

Eric Berne – The Man and His Times

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By Ann Heathcote & Marco Mazzetti

Our workshop will be a workshop of two halves, with Ann presenting biographical information about Eric Berne, and with Marco reflecting on some aspects of the possible cultural script of Berne and how our cultural scripts can influence our present professional activities. So, in keeping with this, our conference paper will also be in two halves – first a paper entitled “Eric Berne - A short biographical sketch” by Ann, and then one by Marco entitled “Eric Berne and the cultural script”, which he has also submitted to the *Transactional Analysis Journal* for the Eric Berne – Then and Now themed edition scheduled for October 2010.

Eric Berne – A short biographical sketch

By Ann Heathcote

Early years

Leonard Eric Bernstein (later Berne used Lennard) was born on 10 May 1910 at his family home in Montreal, Canada. He was born into a Jewish family, who lived in a pleasant area of Montreal where half the residents spoke English and the other half French (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1978). Berne had one sister, Grace, who was five years younger. His family were comparatively well off, lived in a beautiful home, had servants, and paid for their two children to be privately educated at Montreal High School.

Berne’s father, David Hillel Bernstein, was a well-known and well-respected doctor. He founded the Herzl Clinic, a free clinic, for Jewish immigrants and refugees. David’s father had emigrated from Poland and was a travelling optometrist, colloquially known as “the glasses man” (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1978, p. 177). Berne’s mother, Sara Gordon Bernstein, was a teacher and journalist, who encouraged the young Berne to write. She was born in Pinsk, Russia, and brought to Canada by her mother. Later her father, who went AWOL from the Czar’s army, managed to join his wife and daughter. In Canada, Sara’s father initially worked as a gravedigger and then set up a second hand furniture and antique store (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984). Berne’s parents were both graduates of McGill University in Montreal.

Berne admired and looked up to his father, even going out on medical rounds with him on occasions. Perhaps it was hardly surprising that Berne himself would decide to become a doctor. Berne’s father caught the World War I influenza in 1918, which developed into tuberculosis. He died in February 1921 when Berne was only 10 years old.

Anti-semitism in Montreal was rife e.g. there were notices at public beaches saying “Gentiles Only” and signs in hotels stating “No dogs or Jews Allowed”. The Bernstein family certainly experienced anti-semitic ‘attacks’ first hand. For example, Berne’s mother lost her job as a teacher at a protestant school, when the school board discovered she was Jewish. It has also been reported that when Berne was young he experienced being spat at by French Canadian youth (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984). In addition, Berne moved to the United States of America in 1935, as he narrowly missed out on obtaining one of only two places available for Jewish interns each year in the Montreal hospitals (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984). It is likely that Lennard Eric Bernstein changed his name to Eric Berne, circa 1943, as a result of the prevailing anti-semitic attitudes in Canada and America.

Education and early work history

Berne graduated from McGill University in 1931. He then gained the degrees of Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Master of Surgery (CM) from McGill University Medical School in 1935. He undertook his internship at Englewood Hospital, New Jersey from 1935-36 and from 1936-38 he did a psychiatric residency at Yale University School of Medicine (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984).

From 1938-40, Berne was an assistant physician at Ring Sanitarium, Arlington Heights, Massachusetts, and from 1940-43 he was employed as a psychiatrist in a sanitarium in Connecticut, and concurrently as a clinical assistant in psychiatry at Mt Sinai Hospital in New York. He also maintained a private practice.

In 1943, Berne joined the United States Army Medical Corps. He rose from the rank of Lieutenant, to Captain, and then to Major. During his time in the army, Berne was based at several different hospitals within the United States. After he was demobbed in July 1946, Berne decided to move to Carmel, California.

Wives and children

Berne was a man of his times i.e. the 1940s, 50s and 60s, who held 'traditional' (at that time largely and widely held and accepted) views regarding the male/female role divisions in marriage. He expected his wives to be beautiful, domesticated and tolerant of his heavy work schedule.

