the SCRIPT

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Good-Bye: It's Been Good to Know You

by John Heath



Lis and John Heath

So, the time has finally arrived for me to be writing my last posting as ITAA President. In fact, by the time most of you read this, my term will be over. I have occupied the position for 5 years, 2 years longer than normal. That fact alone is enough evidence that these have been unusual and turbulent times for our organization. But I think that the trustees and I have done what we set out to do, and I am glad of that and to have played a part in the life of the association.

It's perhaps hard to remember, but in 2010 the ITAA was in a mess. We were losing money year on year, and we were still running a full-time office. Our membership was declining steadily, and some were saying that the end was nigh. We did have some assets. Our best tangible asset was, and still is, the *Transactional Analysis Journal*, a widely respected publication that transactional analysis authors and academics have been proud to use as a vehicle for their work and the priceless companion of any serious student of the theory. We also had the less tangible but equally important asset of the Berne legacy, for without his work, there would have been no body of knowledge called transactional analysis. No one who believes, as I do, in the principles and practice of TA would want to preside over the closure of the organization that he founded. Certainly I didn't. I never sought to be the twenty-first president of the ITAA, but when that responsibility fell to me, I was not about to take it lightly. It was my time to step up and do what was required.

So, over time we:

- Closed the full-time office
- Replaced the old Training & Certification Council with a new credentialing service in the form of the

International Board of Certification and the new vice president of professional standards

- Sorted out our website and made it fit for purpose
- Ended the contract to make the *TAJ* available via the TAJdisk and negotiated a commercial partnership with SAGE for the publication and distribution of the *Journal*
- Created new membership categories that included a student membership designed to benefit TA trainees
- Registered new articles of incorporation for the association as the first step in a major review of the bylaws, which will literally give the ITAA a new identity

This is far from an exhaustive list, but it does reflect the major areas of focus over recent years. It doesn't really do justice to the amount of work involved, but even a fully itemized list of achievements wouldn't really tell the story of what has happened to pull the ITAA out of what could have been its final nosedive. We are, at root, a psychological organization, and so it should come as no surprise that the main changes to make a difference have been psychological. Throughout all that has happened over the last 5 years, we have talked. We communicated with each other, with members, with other TA organizations, and with our ITAA staff. We created a successful, respectful, and active community at the heart of the association, and that is what turned the wider organization into a successful, respectful, and active community in its own right.

I was asked to stay on as president for an additional 2 years because the trustees felt that there needed to be an extended period of stability at the center of the organization. It's not because I had some particular business expertise or uncommonly sharp leadership skills. But I had presided over a time when the level of controversy, conflict, and instability had gradually declined, and this is what people wanted to hang on to by asking me to stay. The organization felt safe again, with a sense of a future. It has been touching to me to carry that transference and to hold the community in my heart during its troubled time. That is all I did really. That's all anyone needed to do.

I will never forget these 5 years. I do think I will forget some of the anxiety and frustration, the sunny Sundays stuck at my computer, the disapproving looks of my family when I disappeared early from the table to check my emails, and the endless sense of being busy, of never being able to do quite enough. When any of us has been engaged in a labor of love, what we mostly do with the negative stuff is consign it to obscurity and irrelevance. What else is there to do? There's no point in complaining as we wouldn't do it any other way in any case.

> *"As I step down, I think what I will miss most, and what I will work hardest to maintain, is the sense of connectedness that reaches all around the world. I feel at home in the world now in a way that I didn't before, and I have the deep conviction that the proliferation of inclusive communities such as ours will be what finally leads the planet to safety."*

Being your president has been an amazing experience, one that has far surpassed my expectations. As I step down, I think what I will miss most, and what I will work hardest to maintain, is the sense of connectedness that reaches all around the world. I feel at home in the world now in a way that I didn't before, and I have the deep conviction that the proliferation of inclusive communities such as ours will be what finally leads the planet to safety. I know that might sound grandiose, but it's my truth and I'm standing by it. I freely admit that it might take a while to achieve, but there's nothing much else to do, so I suggest we make a start.

And here's where the ITAA is now. The 2015 Board of Trustees meeting will receive its first in-profit balance sheet for many years. Yes, it's official: We are no longer losing money! Our membership is growing again, steadily, which is the best way. Our journal goes from strength to strength. Readers love the SAGE website facilities and the search pos-

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> *"Throughout all that has happened over the last 5 years, we have talked. We communicated with each other, with members, with other TA organizations, and with our ITAA staff. We created a successful, respectful, and active community at the heart of the association, and that is what turned the wider organization into a successful, respectful, and active community in its own right."*

sibilities, non-TA readers are finding it in their university libraries, and serious academic authors can have their *TAJ* article citations credited for the first time. The website is finally stable (I have my fingers crossed as I write that because I believe more in the old magic than the new). Our new IBOC is regarded with respect, and the ITAA is actively involved again in maintaining worldwide standards of training and certification in transactional analysis through its contribution to the newly constituted Transactional Analysis World Council of Standards (TAWCS). The bylaws are ready for their final review, and by the time this appears in *The Script*, it is possible that the board will have approved the final draft so it can go to members. The ITAA is about to launch a new policy on partnership with other TA organizations that, if successful, will further consolidate our position and help build the network so essential for our mission.

