Berne, Phobia, Episcripts, and Racketeering

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Abstract

This article is an extension of an Eric Berne Award winner keynote speech given at the Major International Transactional Analysis Conference (MITAC) in August 1995. The author reminisces about her contacts with Berne and how he cured her of a writing phobia. She also discusses "hot potatoes" and episcripts, topics that she believes still warrant much attention and clinical research. She describes her work on rackets and racketeering transactions, which challenges classic game theory assumptions. Finally, she discusses how codependent personal relationships and those within cults are based on racketeering between Oversure and Undersure character types (described in previous articles) and how lethal consequences can ensue.

When I was invited to present a keynote speech at MITAC 1995 as an Eric Berne Award winner, I was asked to address three questions: What did I learn from Eric Berne, how I have changed my ideas since writing my articles, and how would I rewrite them now? I will aim to answer these questions, albeit in a somewhat rambling manner.

What I Learned from Reading Berne

The first important thing I learned from Eric Berne was that there are three distinct ego states that operate in the here and now, each with its own system for thinking, feeling, and determining behavior.

I'm not joking. It may seem ridiculous to you that I would emphasize this elementary concept, because all of you are more than familiar with it. In fact, references to the "inner Child" are now the currency of pop psychology, sometimes to the detriment of serious respect for all that transactional analysis can offer.

But about 30 years ago, when I first read *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* (Berne, 1961), the concept of ego states was a revelation. I was a psychoanalytically trained practicing psychotherapist in Chicago and thought I was knowledgeable about ambivalence, irrational behavior, and fixation. Yet I was often puzzled by contradictions in my patients that could not be theorized away as fixations or shrugged off simply as the result of immaturity. Patients were supposed to reach "maturity" as a result of treatment, but somehow that was an ever-elusive goal. In fact, some of their "childish" statements were the most conducive to healing. Also, I used to worry about my own "immature" thoughts and feelings.

Berne's book showed how the psychic apparatus of one individual is represented by the phenomena of ego states, each with its distinct phenomenological and behavioral manifestations and potentially operating in the here and now. He showed how they each have separate determinants that establish their particular internal and external programming (Berne, 1961, pp. 239, 240). At last I began to understand much of what had been puzzling me. I could now distinguish between the Child and the Parent of someone I had met as Adult, and use my own Adult appropriately without wasting energy if my perfectionistic Parent scolded my Child for failing to comprehend all that was going on. Previously I had no way to sort out the changes of ego states that I witnessed; such shifts did not seem to fit known categories of pathology! Now I had clues and names with which to distinguish among ego states. I could use the experience I had gained in the past, when working with chronological children, to deal with a client's Child and to help her or him use the Adult when archaic survival conclusions caused difficulties in the present.

Similarly, with regard to transference and countertransference, I had often been concerned by the fact that shifts of ego states in my patients triggered shifts in *my own* internal ego states, even as I enacted the role of the mature, detached, objective, and understanding therapist.

I realized that too much of my therapy was conducted from a contaminated Parent ego state that frequently stifled my Child's intuitions about my patients and myself.

Learning from Eric Berne in Person

I took three months off from my work in Chicago and went to Carmel, California, to learn transactional analysis. There I trained primarily with David Kupfer, but I also had a good deal of contact with Berne, with whom I developed a semi-friendly relationship.

To transact with Berne required agility in moving from one ego state to another, back and forth from Adult to Child to Parent, so our initial contacts were not always good. For instance, his Adult was respectful of women, and he staunchly defended the idea that a female could be as potent as a male; but his Parent, and often his Child, were extremely sexist, so there were many crossed transactions between us. Blame it on my rigid Parent, if you will, or on his mischievous Child. Anyway, eventually we overcame a number of clashes, perhaps because both of us could see the other as basically OK, and the Child in each of us was repeatedly motivated by the challenges posed by the other. We tangled over many ideas, but finally we did establish mutual respect, along with good, though somewhat belligerent, Child-Child contacts.

Thus, Eric Berne in person gave me plenty of practice with changing ego states. I got to see how the same person can switch from being admirable to impossible, and vice versa. I continue to value all I learned from him, including that it was OK to stand up for myself in an argument, however awed I was by his genius. In effect, he gave me permission to challenge some of the very tenets of transactional analysis—specifically game theory and script theory, both of which I could never quite stomach in their original rigid forms. After all, he himself emphasized that theory must be constantly tested by clinical experience, from the "Emperor's New Clothes" perspective, namely, that we must not necessarily accept an expert's edict, even if the expert happened to be Berne himself.

