

# Letter from the Coeditor

*Jan Morrison*

Where I am sitting I can see out on a landscape blanketed in snow. The temperature is low—about minus 15 degrees Celsius—the sky mostly clear. It looks to be a beautiful world, but the news is not good. There is fighting just about everywhere one can imagine. Leaders are not leading and confusion reigns supreme. The news is not good. Global warming, the AIDS pandemic in Africa, starvation and strife. The news is not good. And so I sit to write about this issue's crop of articles. How do we as an intentional community of transactional analysts grapple with the problems besetting us on all sides? I find that the authors of each of these articles, book reviews, and letters approach their subjects with passion, intelligence, and conviction. Whether it is the lone suffering done by someone who endures a painful affliction, the collective suffering of those who witness how the spread of AIDS is devastating our planet, the resistance to change that involves everyone, or how to get people at work to do that work—our writers have pushed on through. Some explore at the cellular level those impulses, patterns, and habits that keep humans in destructive holding patterns. Others bring forth advances in theory—new ways to regard personality, impasses, and resistances. Some have applied transactional analysis to the understanding of marketing ideas. None of the authors and researchers featured in these pages has given up on transactional analysis theory or practice as a way to build a more enlightened society.

Our first article in this issue is Ray Little's "Ego State Relational Units and Resistance to Change." Little outlines a fascinating and important development of ego state theory. He offers an in-depth review of relevant object relations concepts and considers ways of working relationally that address some difficult therapeutic impasses. Little unpacks the various components of the resistance to change in a way that facilitates both a respectful view of this defense mechanism and a way of shedding and unmasking it. To quote him, "Psychotherapy offers an opportunity to transform internalized structures, thus setting free the potential contained therein. If the process is successful, not only will the client change and grow, but the therapist may also change." I commend Ray Little for daring to make advances in fundamental transactional analysis theory. Clearly, he is walking his talk.

Next up is an article by Jorge Oller-Vallejo on "Freudian Agencies, Psychic Organs, and Ego States." He offers a view on the relationship between Freudian agencies and psychic organs as structural components in the formation of the historical and functional ego states. Oller-Vallejo believes there is some ambiguity in transactional analysis regarding the relationship between these concepts. He follows Berne in his quest to develop a structural foundation for ego states and describes some interesting relationships between two paradigmatic approaches to understanding personality.

Christine Hyde then explores with fearlessness and sensitivity what she calls "this brilliantly resourceful defense" in her article "The Hot Cross Bun Model: The Nature of the Impasse in Stammering." she integrates personal experience and theory development to create new ways of working using a nonpathologizing approach. I really like that she uses the models and diagrams of transactional analysis as a way to map the stammering experience and reveal "the inherent insolvability" of these phenomenon. This is an elegant and compelling article.

Michele Novellino has written an article that builds on Berne's ideas about script and the child's construction of meaning. In "The Don Juan Syndrome: The Script of the Great Losing Lover," he offers a sensitive and nonjudgmental portrayal of his client's dilemmas as he explores the myth of Don Juan and outlines the main personality characteristics and treatment criteria for men suffering from this syndrome. Novellino, as well as exploring this particular script, gives a cogent argument and short history of aligning historical or fictitious characters with the concept of "syndrome." Readers will find this a provocative and engaging article.

Ritchie Macefield and Ken Mellor bring us a clear analysis of the role of awareness in the original discounting research with their article "Awareness and Discounting: New Tools for Task/Option-Oriented Settings." They are convincing and creative as they use industry-specific terminology in their awareness-discounting matrix and the awareness action sequence. It is always a joy to receive well-thought-out tools for use in different settings, in this case educational, business, and commercial. Their example of an intervention using an awareness action sequence shows it to be an accessible and useful tool.

Sue Dalton, Floyd Bolitho, Stuart Carr, Alicia Commons, and Malcolm MacLachlan describe a study that further tests the hypothesis of MacLaclan, Carr, Fardell, Maffesoni, and Cunningham (1997), who proposed that HIV/AIDS health education messages would be more effective when the ego state 'hooked' by the advertisement is complementary (parallel) with the ego state predicted as experienced during sexual interaction. The authors of the present article believe their this study and the one that engendered it reinforce the value of a transactional analysis of television communications related to health promotion. This is extremely relevant information when we consider the vulnerability of the populations at risk from HIV/AIDS.

Thanks to the efforts of *TAJ* Book Review Editor Curtis Steele, we also offer in this issue an interesting book review of Jim McKenna's book on poker, *Beyond Tells*.

Lastly, we have the latest but not likely the last epistle in the discourse regarding transactional analysis and psychoanalysis. The *Transactional Analysis Journal* has a tradition of hosting excellent academic argument, and this tradition continues with a letter from Claude Steiner. My spontaneous reaction to whether this letter should be edited was, "Nope, put it in as is!" That is not to say that I do not have an opinion on some of the views presented or the passion with which they are offered. As I walked the dog through the woods this morning, I thought about Claude's letter. I swing back and forth between understanding his desire to keep us on the good, clear path of Eric Berne and the desire of some others to explore transactional analysis under the light (or perhaps dark?) of psychoanalysis. The upshot of my wanderings down paths real and figurative was that I was invigorated. It seemed that while my monkey mind had gone back and forth, my human heart had recognized that all of this argument was to the good. That is what transactional analysis is in this current world: passion and commitment to awareness, spontaneity, and human connectedness.

I end this letter with the wish that you will enjoy, be irritated by, amused, stimulated, or even enraged with what appears within this issue of the *Transactional Analysis Journal*.

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