The Comparative Script System
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Abstract
The article presents the Comparative Script System—a chart which synthesizes the major theories in TA: Classical School and the Racket system; Redecision School and Cathexis School. It offers a tool which presents all of these within a systemic framework. The Comparative Script System (CSS) provides an overview of how these theories overlap and complement each other. It also provides an opportunity for detailed focus on specific aspects of the self reinforcing system by which an individual maintains his or her script.

Introduction
Some psychotherapeutic approaches concentrate on the 'why' of our personality and behaviour. They analyse our past to understand our present thoughts and feelings. Some focus almost exclusively on the 'what' and seek to change our behaviour in order to affect the whole. Other therapies take a more phenomenological approach. TA is concerned with the whole person, it is an unusual and profound psychotherapeutic tool. It offers a framework for analysing intrapsychic processes and relates them to past events and experiences. It also shows how these are active in the present day, manifesting in our communication and behaviour. Thus TA offers to the clinician a complete understanding of a person's 'pathology' and how it is maintained moment by moment in everyday life.

Despite this richness, TA is sometimes used in a restricted way, either simply as a communications theory or as a cognitive theory. Paradoxically, this may be partly due to the abundance of new theories and developments that have grown up since Berne first formed his ideas. These have broadened and deepened TA as a psychotherapeutic tool and yet the disadvantage of such diversity is that some transactional analysts—particularly trainees—may have been confused by the growth of different 'schools' into thinking that the various theories are in some ways mutually exclusive.

The authors offer here the comparative script System (CSS) which both encapsulates TA's understanding of the internal/external reinforcement of pathology and also integrates various TA approaches showing them to be mutually compatible and enriching.

A systemic approach to learning
A systemic way of understanding how children learn to interpret, adapt to, and manipulate their world is diagrammed by the pie-chart in Figure 1.

Section A represents the original experience of the child. This might be the child's need being expressed and responded to or an external event which affects the child. For instance, Sam feels his hunger, expresses his need, is fed and feels satisfaction.

If the experience at A happens often enough—or with sufficient impact—the child will develop beliefs about himself and his environment. This is the meaning-making process of Section B. In Sam's case he is likely to believe that his needs are OK and that the environment will respond to him (I+U+).

Section C represents the patterns of thinking and feeling based on those beliefs, with which the child will respond when a stimulus similar to the one at A (either internal or external) is experienced at a later date. As an adult Sam would experience his hunger readily, anticipate eating with pleasure and think appropriately about what he needed to eat.

Section D represents the individual's behaviour based on the internal beliefs and processes. Sam chooses and prepares a variety of interesting and nourishing food. He thus reproduces a similarly satisfying experience as that of his childhood (A).

Figure 1.

At a slightly more complex level, as a child Sam is taught to read by a man who revels in reading and discovery (A), he therefore 'knows' that learning is stimulating and rewarding (B), when he is faced with a book containing new information he feels excited and expects to understand and be interested (C), he reads copiously and integrates his learning in his work—trying out theories and techniques (D).

Although this system is self-reinforcing by its nature, it is not a closed system. This means that the individual can assimilate new information and therefore constantly update his beliefs in the light of new experiences. For example, after several attempts at an engineering manual Sam decides that not all learning is exciting and pleasurable for him and he takes up quantum physics.

However, as psychotherapists, we may need to focus on the pathological elements of a person's learning and how her or his system of thinking, feeling and behaving becomes a closed one—binding energy and limiting new learning and options. This happens when the responses of the environment are inadequate or inappropriate to the child's needs.

With this in mind, we will now look at the Comparative Script System (Fig.2)

Section A of the chart contains the original experience—called the 'script drama' or Protocol by Berne (1980), which the Cathexis School understands in terms of a pathological symbiosis between the child and his primary caretaker (Schiff et al. 1975). In other words this Section contains the elements of TA theory which relate to a person's early life and are descriptions of the environment's failure to respond appropriately to the child's needs, hunger or aspirations. It also contains the
repetitions of the original experience that have been brought about by the individual either in imagination (Reinforcing Memories of the Racket System (Erskhine and Zalcman 1979)) or as a result of his pathological system (Game Payoff (Berne 1964) or Racketeering (English 1976)). These, in turn, confirm and reinforce the elements at Section B.