How Berne Cured Me of My Writing Phobia

Berne transformed my life in that he cured me of a long-standing writing phobia that had severely hampered my professional activity. He did this by means of radical treatment without a contract, for I was not his patient. I have described the story elsewhere, but will tell it here again. To do so I must digress to my episcript and hot potato theory (English, 1969).

It was in 1967–1968, in the course of my practice in Chicago, that I became aware of what I called the hot potato phenomenon. Specifically, in relationships that are primarily based on Parent/Child complementary transactions (be they chronological parent/child, or teacher/pupil, therapist/patient, or husband/wife), it is possible for the controlling figure (whom I call the donor) to transmit to the other (whom I call the vulnerable recipient) a sense that he or she must enact behavior that actually pertains to the donor's pathology. Thereby the donor feels "magically" liberated from an inner compulsion to enact the particular behavior which has been transmitted to the vulnerable recipient. The process of transmission operates subtly, on a well-nigh unconscious level. It is akin to persistent malevolent hypnotism that takes advantage of whatever transference feelings are developed in the vulnerable recipient as a result of real or imagined dependency on the donor.

I was very excited to have identified this phenomenon in a number of cases and to have developed some techniques for treating it, so I wanted to present my material at the 1969 transactional analysis summer conference, which was to take place in Monterey.

However, because Berne wanted to check what was presented at transactional analysis conferences (perhaps because of his expressed concern that psychoanalysts might take over and also to have material for his *Transactional Analysis Bulletin*), he had established an iron rule that conference presentations had to be written out in advance. Since I could not do this because of my writing phobia, unbeknown to Berne, I convinced the program committee to put me on the program anyway.

On arrival in Monterey, I was confronted by a stone-faced Berne who demanded my written material. "But, Eric, you known very well that I have a writing phobia," I protested, putting my

best Wooden Leg forward, secure in the knowledge that it was now too late to get me off the program. He gave me a scathing look and walked off. However, during my presentation, he made a point of noisily walking in and out of the room four times, causing heads to turn around each time.

We were seated at the same table at dinner that evening. Claude Steiner, who had been the formal discussant for my paper, started talking about it, for it had caused quite a stir among attendees. Berne interrupted to say that he was not interested in any ideas that were not written and abruptly changed the subject. Later, during the conference, he cold-shouldered me repeatedly when I tried to talk to him—even diving off into the swimming pool when I tried to address him there.

It was clear that I could have no future contact with him unless I wrote out this material, yet I felt paralyzed by my phobia. However, one day, about a month after my return to Chicago, almost in a trance, I sat down at my typewriter, wrote out the whole presentation, and mailed it to him, without even revising it. I used very thin, transparent paper, knowing that Berne always begged contributors to his *Bulletin* to write on thick paper rather than on what he called "toilet paper."

I do not remember what my thoughts were at the time, but obviously my Child was provoking his Child to throw my piece into the trash. However, in this crucial instance, Berne did not take the bait. His Adult took over instead. For this I owe him unending gratitude. He responded immediately on receipt of my material, suggesting that I call the phenomenon episcript instead of antiscript, the name I had used, pointing out that I was describing a script outside the script, the way epilogue is a separate chapter after the main body of a book. When I received the October 1969 *Bulletin*, to my surprise, there was my article, in print, entitled "Episcript and the 'Hot Potato' Game." Berne had given it this title and published it without asking me, for surely I would have said no. Later, he wrote me a very supportive letter.

Thus had he cured me of my phobia. Was it simply a "transference cure," as psychoanalysts might say critically? Perhaps so, for indeed a

few years ago I finally recognized the unconscious reasons for the origin of my phobia. But that was more than 20 years after Berne's unorthodox cure of this incapacitating symptom, and I am glad I did not have to wait these 20 years before getting to write! So, as far as I am concerned, Berne proved his dictum, which was: "Cure first and figure out why later."