Berne married three times in all. First he married Ruth McRae. When Berne was first introduced to Ruth, in 1941, she was still married to her first husband Ian. Berne seemed smitten from the start, apparently saying Ruth was the epitome of his childhood dream of beauty (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984). Berne and Ruth began an affair, which resulted in Ruth becoming pregnant. Berne persuaded her to leave Ian and to marry him in 1942. Ruth reported being both attracted to and repulsed by Berne (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984). They had two children Ellen, born in 1942, and Peter, born in 1945. By the time Peter was born, Berne and Ruth were already separated. They were divorced in 1946.

Next, Berne met and married a divorced socialite, Dorothy De Mass Way, in 1947. They married in 1949 and divorced in 1964. Dorothy had three children from her first marriage: Robin; Janice; and Roxana (who was tragically killed in a car accident when she was aged fifteen). Dorothy and Berne had two children together: Eric Junior (Ricky) in 1952 and Terence (Terry) in 1955. In the school holidays, Ellen and Peter would often come to stay with their father. At these times there would be seven children in the Berne household!

Finally in 1967, Berne married Torre Rosenkrantz, who was only 29 years old when she met Berne in approximately 1966 (Berne was then 56). They were married for only a short time, separated at the end of 1969 and were divorced in early 1970.

Berne's long-term relationship with Dorothy and his shorter relationship with Torre were both adversely affected by his gruelling work schedule.

Relationship with psychoanalysis

In 1941, Berne began training as a psychoanalyst at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute and became an analysand of Paul Federn. Berne's analysis with Federn appears to have been cut short when he joined the United States army. After the war, he resumed his psychoanalytic training in San Francisco where he became the analysand of Erik Erikson from 1947-49.

In 1956, after 15 years of psychoanalytic training, Berne was refused admission to the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute as a fully-fledged psychoanalyst. He was apparently asked to do a few years further

training. It is likely that Berne's admission was refused at this time as his thinking, on both the ego and on intuition (see Berne, 1977), was not in keeping with the Freudian 'party line'. Berne decided to end his psychoanalytic training at this time.

Berne continued to use Freudian concepts when he had no developed theory of his own in a particular area, and he compared and contrasted Freudian concepts with the concepts he himself was developing. Until the end of his life, Berne continued to use the Freudian methodology of the couch and free association in his individual psychotherapy work (Steiner, 1974), although with an increased emphasis on script analysis, rather than on psychoanalysis, as the years progressed. His group work was very different and concentrated on the theory and methodology of transactional analysis.

A reply to a critique of transactional analysis in 1969, succinctly sums up Berne's attitude towards Freudian theory:

"As to the Freudian ... elements in transactional theory, I think ... Freud ... were [was] right, and I think I am right too, so I am not ready to discard any of us. Therefore, there has to be a way to get us together, which may take another ten years to do more elegantly than I have done it so far." (Berne, 1969, p. 478).

Development of Transactional Analysis

Berne was developing, and using in his clinical work, the concept of ego states from around the early 1950s. In 1957, Berne had two articles published where he wrote for the first time about ego states. In the first article, entitled *The ego image*, Berne (1957a) differentiated between the Adult and Child states of the ego, and in the second article *Ego state in psychotherapy* he described the Parent ego state (1957b). Berne made clear that his development of ego state theory rested firmly on the foundations already laid by Federn (1952, published posthumously) and Weiss (1950). He concluded that what he was doing that was new was "not necessarily the concepts, but the emphasis and development." (Berne, 1957b, p. 300)

By the time Berne's (1961) book *TA in psychotherapy* was published the main theories of TA had been conceived and written about, although they were all at different stages of development. These were: ego state theory; transactional analysis proper (the analysis of transactions); game; and script theory.

In 1964, *Games people play* was published, which led to the popularisation of transactional analysis around the world. At one point, Berne was apparently delighted to hear that this book had outsold *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Lawrence, 1928) in England! (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984)

Berne also wrote two books on groups and organizations entitled *The structure and dynamics of organizations and groups* (1963) and *Principles of group treatment* (1966).

Berne's books *Sex in human loving* (1970) and *What do you say after you say hello?* (1972) were published posthumously.

