours built up during childhood, through the 'archaeo-psyche' (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 28). This set of behaviours can become 'Scripts' (Erskine, 2010, p. 1) [Also involves active perceptions and decision making based on the evidence available at the time, not just passively absorbed behaviours and perspectives.](#)

The Adult ego state is the set of behaviours built on processing the current moment, the relevant organ is the 'neo-psyche'. (Harris, 1979, p. 28ff)

Within a therapy session, I am often asked which ego state is speaking or hearing a particular interaction. This can often help me understand whether the information is coming from outside/historic - Adult, inside/historic - Child or from the current situation - Adult (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 267). In this way, I become more aware of how I am reacting to other people. By bringing these processes into the conscious mind, I am then able to choose how I react to them.

One unfortunate aspect of this is that TA can be seen as a cognitive ('thinking-based') therapy where Adult is the best ego state to operate from. This is understandable when Berne talks about process in this way: 'The process of "pulling herself together," which was activated by the business-like tone of the psychiatrist, represented the transition from the archaic ego states to this adult ego state.' (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 26). However, other authors point out that for progress to be made in therapy the other ego states need to be employed (e.g. M. M. Goulding & Goulding (1979/1997, p. 17) gives an example where change has to be made in the child ego state). [Good point. Can you give an example from your own experience?](#)

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Now that we have the first order ego states, an important part of therapy is drawing them.

They are often drawn as in fig. 1.

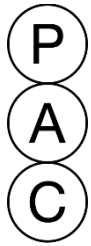


Figure 1: The PAC diagram

Berne does introduce 2nd and 3rd order ego states and draws these on to work on finer structure within of the personality (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 218). However, Berne's own advice is, 'The reader may be well advised to postpone his onslaught on this section until the preceding material has been thoroughly subjugated.' (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 215).

Transactional Analysis

Transactional Analysis looks at the ways in which the ego states of two or more individuals interact. These are called Transactions ('A transactional stimulus from a certain ego state in the agent plus a transactional response from a certain ego state in the respondent. A transaction is the unit of social action' (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 496)). Analysing the transactions between people leads to the concepts such as Games ('a series of transactions with a con, a gimmick, a switch, and a crossup, leading to a payoff'), Stamps, Strokes, etc. This multiplicity of terms is described in (Berne, 1961/2011, pp. 489–497).

One corollary of using transactional analysis and structural analysis is that the transactions between the ego states of people can be represented with diagrams.

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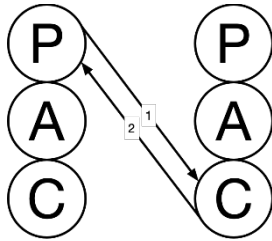


Figure 2: Ego states interacting

This could represent a Parent to Child transaction, e.g. 'Pick up your shoes', with the Child to Parent reply, 'Why should I?' (fig. 2). We can discern the ego state in action by the way they are: 'This model describes a range of functional modes - by which we mean the gestures, words, voice tones, body postures, facial expressions, attitudes and so on [...] from which we can choose how to respond in a given situation' (Lapworth, Sills, & Fish, 1993, p. 49).

Again, it would be good to have an example from your own experience rather than the hypothetical one.

TA explicitly looks at the relations between people, rather than the individual in isolation. If my therapist talks about Autonomy ('The attainment of autonomy is manifested by the release or recovery of three capacities: awareness, spontaneity and intimacy.' (Berne, 1964/1996, pp. 158–160)) or Intimacy ('a game-free exchange of emotional expression without exploitation' (Berne, 1982, p. 491)). My therapist can use the diagrams to explain terms that not intrinsically part of TA, such as Symbiosis. I see the diagrams that she draws to represent these states and I have a good idea of what she is talking about.

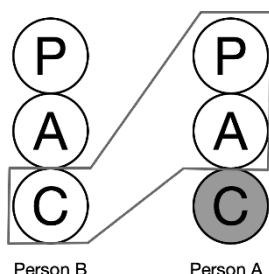


Figure 3: Symbiosis

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One of the weaknesses and strengths of TA is its use of everyday language. For instance, the idea of Parent can mean something very different to a new client compared to someone who is well-versed in TA. [Good point](#) Berne does acknowledge that clients get to a point where they dislike the terminology (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 691). The precise meaning of 'OK and 'Not OK' is explored in Harris (1979, pp. 36–51) as part of his exposition of life positions. Fortunately, Berne provides a useful glossary in (1982, pp. 489–497) that provides pithy descriptions of many of the TA terms.