However, I must admit that the article itself was badly written (English, 1969). This may be why the concepts therein do not seem to have aroused enough interest to stimulate more articles on the subject, or for the article to be reprinted, as was the case with my later rackets articles (English, 1971, 1972). Yet I believe that the concepts of hot-potato transmission and episcripts are far more important. Therefore, before discussing rackets, which I am expected to do here, I will use the present opportunity to elaborate on hot potatoes and episcripts in a question-and-answer form, with the hope that the subject becomes more accessible to the present generation of transactional analysis practitioners.

What is Meant by "Hot Potato"?

I used the term "hot potato" as an analogy that refers to the children's game in which a potato is passed around the circle and, when the music stops, the child stuck holding the potato must pay a predetermined penalty. In the psychotherapeutic context, a hot potato is a particular instruction or suggestion transmitted by a donor to a vulnerable recipient, who then feels compelled to follow certain commands related to the hot potato. (The Hot Potato game is well-known in the United States. In other countries, similar games are played with cards, in which one person gets stuck with the bad card at the end of a game, as in Old Maid in England, Schwarzer Peter in Germany, and Mistigri in France. In translating the hot potato concept into other languages, it is advisable to use the name of a corresponding game, one that is familiar in the culture.)

In practice, donors operate with the magic assumption that they can rid themselves of whatever frustrations, fears, guilt feelings, or irrational compulsions they carry by passing on such "curses" to someone else, just as someone

gets rid of the potato in the children's game by passing it on.

The hot potato that is thus transferred may represent certain chronic bad feelings (such as anxiety, anger, or depression), or it can bring on a vaguer penalty, such as the expectation of having to suffer, hate, or fear throughout life. Or it can constitute a particular task that must be implemented, for instance, to take revenge on a person or his or her family for slights suffered by the donor. It can even represent what may seem like an admirable transfer of ambition, for instance, to become famous at all costs because the donor lacked the ability or opportunity to do so. The assignment can also appear noble or well-intentioned—to become holy, or rich, or to conquer the world. At another extreme, the assignment can be to take on a horrible fate feared by the donor for himself or herself, such as becoming crazy or getting locked up or killed, thereby magically substituting for the donor and thus delivering him or her from that fate.

What is an Episcript, and How is It Different from a Script?

Even though scripts are defined in different ways by transactional analysis practitioners, it is still possible to distinguish between script and episcript in that the latter is not developed by the person himself or herself, as is the script, but rather, it contains formulated hot potatoes that pertain specifically to someone else's needs and pathology. However, in some cases the episcript may attach itself to the recipient's script like a cancer that is extraneous to the organism but nevertheless grows with it, so it may thus become a damaging *addition* to the script.

The episcript contains a collection of hot potatoes in a configuration or Gestalt with a design, and often with specific sequential steps as to how the vulnerable recipient is to concretely implement the tasks pertaining to the hot potatoes. Sometimes the complete plan of the episcript is incorporated from the donor; sometimes hot potatoes are taken in separately, and the episcript is then developed by the vulnerable recipient. Frequently, a complex pattern is involved whereby several hot potatoes are combined into tasks that are to be enacted in steps over time. Since the hot potatoes that are the

components of the episcript do not originate with the vulnerable recipient, but are taken in from an outside source in a particular form (like a tumor that is already cancerous when put into a lab rat), the episcript operates quite differently from the person's own script, which takes shape as a part of the person's own development.

For instance, a hot potato about suicide that is taken on at a given time might become connected to another one about revenge and murder and yet another about losing a lover. An episcript is then developed like a theatrical plot. For instance, a person might provoke the loss of a lover to implement the hot potato which calls for suffering, then murder the lover to implement revenge, and then finally fulfill the dictate of the original hot potato which calls for suicide.

An episcript may also contain hot potatoes that make use of the recipient's own aptitudes or talents. For instance, a hot potato might specify "be a hero" and lead either to an episcript that involves heroic rescue behavior or to another that requires the skills to generate a terrorist attack. Or, with an episcript that evolves from a seemingly positive hot potato, like "be a star" (to make up for the parent's failure), if the vulnerable recipient is talented enough, he or she might become successful, though involved in a painful career of struggles in which even achievement is hollow.