Work and writing schedule

Berne had an incredibly busy work schedule. For example, Cheney (1971) wrote:

"Monday mornings he saw patients in his Carmel Office, Monday afternoon he travelled to San Francisco. Tuesday morning he spent at one of the hospitals there. Tuesday afternoon he saw private patients; and beginning in 1950-51 he spent Tuesday evening conducting his seminar. Wednesday he was back in the hospital, or ... lecturing at ... University of California School of Medicine. Wednesday afternoon patients. Wednesday evening teaching the TA 101 course, Thursday morning at Stanford or working with private patients, travelled back to Carmel Thursday afternoon. Thursday evening he conducted the Monterey TA

Seminar. Friday he wrote, Friday evening, beginning in 1951, poker at his house, every week without fail. Week-ends were devoted to writing.” (p. 17-18)

In all he wrote eight psychotherapy-related books during his life time and over 56 articles and book chapters (10 of these were co-authored). He was also editor of the *Transactional Analysis Bulletin* from 1962 to 1969, and consulting editor in 1970.

Berne also travelled widely, e.g. Fiji, India, Lebanon, Singapore, Syria and Turkey, primarily to research the psychiatric institutes, hospitals and practices in these countries.

Berne's personality

Berne was an astute observer and studier of human beings and their behaviour. This aspect of his personality clearly developed early, for example, Berne's sister (Grace) recalled that as a student Berne would spend hours at the Montreal docks observing the alcoholics (Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1978).

Berne has been described variously as: “playful, scientific, intense” (Dusay, 1971, p. 43); “devilish, witty, naughty” , “very shy” and “of genius capacities” (Steiner, 1971, p. 46); “a constant source of encouragement, enthusiasm, and support” (Harris, 1971, p. 59); “a man of many moods” (p. 64) and “direct and straight” (p. 69) (Levaggi et al, 1971, p. 64). People often had strong reactions in response to Berne, they tended to either love him or hate him.

He had “irrepressible humor” (Steiner, 1971) which was particularly evident in his writing, for example in his article entitled ‘Who was condom?’ (Bernstein, 1940) Berne wrote about the contraceptive, the condom, and whether a man called Condom ever existed!

He was confrontational and provocative, particularly regarding the psychiatric profession and practices of the time. For example, in his last keynote address given in June 1970 at the Golden Gate Group Psychotherapy Society (Berne, 1971), with the spoof title ‘Away from a theory of the impact of interpersonal interaction on non-verbal participation’, Berne was critical of the antipathy of the psychiatric profession's attitude towards curing their patients.

Berne worked hard and played hard. He enjoyed “jumping up and down” (Steiner, 1971, p.47) parties after the weekly seminars in San Francisco, playing poker on Friday evenings with his Carmel friends, and swimming and constitutionals on his favourite Carmel beach on Sundays with his friends and children.

Final days

Berne experienced a first heart attack on 28 June 1970. He was hospitalised and was expected to make a near full recovery. He even spent time correcting the proofs for one of his books. Just over two weeks later on 15 July 1970, he had a second heart attack and died.

Eric Berne was only sixty when he died. I often wonder how he and transactional analysis would have continued to have developed if he had lived to a ripe old age.

[The content of this short biographical sketch of Eric Berne is representative of the current state of Ann's knowledge and understanding of Berne and his life – she would like the reader to be aware, that what she has written is work in progress and has yet to be fully verified.]

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ERIC BERNE AND THE CULTURAL SCRIPT

Marco Mazzetti

My workshop is aimed at identifying possible manifestations of the cultural script in today's society and the relevance that they may have for the professional practice of transactional analysts, starting with a review of Eric Berne's opinions on script and culture.

“The young man in New Guinea with an old wrist watch dangling from his ear to ensure success, and the young man in America with a new wrist watch wrapped around his arm to ensure success, both feel that they have ‘purpose’ in life” (Berne, 1964/1968, page 71).