Section B is called the internal adaptive position. It contains some of the methods TA offers for understanding what meaning an individual gives to his experience. In the Classical School these methods are Structural Analysis (Berne 1980); Script Analysis - including script type (Berne 1972); life positions (Ernst 1973) and escape hatches (Holloway 1973). It also contains the script matrix (Steiner 1974) which, though it contains messages received from parents and may therefore seem to belong in the realm of original experience, is actually the child’s definition of what happened. The Racket System describes this position in terms of beliefs about self, others and the world. The Cathexis School calls it Frame of Reference (which Ken Mellor defines as “The overall structural connections between and the degree of functional integration of Parent, Adult and Child which characterise a person” (Schiff et al. 1975)). This is where the Early Divisions of the Redecision School reside (Gouldings 1976, 1978).

Section C contains ways of understanding the active processes by which a person distorts his thinking and develops substitute feelings for the original feel repressed at A. These are based on the beliefs at B and maintain them by preventing the assimilation of new information which would challenge those beliefs. The Classical School has many ways of analysing these processes. These include Functional Pathology (Berne 1964, 1972, 1980), the Transference experience (Moisi 1985), the Miniscript (Kahler & Capers 1974), the internal components of the Racket display (Erskhine & Zalcman 1979). Contaminations and Exclusions (Structural pathology - Berne 1980) have been diagrammed as crossing the boundary between Sections B and C, as we think they are both structural and dynamic. From the Racket system the internal components of the Racket display are included in this Section. These are the reported internal experience and sensation and fantasies. The Cathexis School analysis the internal processes in terms of thinking disorders, discounting and grandiosity while the Redecision School concentrates on the impasse as it is managed to experienced as inner conflict (Gouldings 1974, 1975).

When a stimulus is experienced which is similar to that at Section A the individual, having the beliefs at B and the internal processes at C, will then manifest these in external behaviour.

Section D represents this manifestation of beliefs and inner processes. We understand this within the Classical School and also the Redecision School in terms of the analysis of Transactions, the analysis of Games (Berne 1964 and for an overview see Zalcman 1990), and the analysis of behavioural ego states in the egogram (Dusay 1972). Racketeering (English 1976) also applies here as do the observable components of the Racket system—body posture, expression and actions. External manifestations are described in Cathexis terms by means of the four passive behaviours - Doing Nothing, Overadapting, Agitating and Escalating to violence or incapacitation (Schiff et al. 1975). Cathexis describes two types of redefining transaction—blocking and tangential. It also analyses Game roles and offers the redefining hexagon.

Clinical Example

Section A: Original failure (and repetitions thereof) by the environment to meet child’s needs.

Arthur had a highly restricted and unstimulating early life. His parents were very over-protective. While his school friends had adventures he stayed at home with his mother who chose his clothes, his games and so on. He would often look out of the window and watch other children having much more colourful lives.

Section B: Consequent Beliefs

It seemed to him, when he was a little boy, that exciting things always happened to other people and never to him, and he grew up expecting to be bored most of the time. He used to say “It’s not fair, other people have all the luck”. He also distrusted his own decisions and waiting for others to tell him what to do, especially as he had learned from his parents that the world was a dangerous place. This was this internal adaptive position.

Section C: Internal Process

Arthur often felt bored and resentful but scared of change and risk. (Reported Internal Feeling Racket System) and thought “I couldn’t do that” (Discount) when he saw people being ‘more creative’ (Grandiosity) than him.

Section D: External Manifestations of Internal Process

He continued to obey his mother (Complementary Transactions [Child to Parent]) and got into Games of ‘Poor Me’.

Section A: Repetitions of Original Experience

When Arthur grew up, he took a safe and boring job that his mother suggested...

B ... And he believed that other people led interesting lives but he never could.

C. He felt bored and resentful and when the chance of a challenging promotion came up at the office he thought “I could never get that” (Discount at a level of personal ability) and “Others are more exciting” (Grandiosity to justify level of discounting).