Judy Garland was such an example. She suffered throughout her career, which was designed to make up for the fact that her mother had not herself become a star. Even when there is outward success, as in Garland's case, when the vulnerable recipient works at a career exclusively to compensate for the parent's frustrations, the person may still have spent a lifetime striving in ego-dystonic directions without achieving a sense of owning his or her life. So, the episcript is damaging in all instances, for the vulnerable recipient experiences it as an obligation or a vocation to be implemented inexorably, regardless of his or her inclinations. The feeling that the episcript must be fulfilled can be well-nigh obsessive, even when it is ego-dystonic.

Why and How are Hot Potatoes Transmitted to Vulnerable Recipients?

Frequently donors were themselves recipients

of hot potatoes at some point of their lives. For example, there are certain compulsive rapists or child abusers who were themselves raped and humiliated in childhood. They are often motivated by an unconscious magical belief in cleansing by scapegoating: The donor feels as though he or she can get rid of something, like a curse that causes him or her continued pain and anguish, by passing it on.

Indeed, such individuals can experience temporary relief from such anguish or from certain obsessive symptoms or destructive compulsions when they pass on hot potatoes, but they have a recurrent need to ensure that the vulnerable recipient will hold onto the hot potato or implement the corresponding episcript, so they keep seeking contact or control of the vulnerable recipient to reinforce transmissions of hot potatoes in the magical belief that otherwise they themselves will again fall prey to the "curse" they carry.

A gruesome example of this process occurred recently in New York. A mother went to court and fought to get custody of her 5-year-old daughter, although she had several children with a new husband. Then she repeatedly attacked the little girl, calling her a "whore" to justify abusing her. The case only came to public attention because the child finally died from the repeated punishment (Van Biema, 1995, p. 36).

When donors of hot potatoes lose contact with the vulnerable recipient, they feel compelled to secure yet another recipient. This is why, in situations in which one or another child in a family carries hot potatoes from a caretaker, the donor is at pains to keep the family dependently glued together. If one child moves away, another may become the vulnerable recipient. Since many transmissions of hot potatoes occur in families, certain typical family episcripts are transmitted from one generation to another. Similarly, there are episcript patterns that become imbedded in the culture of certain groups—for instance, in Mafia codes of behavior.

Although the examples just cited include extreme violence, there are less brutal examples within relationships in which, say, the donor partner suffered from excessive rejection or inconsistency during childhood and transmits the same kind of pain to an overly dependent partner. Hot potatoes may be transmitted for similar reasons in teacher/student or employer/employee or guru/disciple or cult leader/follower relationships, and even, unfortunately, in certain therapist/patient relationships.

All situations of transmission involve unequal power between donor and vulnerable recipient, although in many cases the donor's power is only psychological and due to transference phenomena. Subtle covert transmission occurs as in hypnosis with post-hypnotic suggestions.

Treatment Issues

Carriers of hot potatoes can be identified by the robot-like manner in which their Adapted Child might manifest certain feelings or attitudes, as did, for instance, certain volunteers working for Werner Erhard during the heyday of the EST movement. An episcript may be recognized by the nonautonomous, semi-fanatic manner in which a particular individual may assert an ironclad vocation or obligation to fulfill certain tasks or goals.

Detailed treatment suggestions are beyond the scope of this presentation, other than to say that if a therapist suspects an episcript, it is important to seek, and then to define verbally with the client's Adult, what its origin is, and thence the causative hot potato (or potatoes). From then on the client needs permission to drop it as well as the surrounding episcript, the way a cancer may be excised by radiation or surgery.

Once in a while there are opportunities for treatment in the course of family therapy. Yet if, for instance, one of the children in a family is the vulnerable recipient for, say, suicidal behavior, it is difficult to get the child to discard it, for it is likely then to reappear in the donor, who may be the parent. The vulnerable recipient may himself or herself often unconsciously prefer to hold on to the hot potato rather than to endanger the donor. (Remember, magical assumptions are involved here, including the belief that there is no way to totally discard a hot potato; someone must carry it!)

However, when clients no longer live in the same area as the donor, it is possible to help them successfully drop their episcript or cast off hot potatoes by identifying and naming them.

Sometimes specific permission must be given to the Child to exorcise and discard them, as in children's games; interestingly this can be quite effective. (For instance: "It doesn't have to go back or be carried by anybody; let's just blow, blow, blow it all off, way off, into the stratosphere!" and so on.) This process is particularly successful in groups, wherein it is easiest to concoct playful magical rituals.