This kind of sentence is quite common in Eric Berne's books. The founder of Transactional Analysis loved to include examples in his writing – often funny – taken from the wide world. Therefore it is easy, running across his writings, to meet young men from New Guinea, Bulgarian peasants, medicine men from Fiji, chiefs from Papua, Indian Ayur-Vedic doctors as well as people from Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere.

According to his biographers (Cheney, 1971; Cranmer, 1971; Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984; Stewart, 1992) he travelled a lot, visiting psychiatric institutions in India, Singapore, Fiji, Tahiti, Papua – New Guinea, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Filipinas, Syria, Lebanon, Guatemala, Turkey, Bulgaria and several other countries.

His first article published in a medical journal was entitled “Psychiatry in Syria” and appeared in the American Journal of Psychiatry in 1939 (Berne, 1939).

I don't know if the young Eric was influenced by one of the founders of modern psychiatry, the neuro-psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926), who travelled in Malaysia and Indonesia at the beginning of the century to observe and describe different culture-bound clinical pictures, but I think it is probable, as Berne was a learned man, and that journey was well known inside the psychiatric community. Interestingly, one of the syndromes that Kraepelin described was the *amok* (a furious explosion affecting young men who, crying and running, wound and kill everyone they meet on their way, observed in South-East Asia), to which Eric Berne also devoted an article (Berne, 1950).

Whether or not this was the case, the soul of the observations of both travellers during their expeditions seemed quite similar: the curiosity of passionate psychiatrists to discover the multiform expressions of mental sufferings, and the possible therapies around the world, all conducted with the spirit of the anthropologist (it was not by chance that Berne loved to quote Margaret Mead in his books: 1961, 1963, 1964, 1970).

Later, the goal of his trips seemed to change a little, as witnessed by the preface of “Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy”:

“The writer has had the privilege of visiting mental hospitals in about thirty different countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific, and has taken the opportunity of testing the principles of structural analysis in various racial and cultural settings. Their precision and predictive value have stood up rather well under particularly rigorous conditions requiring the services of interpreters to reach people of very exotic mentalities” (Berne, 1961, p. 11).

After he developed Transactional Analysis, his interest seemed focused mainly on demonstrating the cross-cultural efficacy of his theory and practice.

My opinion is that Eric Berne was right: Transactional Analysis looks efficient cross-culturally (Mazzetti, 2007). I think that its strength lies also in its basis, deeply rooted in neuroscience, as witnessed by the several references Berne made to the work of the neuroscientists of his time, such as the neurosurgeon Penfield (Berne, 1961), and confirmed by recent advancements (Allen & Allen, 1989; Allen, 1999, 2000, 2009; Cornell, 2003; Gildebrand, 2003). The same success Transactional Analysis enjoyed all around the world during the last decades confirms its efficiency in working

inside the most different cultural environment (what Eric called, from his white western ethno-centric perspective, the “*very exotic mentalities*”).

However, the effort of underlining the cross-cultural efficacy of Transactional Analysis, seem in some way to discount the effect of cultural environment when it comes to influencing personal scripts.

Eric Berne was very assertive in this sense:

“Culture has very little to do with scripts. There are winners and losers in every layer of society and in every country, and they go about fulfilling their destinies in much the same way all over the world. For example, the prevalence of mental illness in any large group of people is pretty much the same all over, and there are suicides everywhere” (Berne, 1972/1996, p. 323).

I disagree with Berne. I think that culture has very much to do with scripts. Moreover, my opinion is that cultural influences are relevant not only in script formation, but also as a fundamental aspect of the therapeutic process.

Focusing on the cultural script, a risk is to remain in an anecdotal and comparative description of cultural differences, like: “Italians do this, Irish do that, while people from Fiji they ...”, instead of paying attention to the dynamics which perpetuates the cultural influences at the intrapsychic level, the subtleties of their action or the mystification they evoke.

This can be a very interesting area of research for therapy and other fields of intervention, as very often professionals and clients come from the same social environment, which enhances the likelihood that they share the same cultural prejudices. Then ‘cultural influences’ become a potential risk for both therapist and client: whereby they address issues within a frame of reference which follows a path towards social adaptation as opposed to moving in a direction which paves the way towards autonomy.