A sticking point for me had been the term 'symbiosis', [could you explain how it is a sticking point?](#) which in biology means two organisms living in a mutually beneficial relationship (e.g. a bacterium and a fungus forming a lichen together.) When explained through the diagrams of TA the term symbiosis represents a state where one party (A) looks after the child ego state of another (B), in the hope that the other (B) will look after their (A) child ego state. A does this to the detriment of their own child ego state. While symbiosis was not originally part of TA, unhealthy scripts can be seen as reflecting a symbiotic relationship, where individuals may be overly dependent, enmeshed, or lacking autonomy and differentiation. In a mother/child relationship, this would have some similarities to the state in Winnicott (1960) where the child has not yet successfully separated from the mother/child dyad. [Good link although in Winnicott's account this is of course a healthy state of affairs because the child is actually a child.](#) The client looks after the C of the other in the hope that the other will look after them. Hargaden & Sills (2014, p. 51) explore developmental issues and the idea of symbiosis. See fig. 3 where (A) is the PAC on the right and (B) is the PAC on the left. I find it much simpler as a diagram rather than words.

Exploring the diagram helped me understand a fundamental issue that I had with relationships: that in my relationship with my father I had attempted to look after his child in the hope that he would protect me. This style of relationships had continued through my relationships with various employers right through to my relationship with my husband.

[Sounds like really valuable learning.](#)

Scripts

Eric Berne defined a script as an 'extensive, unconscious life plan' (Berne, 1961/2011, p. 23). Although Berne introduced the idea of scripts, he did little with it. Steiner (2010, p. 204) describes how Berne tended to use script analysis psychoanalytically. **Explain?** Basically, Scripts are ways of coping that are laid down in childhood. While these Scripts may have helped the developing child to survive, they may not be useful patterns of behaviour in adulthood. The Child ego state that they inhabit does not have access to the fresh data that are only accessible to the Adult ego state. To analyse the scripts requires the Adult ego state (Steiner, 2010, p. 205). For example, if someone is living the script 'I will never make anything of myself' then unconsciously they will sabotage any successes to ensure that the script comes true. The work of therapy is to bring that into conscious awareness by noticing it. From that point the therapist can work with the client's adult ego state to see if that is what they want their life script to be and whether the assertion present in the script is true. The client can then choose a new, more helpful script (e.g. I can be successful). Sometimes a script is changed because the goals of the client have changed. R. L. Goulding & Goulding (1978, pp. 1–8) describe how Robert went from a script 'I go fishing to spend time with my friend' (and not catch any fish) to the time after his friend died when he re-decided the script as 'I go fishing to catch fish' and subsequently caught a lot of fish. This ability of the client to choose to do things differently (unless mentally deficient **might need to find a more PC phrase here...**) is fundamental to TA. The process of re-deciding scripts can be a process of two steps forward, one step back. This is sometimes referred to as 'rubber banding' and an example is given by R. L. Goulding & Goulding (1978, p. 101). **Which is? Best not to mention something you are not going to explore.**

Development of My Case

When I look back at how I originally presented my case, a lot of it was about 'the other' in the relationship: the business, the employees, my husband, etc - symbiotic processes. While I

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can consciously understand the Scripts underlying Symbiosis, I often find the process of 'rubber banding' and returning to old, scripty behaviour. **Unfinished sentence I think.** The challenge in therapy is that I am choosing to do things differently. Like any skill it takes time to learn and practice to obtain proficiency. **Could you spell out your personal example a little more – what was 'rubber banding' like for you? How did you choose to change your script?**

One of the supports of TA for me is that capturing a single diagram can remind me of the issues addressed through that therapeutic session and it can act as a mnemonic for me when I encounter relevant situations between therapy sessions. In his therapeutic hints, Berne (1961/2011, p. 267) suggests having many diagrams as a part of diagnosis.

In other words, the therapist can draw a diagram outlining the situation they think the client finds themselves in. If this does not 'hit' for the client, then try another diagram. If the second does not resonate with the client, then this may be the wrong time in the therapeutic process. **Or, might the therapist simply be on the wrong track? Are you assuming therapist as expert here?** These hints come from the early days of TA and have been refined in works such as Joines & Stewart (2002) who use six diagrams to explore their theory of personality adaptations and Marshall (2005) who links these to 'Doors' (the behavioural, affective or cognitive preferred styles of contact applying to different clients).