This is a great list of outcomes to be reporting at the close of my tenure, and I claim no personal accolades for any of them. I am proud to have helped, that is all. There are many others involved in every one of the achievements mentioned, although I am reluctant to name them individually in this context. There are so many people to thank that I am afraid I will miss someone. I hope those of you who have helped the ITAA to recover over these last 5 years know who you are and that you know how grateful I am to you.

However, having said that, there are several names I must mention. One challenge that I am glad I did not have to face in the years of my presidency is the loss through retirement or any other reason of any of our paid staff. Robin, Ken, and Janet are an inestimable asset to this organization. They cannot be asked to work with us forever, but I am glad they were there for my 5 years. I must also mention my successor, Suriya. He has been a fine and loyal colleague, and I am proud to be passing on the leadership role to him. I am sure that as the first ITAA President from the Indian subcontinent, he will widen our perspective and help us grow as a global community.

And lastly, I am going to thank someone I have never thanked before in this context: my wife Lis. She has put up with much over these years in the form of lost weekends and empty evenings. She has quietly served the community alongside me, and I am grateful for her support and her timely, wise advice. We shall enjoy getting to know each other again when the ITAA bird has flown our particular nest.

I read somewhere recently that the only prayer any of us ever needs to say is "thank you." So, thank you.

John Heath finished his term as ITAA President at the end of the Annual General Membership meeting in Sydney on 30 July. He will continue to serve on the ITAA Board for another year as past president. He can be reached at johnheath1105@gmail.com .

Welcome to New Members

JUNE 2015

Adri Brand, Netherlands
Bernadette Cass, UK
Leonie Cowl, UK
Judith Finney, New Zealand
Julia James, UK
Anita Manhas, India
Christin Nierlich, Germany
Sian Ponting, UK
Margarita Sizikova, Russia

EXAM CALENDAR

Exam Date	Exam	Cert. Body	Location	Application Deadline
6-7 Nov 2015	CTA	COC	Venue Louvain La Neuve, Belgium	*
13-14 Nov 2015	CTA	COC	Roesrath, Germany	*
6-7 Nov 2015	TSTA	COC	Venue Louvain La Neuve, Belgium	6 May 2015
13-14 Nov 2015	TSTA	COC	Roesrath, Germany	13 May 2015
5-7 Dec 2015	TEvW	COC	TBA	*
9-11 Dec 2015	TEW	COC	TBA	*
19-21 Mar 2016	TEW	COC	TBA	*
11-13 Jul 2016	TEW	COC	Geneva, Switzerland	*
2-4 Dec 2016	TEW	COC	TBA	*

* For CTA and TEW deadlines see the EATA Handbook or contact the EATA Supervising Examiner.

For more information about IBOC exams, see www.itaaworld.org .
For further information on COC exams, see www.eatanews.org/examinations/ .

A Big Thank You to the EATA Conference Organizers

by Marco Mazzetti

As you will read elsewhere in this issue of *The Script*, the European Association for Transactional Analysis (EATA) has just completed the first transactional analysis conference devoted to research and theory development. Held in Rome, Italy, from 9-11 July, it was a tremendous success, with more than 500 participants. This prestigious gathering was the result of the commitment and rigorous work of many researchers who served our community by providing demonstrations of the evidence-based efficacy of transactional analysis as a scientifically reliable theory and professional approach. The conference theme, "Beyond Limits: Verifying the Development of TA Theory Through Research," expressed well the aims and results of our community.

Among all of the colleagues who contributed to the success of the conference in various ways, two people deserve a special thank you.

Marco Mazzetti is the outgoing president of EATA. He can be reached at marcomazzetti.at@libero.it .

The first is Alessandra Pierini, the chairperson of the organizing committee. She worked incredibly hard and devoted a huge amount of time and energy over the past year to make sure that things would run as smooth as silk, even with so many attendees, so many presentations, and so many meetings. I greatly admire Alessandra's generosity and capacity to work!

The second person is Laura Bastianelli, who served as the chairperson of the conference scientific committee. She put her competence as a researcher and university professor at the service of the committee, which under her professional leadership, ensured the presence of prestigious keynote speakers from outside the TA world who provided us with stimulation and inspiration. Laura and her committee also evaluated hundreds of proposals to ensure that the workshops and presentations offered in Rome would be of the highest quality possible.

Thank you, Alessandra and Laura! You have the gratitude of EATA, the TA community, and me personally. We are so proud of you and grateful for your contribution.