Moreover, unaware aspects of cultural script could and can be of interest as possible influencing factors on the very process of theorization, in our case of the theoretical corpus of Transactional Analysis.

Some ideas from Sociology

Amongst works that I have found useful to move forward a little in this area, I want to refer to “The Lonely Crowd”, a well known work by the sociologist David Riesman (1950), and to the theoretical production of the Brazilian colleague Roberto Menna Barreto (1985), whom I discovered several years ago in Rio de Janeiro.

In his work David Riesman (1909-2002) analyses the development of the human society. He distinguishes three very different social character types.

The first type, tradition-directed, is driven by cultural demands to act in an approved way, and is enforced through fear of being shamed or losing honour. The second type, inner-directed, is driven by “inner drivers” that are set primarily by the parents. The inner-directed person behaves according to this “internal piloting” and often senses feelings of guilt, rather than shame, if his behaviour shifts from these parent-instilled values. The third and final type, other-directed, is the group that Riesman has nicknamed “the lonely crowd.” The behaviour of other-directed individuals is governed primarily by their set of peers at any given moment. According to Riesman, other-directed individuals have an internal “radar” for sensing and responding to their peers and makes them “capable of a rapid if sometimes superficial intimacy with and response to everyone.”

The other-directed type of person varies greatly from the other two types. Rather than basing behaviour on the example set by parents or traditional roles, the other-directed type is constantly attuned to the behaviour of peers and responds based on what is observed. The primary difference between the three types comes from the size of the group that their behaviour is established upon. While tradition-directed types respond to the needs of a small group of close contacts, for example in a Samoan village, the inner-directed responds to only a set of values within himself that was

established at a young age by the limited family group, and the other-directed type, however, responds to an infinite number of individuals, as many as he meets in a lifetime. The tradition-directed type rarely came in contact with those outside his social group, and the inner-directed type does not respond to the cues of others. Lastly, other-directed individuals are driven by a diffuse anxiety that they will not conform or fit in properly. Riesman sees a fourth phase, which is of a different order: it concerns people who have transcended the social character in which they were born to achieve a real fulfilment of their lives: Riesman defined it “autonomy”. It is interesting to see here the semantic convergence between Berne’s and Riesman’s theories, more or less in the same years.

Menna Barreto, in turn, is the author of an interesting essay which links the application of Transactional Analysis to social psychology; it is really unfortunate that – as far as I know - his book is only available in Portuguese. The system he elaborates, combining the TA theoretical framework with Riesman concepts, is focused on how cultural scripts are formed and structured.

Here is not the place to exhibit in detail Barreto’s whole system; I will limit myself to summarizing certain aspects of the advanced capitalist society, and the “other-directed” social character into which it is linked, as a premise of further reflections which can affect Berne’s theory and our role as today’s Transactional Analysts.

According to Riesman and Barreto, the predominant cultural norm in the third phase of social structure is the approbation of others. In societies driven by tradition, “It’s ok to respect the transmitted norms”; in inner-directed societies, “It’s ok to pursue one’s own goals independently from others”; in other-directed societies, “It’s ok to be approved”.

In other words, the individuals’ goal, in the latest society, is to continually conform to other’s expectations, to forge an appreciated external image.

I think that it is not hard to identify in our society many examples of this tendency: the cult of image, the submission to fashion, the need to be seen in a particular way overwhelming authentic being, and a climate of uncertainties regarding stable values. Some complain “there’s no more values” but in reality what is missing is the stability of values: if norms transmitted via tradition, and faith in personal goals are substituted by other’s approbation, the effect is a lack of stability: the other’s opinion is inconstant, and to continually adapt to such changeability requires a considerable amount of energy.

Beyond these macroscopic aspects, I believe that there are also some fleeting microscopic aspects, hidden under more general dynamics likely to be discounted even by an attentive observer: postulates which are such an integrated part of our daily lives that we can no longer question them. But, are they really part of our nature or rather a cultural component that we do not need for our self-realisation?