As a modality that can be heavily cognitive there should be questions about whether TA is an effective modality for all people. Joines & Stewart (2002) suggest that for some people thinking is a block to contact with people (a 'trapdoor') - in particular people with Passive Aggressive or Anti-Social adaptations. Would TA be appropriate for these people where thinking is the trapdoor? Would they self-select at the introductory interview? Would a tool like the Joines Personality Adaptation Questionnaire (JPAQ) Joines (n.d.) help filter these people out? That said, Joines describes ways of working with such people within the TA modality Joines & Stewart (2002, ch 23-24). Within TA, some authors have recognised this potential over-reliance on the Adult ego state. Hargaden & Sills (2014, p. 1) bring to bear techniques that they refer to as 'deconfusion of the child' that are 'non- or preverbal and

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largely unconscious'. Their intention is to extend TA as a relational modality (Hargaden & Sills, 2014, p. 2). There are some good clinical questions here. I think that as therapists we can think about our clients in TA terms and this can guide our interventions, whether or not we deem it useful to share this with the client.

I think the last couple of sentences here requires greater explanation.

One concern that I have with TA is that during my psychotherapy training I uncovered significant childhood trauma during various non-TA therapeutic exercises. This had not come up in many years of TA therapy. This raises several important questions: would TA have ever uncovered this trauma? Would it have needed to? For instance, it might not have uncovered the childhood trauma, but might have helped me live effectively with the effects of that trauma. (Comparable to Rothschild (2000) who describes a process of working with trauma that does not need the trauma to be recounted.) Again, good question. Do you have any inkling as to why these experiences hadn't come up in your therapy?

Ethical and Anti-oppressive Practice (EAOP)

I am now going to examine some factors that might affect the efficacy and accessibility of therapy using TA, in line with the EAOP framework of Dominelli (2010, p. 166).

Should the client have the means to access the TA therapy then the terms used are easily accessible in English (e.g. Parent, Adult, Child), rather than other modalities which use terms like, 'introject', 'interroception', 'id', and 'superego'. While 'ego' makes it through into TA (but) that is explained as part of the process of delivering TA. The use of diagrams further reduces any need to use complex language. There is a period within TA when the client is learning the language of TA. This can lead to a teacher/pupil style power imbalance at the start of therapy. The therapist can be aware of this and mitigate it. How would you imagine addressing this issue as a therapist?

Good points here.

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The very nature of TA is that it is looking at communication with the aim of helping to make communication clearer. This, linked with its goals of Intimacy and Autonomy, is part of empowering the individual to make their needs known and the important boundary between them and the other, thus countering oppression.

The use of diagrams gives a sense of collaboration as both therapist and client can contribute to the same picture. It also means that the psychotherapist is not always staring at the client - there is an opportunity to break the eye-gaze and work on something together. This could be helpful for neuro-diverse people who find direct eye contact difficult. On the other hand, concentrating on a diagram may be difficult for other neuro-divergent people.

Again, some very good points. I guess you can just keep checking in with the client...

In terms of oppressive narratives, Sex in Human Loving Berne (1973) is almost completely heteronormative. It's its scant mention of 'homosexuality' (p79) - where it forms part of a list of 'biologically inappropriate forms of sexual activity' (p180) suggests that Berne was a man of his era. Similarly Berne (1982, p. 391) introduces the homosexual man as having a problem with relating to women. In M. M. Goulding & Goulding (1979/1997, pp. 6–7), a more modern perspective, there is a far more positive example of a gay relationship.

Conclusion

Although Transactional Analysis has only been extant since the 1950's, I believe that it provides a rich set of tools to work with in a psychotherapeutic context. The initial simplicity of Structural Analysis and Transactional Analysis are easy for clients to grasp, give clients tools that they can take with them, and have visual forms that are easily memorable. Despite this apparent simplicity, these concepts are capable of delivering complex and nuanced analyses of psychological processes. Scripts are one of the fundamental processes of TA and, along with Games, Stamps, Rackets and the ensemble of TA mechanisms, help form a description of what is happening, so that it can be brought into awareness and worked on in the therapy session. In my therapeutic journey, I have found Scripts both explanatory and a

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useful tool for change. TA continues to evolve in line with newer understandings of psychotherapeutic process and this has moved it from a potentially cognitive discipline towards one that can engage the whole person. [Clear conclusion.](#)

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