D. He did nothing (Passive behaviour).

A. His colleague applied for and got the job. (Again, other people were having the adventures).

B. He said “It’s not fair. Other people have all the luck”. (Repeat of Script decision).

C. The next time a job became available, a friend urged him to apply so he did. However, before the interview he felt pessimistic and resentful (Reported Internal feeling) said “I’m sure I won’t get it (fantasies); someone else will have the luck”.

D. At the interview, when asked what qualities he would bring to the job he replied “My friend suggested I apply” (Redefining transaction). He acted depressed and resigned.

A. A more creative applicant was appointed...

B. ... And Arthur thought “Other people have all the luck”. And so on.

The example shows how Arthur confirmed and reinforced his script continuously. In psychotherapy, Arthur presented saying he was not getting enough out of life, He was quick to recognise his resigned and resentful behaviour. He liked that to his beliefs about life and began to realise that it was his parents who had given him those beliefs. Gradually he began to feel real anger at how he had been limited and grieved for the way he had limited himself. The story illustrates the components of the CSS as they are enacted by Arthur, and by all individuals who limit their options and maintain their scripts.
Uses of the Comparative Script System
The first use of the chart is as a training and supervision tool. Trainers can use the chart to offer an overview of TA theory to their trainees to help them understand how it can be integrated and used as a whole. In supervision, it can be used to highlight gaps in theory or for developing a trainee's flexibility of approach. Clearly, at the start of training, this would not be appropriate as trainees could be daunted by the quantity of material with which they are not yet familiar. However, later in the training process towards Stage 3 of Erskine's Stages of Development (1982) it can be used to invite trainees to the challenge of extending their options in diagnosis and intervention.

It can be particularly useful for trainees who are starting to prepare for Level 1 examination and students preparing exam tapes can use the chart as a checklist in analysing transcripts and in self-testing of flexibility and range between schools.

The chart can also be used for diagnosis and treatment planning. In the early stages of treatment the clinician uses the Assessment Chart (Figure 3) and begins to fill the information as it becomes available. In filling in the various 'knowns' much more is inferred in the 'unknown' areas—hypotheses can be formed and tested. This is a useful way of developing thinking and expanding options. The chart can then be used for treatment planning. Tools such as that of Paul Ware can have immediate relevance.

TA is a rich body of theory for any therapist who thinks systematically about her clients. The Racket System already offers to transactional analysts a way of working in that way with either an individual or a family. The chart highlights the systemic quality of other TA theories and makes it possible to select elements from any 'school' in order to make the formulation and therefore to draw our attention to the many options for breaking into the system.

Summary
In this paper, the Comparative Script System is presented as a way of integrating the diverse facets of Transactional Analysis theory. The self-maintaining elements of internal processes and external behaviour are underlined and some ways of using the system are indicated.

References
11. Holloway, W H (1973), Shut the Escape Hatch, Monograph IV, mimeographed, Medina, Ohio: Midwest Institute for Human Understanding

The Comparative Script System Diagrams were designed by the authors and drawn by Leo’s Graphic Design. These diagrams may be copied for use, and remain the intellectual property of Charlotte Sills and Diane Salters.
Repetitions of original failure by environment to meet infants' needs.

CLASSICAL SCHOOL
- Re-enactment of original protocol
  - Palimpsest

RACKET SYSTEM
- Remembered, imagined or hoped for responses from other reinforcing experiences
- Game Payoff
- Script Confirmation

CATHEXIS SCHOOL
- Original pathological symbiosis, or re-enactment thereof
  - Games
  - Early decisions
  - Escape Hatches

REDECISION SCHOOL
- Original relationship experience
  - Frame of Reference
  - Impasses
  - 1st 2nd 3rd Type Internal conflict

- Thinking Disorders
  - Grandiosity
  - Discounting

- Fantasies
- Reported internal experience and feeling
- Contaminations
- Exclusions
- Lesions

FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS
- Egogram
- Psychogram
- Functional pathology
  - Miniscript
  - Transference Experience
- Anomalies of cathexis and ego state boundaries
- Influencing Parent

INTERNAL PROCESS FOR MAINTAINING SCRIPT BELIEFS

Figure 2 The Comparative Script System
Repetitions of original failure by environment to meet infants' needs.

**Figure 3: The Assessment Form**