For example: the role that work takes in the advanced capitalist society, where it appears as an ethical value. In fact, it is normally a compliment to be seen as a ‘hard worker’ as opposed to being a ‘slacker’, which is an insult.

‘Work-value’ has become so inseparable from our culture that we make it an indicator of mental health: in manuals of psychiatry the parameter of ‘disinterest for work’ is well represented. Following this direction, the almost totality of members of certain cultures are suffering from mental health problems. Traditional Australian aboriginals for example consider songs a value but not work, and also many African and American native cultures present similar traits. Problematic questions of this kind are of course the bread and butter of those interested in cross-cultural psychology, however this interest is wider spread: it is also stimulating for anyone wishing to understand psychological responses which are induced by their own culture.

Cultural influences in TA theory

Coming back to Eric Berne, influences of the social character of the time in which he wrote, can probably be found even in the theoretical elaboration of Transactional Analysis.

For example, here is a definition of a ‘winner’ in “*What do you say after you say hello?*”:

“On a short term basis, a winner is one who becomes captain of the team, dates the Queen of the May, or wins at the poker game” (Berne, 1972, p. 204).

Few doubt that Berne was a son of the “inner-directed” society; his social character, like many pioneers, looks like that. He was educated in an expanding society, which valued a competitive affirmation of the self in relation to others; consequently, the realisation of one’s own personal goals is the priority.

Several witnesses describe Eric’s competitiveness, his determination to reach his goals, and his difficulties in living a more relaxed and intimate life (Steiner, 1974, Schiff, 1977, English, 1981, 1984).

His definition of a winner is very selective, isn’t it? How many of us, Transactional Analysts, became captain of the team, dated the Queen (or the King, to be less sexist...) of May, and usually won playing cards?

I didn’t, did you? Following this kind of definition, maybe most of us have to recognize themselves as a losers, or, at least, as non-winners.

But probably if Eric was born in an “other-directed” society, identifying himself as the relevant social character... he would have been unlikely to become a pioneer, and probably would not have founded transactional analysis!

But let us suppose that he would have done it anyway, then his definition of the winner might have resembled this one:

“A winner is one who is much appreciated by his team mates, dates a girl (a boy) who, according to everyone, makes them a well matched couple, or whose partnership is sought to play cards”.

Perhaps however, beyond social characters, a “winner’s” definition, which would start from a position of autonomy, might look like:

“A winner is one who plays sport because s/he enjoys the physicality and the joyful use of her/his healthy body, dates a girl (a boy) that s/he finds really agreeable, or likes spending the evening playing cards with friends whilst deepening his relationship with them.”

The inner-directed social character of Eric Berne peeps out in his books, here and there. We can find several other examples like this. But our “Euhemerus” (Berne, 1963), as he called the primal leader of a community, was – first of all and largely – an autonomous man.

While it seems probable, according to his biographers (Steiner, 1974, Schiff, 1977, English, 1981, 1984, Jorgensen & Jorgensen, 1984; Stewart, 1992), that Berne was a troubled man, I believe that his creativity and his courage in founding and developing Transactional Analysis give evidence of his autonomy. This is the reason why this example seems interesting to me: traces of the social character can affect even autonomous persons; moreover, because as a part of the social character, they can be less easily identified and confronted, as they are shared with the environment. This is what makes the difference between a simple personal script belief and another shared with one’s society.

It was my case: I met Transactional Analysis in 1977 and at that time, probably the social character of the environment in which I grew up was also “inner-directed”, so I found that definition of a winner quite obvious; only later it appeared competitive to me and not appropriate for my autonomous growth.

Some ideas to deal with our cultural script

Reflecting on these theoretical elements and practical observations suggests that in therapeutic treatment and ongoing process of self-analysis of the therapist, the cultural script deserves some attention. Indeed:

- 1. To begin with, it highlights that the cultural script usually creates many fewer social difficulties than other aspects of the script, since it follows the expectations of the socio-cultural environment. Which in turn, can make the diagnosis more difficult to establish.
- 2. The therapist may easily be unaware of being contaminated by socio-cultural prejudices, and to share them with the client.
- 3. Finally, cultural script behaviours, which are reinforced by the environment, become even more powerful, because the majority of people inside the society share them, and because they are constantly displayed by the media, publicity, etc... It can be useful to bear in mind this type of conditioning, to be aware of a dual risk: to promote direct adaptation to the dominant pattern, and to induce rebellious actions, as rebelling against a system not always means an expression of autonomy...