Unfortunately, many vulnerable recipients do not come into treatment while under the spell of a dependent relationship with a donor, so all too often it is only with hindsight that an episcript is identified. John Wilkes Booth's episcript (from his mother—to gain dramatic recognition in the theater) became evident only after Lincoln's assassination. A similarly tragic current example is that of the young law student who murdered Prime Minister Yitzah Rabin of Israel, most probably as a result of an episcript that combined several hot potatoes from one or more of his mentors.

In the course of private life, or consultation work for organizations, I have come across a number of examples of hot-potato transmissions and/or episcript development. Sometimes I was able to intervene in the process, but at the cost of crossing certain contractual boundaries and with the risk of repercussions in the donor, who then needed help. Thus, even though ideally speaking a client can be given permission to cast off a hot potato after it is identified, in practice there are many pitfalls, and the helper must be alert not to be herself drawn into the Rescuer/Persecutor/Victim triangle (Karpman, 1968).

Magical Beliefs, Hypnotic Phenomena, and the Need for Research

In my original article I compared the process of transmission of hot potatoes and the development of episcripts in individuals and groups to ancient tribal rituals based on magic and sacrifice. In those instances, beliefs in the power of scapegoating to avert evil fate or to bring about desired outcomes were institutionalized and openly engaged in. A classic example in Homer's mythology is Agamemnon, who offered his virgin daughter, Iphigenia, as a sacrifice so his fleet could sail to Troy. In other myths the vulnerable recipient voluntarily takes on the

curse, as in Wagner's opera, "The Flying Dutchman," or in the story of "Faust."

Nowadays, hot-potato transmission is more covert, although, as mentioned earlier, it exists frequently in families and in many other situations of unequal psychological power. However, research is needed to spell out exactly how the process works, for instance, in cults and in the case of charismatic personalities such as Hitler, who was able to transmit onto multitudes his own obsession about eliminating Jews.

At the time when I identified the process of hot-potato transmission, most mental health practitioners were not particularly interested in clinical phenomena associated with hypnosis, for good or ill. However, ever since Bandler and Grinder (1975) described Milton Erickson's therapeutic techniques, there has been a growing body of therapists practicing Ericksonian hypnosis, and the corresponding literature has shown how easily memory and the behavior of average individuals (not just highly suggestible ones) can be influenced and transformed by hypnotic means using, as did Erickson, "naturally occurring patterns of behavior" (Gordon & Meyers-Anderson, 1981, p. 127). This means that hypnosis can be practiced without the formal hypnotic induction techniques that make the process objectively identifiable.

The emphasis in the professional literature is on the value of these techniques for curative purposes. There has not been equivalent published material on how similar techniques are used deliberately and intuitively for harmful purposes, as in donor/vulnerable recipient relationships. For instance, exactly how and why did Charles Manson manage to get a number of his followers to commit senseless murders on his behalf? It is my hope that some of you will become interested in seriously investigating the harmful parahypnotic processes that can occur in various relationships. This is still a largely unexplored area for future research in psychology and sociology.

Onward to Rackets as Substitute Feelings

I became so carried away with how vulnerable recipients can become substitute carriers for the pathology of donors, that I postponed talking about the work on rackets that got me invited

here as a Berne Award recipient. No matter; by now it has already been expounded on a good deal by myself and others, so what follows here will be mainly a summary and references. However, do let me tell you how the subject came about, for it, also, dates back to my discussions with Berne.

You must have noticed that rackets are not mentioned in *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* or in *Games People Play* (Berne, 1961, 1964). However, when I was in Carmel, and later, I frequently heard Berne express exasperation with what he called "rackets." He was frustrated by the fact that even after he kept confronting certain patients with how certain feelings they expressed repeatedly were just phony rackets, they kept bringing them up anyway, over and over again.

As he later wrote (Berne, 1972), although each patient claimed that his or her particular (racket) feeling was "natural" (pp. 138-139), "each one has been learned, or rather decided upon, in early childhood." (p. 139). He also asserted, "Nearly all angers, hurts, guilts, fears, and inadequate feelings are rackets," and he defined a racket as "a feeling, out of all the possible feelings, that is habitually turned on by a given person" (p. 139).