I have generated a few questions I think may be useful to identify issues emerging from the cultural script. I have written them using the first person tense, but they can easily be applied to others, for example 'my client' etc...

- What is society expecting of a person like me?
- If I was on television, how do I think I should behave?
- If I was a candidate in the elections, what would I need to do/say to get elected?
- If there was a public survey to determine the characteristics of a 'winner' in the society I live in, what type of personality profile would emerge? How much would I try to conform to this profile? To what extent does this profile match with my personal view of what a 'winner' is?
- In the society where I live, what behaviour is considered appropriate for a man/woman? To what extent do I conform to these ideas? To what extent is it coherent with my own personal conception of masculinity/femininity?
- What are the expectations from society regarding men and women in my profession? To what extent do they match my own views about my profession?
- What are society's expectations towards men and women who have a similar social position to mine? To what extent are they coherent with my own conception of my role in society?

I believe these reflections may be useful if we, as active members of our society, aspire to function within a mode rewarding and efficient, as well as being set in a frame where awareness, spontaneity, and openness to intimacy co-exist. In other words, to avoid the trap of social adaptation and build up our autonomy to live our lives as people who have:

- Freedom to think, not accepted in tradition-directed societies.
- Freedom to be sentient and be intimate, denied by the social character of inner-directed societies,
- Freedom to be oneself, in spite of the messages of the other-directed society, which is in many ways the western society in which most of us live.

With gratitude to Eric Berne

I prepared this workshop because I think that culture has much to do with script. Eric Berne wrote that culture has little to do with script (Berne, 1972/1996, p. 323).

I think that, even if everybody has some chance to promote her/his own autonomous life, to be a winner was quite difficult in most of our countries (including the society where Eric Berne lived) some years ago, if you were a black, a woman, a Jew, a gay, a gypsy.

Unfortunately this is still true in several countries, including some of the most developed (I'm thinking, for instance, of a black or gypsy illegal immigrant in my country, today). To be a woman in Afghanistan, a Palestinian in the West Bank, a gay in countries where they can be sentenced to death, or a poor in some areas of Africa means still having a life quite difficult, and deeply reducing the chance to fulfil their own expectations and potentiality in life. A genius

like Galileo Galilei jeopardized his life, fulfilling his autonomous way of thinking, in a tradition-directed society; his forerunner Giordano Bruno, for similar reasons and some years before, was burnt by the Inquisition.

So, I disagree with Eric Berne: I think that culture can limit and influence personal scripts, and can do it in several ways, sometimes very subtle and difficult to identify.

And I am happy to do it in an ITAA Conference, and to also say that I am proud to define myself as Transactional Analyst and Berne's follower.

To take the permission to criticise a Master, a Euhemerus, is difficult, at least for me. But I'm lucky because I've had a very good teacher in this sense: Eric Berne.

He wrote a wonderful epigraph at the beginning of the last edition of his first book, signed with his pseudonym "Cyprian St. Cyr" (he used the name "Cynical St. Cyr", since high school), devoted to Sigmund Freud.

I wish to quote it just changing the name Freud to Berne:

"Remember one thing and it will stand you in good stead – whatever you may think of him as a person, and whatever his followers have or have not done, *Berne was right*. This is a cantrap which you should carry always in your purse, and use whenever common sense fails" (Berne, 1968).

He criticised psychoanalysis and yet he printed this kind of epigraph (with the name of Freud) at the end of his life.

I'm deeply grateful to Eric Berne because his ideas have changed my life since the time when, at nineteen years old, I entered for the first time my therapist's office.

And because, more than thirty years later, I'm still learning from him.

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