It seemed to me that just because they bored him, and he did not know how to deal with them, it was demeaning to label as rackets feelings that patients claimed they experienced, however repetitiously. I thought we needed to consider what feelings, thoughts, or attitudes might lie behind those he termed rackets, how these originated in the past, and why patients would want to keep reviving their so-called rackets even when their therapist disapproved.

So it was because such arguments with Berne preoccupied me with the subject that eventually, in the course of my practice in Chicago, I happened to identify the substitute factor in the case of Thea, and then worked further with this issue (English, 1971). But I knew well enough that to discuss this with Berne, as I wanted to, I would have to write it all out, which I did in advance of the summer conference of 1970 in California, at which we planned to meet.

However, as you all know, tragically, Berne died suddenly just before the conference. Since I never got to show him my material, I wanted to throw it away, which, I now know, would have revived my writing phobia. However, shortly before his death, Berne had transformed the *Transactional Analysis Bulletin*, which he had edited, into the more ambitious *Transactional Analysis Journal*, to be edited by others. Ken Ernst and Jack Dusay, who were in charge of a forthcoming issue, did not have enough articles on hand, so they urged me to give them my material on rackets. They published it in two parts, and thereby were instrumental in gaining me the ensuing recognition.

Additions Since Writing
My Rackets Articles

1. As indicated above, I disliked the label "rackets," but since I never got to convince Berne to change the name, it remained attached to my work (English, 1971, 1972). In fact, later I added the noun "racketeer" to the vocabulary and then the verb "racketeering" for transactions to obtain strokes in support of rackets (English, 1976a, 1976b). I did better in German, in which I use the term "Ersatzgefuehle"—substitute feelings—rather than rackets, thereby including my definition in the name. Instead of racketeering, I say "Ausbeutungstransaktionen," which means "exploitative transactions," and "Ausbeuter" (exploiter or extorter) for racketeer (English, 1980, 1982; English & Wonneberger, 1992). Similarly, in French I use "sentiments parasites" and "parasitage" (English, 1976c, 1992). I hope there are comparable translations in other languages that avoid using the American word rackets, which many foreigners associate with tennis rather than with extortion.

2. Rackets (to use the name we are now stuck with in English) are not limited only to being substitutes for feelings; they can also be substitutes for behaviors, attitudes, insights, and even ideas. For instance, drivers such as "Be strong" can also be rackets and so can certain phobias. (My own writing phobia was probably a racket and probably Berne treated it as such. This means that *sometimes* rackets *can* be cured, at least for practical purposes, when they are confronted in a transference relationship, even when the underlying feelings are not identified.)

3. Issues of shame can reinforce rackets, as

illustrated in my recent article on shame (English, 1994).

4. While some rackets are relatively easy to detect and treat (like obvious here-and-now substitutions of fear for anger or anger for sadness), others are more pervasive and may recur even after underlying feelings are identified. This is because certain previously unacknowledged inchoate feelings and/or attitudes may have been repressed in additional ways at later stages of development, beyond the two to four-year-old age period that I had originally postulated.

5. Thus it is obvious that there may be whole categories of feelings, attitudes, and beliefs that are repressed, rather than just one "genuine" or "authentic" feeling. The rackets that substitute for them may then increasingly appear to sustain the individual, even though they actually undermine the person's ability to function in other ways (as in the example of my writing phobia, which was reinforced in various ways in the past and had offered me some secondary gains, but later blocked me from full expression).

6. It appears that all of us may carry rackets and may racketeer on occasion, on a first- or even second-degree level, whereby even therapists may misdiagnose an issue and fail to realize that it represents a racket. Again, using myself as an example, I now know that the root of my writing phobia had to do with disappointment, so the phobia substituted for acknowledging vulnerability and the pain of disappointment. As indicated at the beginning of this article, I am grateful that Berne forced the symptom away long before I realized what it substituted for. However, for intractable cases I still think it is necessary to identify the underlying feelings, thoughts, or attitudes and to bring them forth into broad daylight for treatment to be completed.

7. In the case of third-degree racketeers, however exasperating they may be and however hollow they may sound, it is important to realize that they are confused persons, obsessively trying to garner strokes for artificial feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and "needs" that they themselves hold as true or essential. It is precisely because their very rackets undermine their ability to gain gratifying relationships and suffi-

cient strokes in other ways that they may ultimately become dangerous to themselves or others when their repeatedly exhibited rackets no longer garner strokes. For instance, O. J. Simpson's racket of possessive generosity, substituting, perhaps, for insecurity, may have ultimately made him dangerous when he no longer continued to get as many reinforcing strokes for his generosity and power as he had previously received from his former wife Nicole and others.

8. Thus a violent outcome of racketeering can occur if, say, one of the characters racketeers on a third-degree level (desperately in need of the strokes for his or her racket) while the other racketeers only on a second- or first-degree basis and seeks to disentangle from perpetual racketeering (English, 1976b, 1977a, 1977b).

9. It is the specific rackets of each party that determine the content of the complementary racketeering of codependent relationships. This process consists of mutual stroking of each other's rackets to exchange the enormous quantity of extra strokes each requires to validate his or her racket.

10. After I recognized this process, I saw that it occurs between two general categories of complementary characters that correspond to the two positions of "I'm not-OK—You're OK" (I–U+) and "I'm OK—You're not-OK" (I+U–), which I named Type I (Undersure, which primarily uses the Child ego state) and Type II (Oversure, which primarily uses the Parent ego state) (English, 1976a, 1977b).

11. A codependent relationship can support two racketeering partners for a while, but it does so by placing them in a drama triangle (English, 1976b; Karpman, 1968). For instance, an Oversure person might racketeer as Rescuer or, alternatively, as Persecutor with an Undersure (Victim) partner. This may be a short-term process or a long-term one, and may occur not only in marital relationships, but also in business contexts. In all cases, sooner or later one partner will switch abruptly because of dissatisfaction, since racketeering operates in the service of rackets and thus does not quell the underlying need to express unacknowledged authentic feelings or attitudes. At that point, the Victim becomes Persecutor, and the Rescuer or Perse-

cutor becomes Victim—until they reinstate their racketeering system if the new Victim becomes Rescuer or, worse, until there are bad, even lethal consequences after the switch.

12. This is where my work on racketeering and episcripting interconnect, for I have found that in cases in which a Type II (allegedly Oversure) racketeer tries to use the complementary relationship with a Type I (Undersure) racketeer to transmit hot potatoes, and the Type I (Undersure) partner seeks to pull out of the relationship (perhaps by finding another more compatible partner, or a Rescuer), the Type II racketeer will become more and more controlling in trying to subdue the partner, all the way to murder.

13. Similar transactional processes such as the ones just described occur in Leader/Follower relationships within cults, rigid religious groups, or closed societies (English, 1979). Although these reject intervention, at least it is possible to anticipate consequences and perhaps to forestall certain tragedies by understanding the delusional process of their racketeering.

14. In treatment, in addition to clarifying the aforementioned processes transactionally and distinguishing the character type of each party, the particular feelings and beliefs underlying the racket of each party must be unearthed for the treatment to hold.

15. When I recognized that sudden switches of ego states occur when a racketeer fears loss of strokes to his or her rackets, I saw that the resulting crossed transaction looks like a game outcome, but that the process is not initiated to further the script, as Berne indicated with his script formula (Berne, 1972, p. 419). Rather, the final crossed transaction occurs because the racketeer switches ego state as a result of fear or frustration about no longer eliciting strokes from his or her racketeering process.

This, however, implies a major revision of basic transactional analysis theory. I dared write it out in my article, "Let's Not Claim It's Script When It Ain't" (English, 1977a). It was a painful article to write, for even though I loved to challenge some of Berne's ideas while he was alive (and actually we had embarked on a spirited discussion about scripts which led him to revise the definition in the glossary of his last book, published posthumously [Berne, 1972,

p. 446]), I hated to contradict his edicts after his death.

I expected a storm of protests from readers of that article, or of the similar chapter in Blakeney's book (English, 1977b). Instead, these revisions of game theory were all but ignored in the United States. However, over the years I had the opportunity to teach most of these concepts in workshops in Europe. Many therapists there have used them, especially since the material is pertinent to the subject of relationships and codependency, major clinical topics both for transactional analysis therapists and others.

I thank you for your patience, as I roamed all over a range of topics, from Berne to ego states, to my phobia, to hot potatoes and episcripts, to rackets, character types, racketeering, game theory, and dysfunctional relationships. Just as Berne encouraged me to examine theory and practice, it is my fond hope that, in whatever way, all this may have stimulated you, also, to further clinical research.

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