Alessandra Pierini



Laura Bastianelli

Our thanks to Ulrika Widén, Marco Mazzetti, and France Brécard for the photos from the EATA Conference.

Bill Cornell Awarded the 2015 EATA Gold Medal

by Marco Mazzetti



The EATA Gold Medal, the most prestigious award granted by the European Association for Transactional Analysis, recognizes outstanding services to transactional analysis and the TA community. Usually it is given to people who have provided long-standing service to the association on a voluntary basis, although sometimes it has been granted to individuals who have promoted or worked on behalf of TA in Europe or who have been honored for their commitment to the development of TA in Europe.

This year EATA awarded the Gold Medal to Bill Cornell. Most *Script* readers will know of him and his generous service to the TA community. Besides being a long-time Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst (psychotherapy) and a trainer in neo-Reichian body psychotherapy, he is one of the most prolific and well-regarded authors in transactional analysis. He has written many fundamental articles and books related to the contemporary development of transactional analysis theory and was the recipient of the 2010 Eric Berne Memorial Award for his work on the relational and somatic organization of the Child ego state and expanding our understanding of script and script protocol. In addition to his contributions as an author, Bill has served as a member of the ITAA Board of Trustees (1984-1991), as editor of *The Script* (1997-201), and as a coeditor of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* (2003-present). He also received the Muriel James Living Principles Award from the ITAA in 2005.

> *"The reason Bill was awarded the EATA Gold Medal is his immeasurable commitment in promoting the* Transactional Analysis Journal *as the premier publication in supporting the development of TA theory and practice. The Gold Medal certificate reads: "In recognition of his outstanding services to transactional analysis worldwide by supporting the dissemination of TA in the scientific literature, expanding its recognition within academia, and promoting it in the wider professional communities."*

However, the reason Bill was awarded the EATA Gold Medal is his immeasurable commitment in promoting the *Transactional Analysis Journal* as the premier publication in supporting the development of TA theory and practice. The Gold Medal certificate reads: "In recognition of his outstanding services to transactional analysis worldwide by supporting the dissemination of TA in the scientific literature, expanding its recognition within academia, and promoting it in the wider professional communities."

Bill took on the responsibility for ferrying the *TAJ* into a safe harbor after the troubled waters it encountered in 2010. That year was a difficult time for the ITAA, which appeared to be in serious danger, with its very survival in doubt. It was of paramount importance to save the *Journal* and secure its future, thereby ensuring the tradition and historical TA literature for all transactional analysts. Luckily, as a result of courageous and clever efforts of ITAA President John Heath and the entire Board of Trustees, the ITAA has been deeply reformed and restructured so that its future is now promising. As a result, Bill's task slightly changed from simply saving the *TAJ* to promoting a good future for it and ensuring the best dissemination of transactional analysis

theory and literature within the scientific, professional, and academic worlds.

I can attest to Bill's commitment, passionate involvement, and even his anxiety about doing the best for all of us. He led difficult and complex negotiations with some of the world's most prestigious publishers until finally arriving at an excellent agreement with Sage Publications that resulted in good financial benefits for the ITAA and excellent dissemination of the *Journal* on a worldwide scale. For example, in 2010 the *TAJ* was read by about 1000 transactional analysts; thanks to Bill's work, it is now in around 7000 libraries in the most important universities and other institutions on the planet. He also promoted a process of referencing for the *TAJ* so that it is now quoted in some of the most relevant scientific databases.

These results are a natural consequence of Bill's attitude toward life and other human beings. This includes his deep, generous, and humanitarian attitude toward individuals and communities, which he shows in so many aspects of his life: his social commitment to the neighborhood where he lives; his presence and support for colleagues, trainees, and TA authors; and his warm and enduring relationships with family and friends.

I am deeply honored to be part of a community that counts Bill among its members, and I'm sure that all transactional analysts share the same pride I have in him.



Marco Mazzetti is the outgoing president of EATA. He can be reached by email at marcomazzetti.at@libero.it .

On Receiving the EATA Gold Medal

by Bill Cornell

I am deeply touched to be the recipient of the 2015 EATA Gold Medal, and I am equally moved to read Marco's kind words in this *Script*. However, as delighted as I am to receive this recognition, I would be seriously remiss if I accepted the award in my name alone. The current success of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* involves a story encompassing many minds and many voices.

When I agreed to become an editor of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* in 2003, it was on the condition that it be edited by a team. Nancy Porter-Steele, Jan Morrison, and I were the first coediting team. Later Ann Heathcote and Birgitta Heiller came on board as Nancy and Jan stepped aside. Jo Stuthridge joined the team, expanding the editorial group to four. More recently, Sylvie Monin and Diana Deaconu have stepped up as Ann and Birgitta moved on. In addition, quite a number of other hardworking colleagues have lent their minds and time as guest editors for special theme issues of the *TAJ*.

Over the past years, we have set several priorities. The first was to see that the *TAJ* reflects all theoretical models in transactional analysis theory and practice. The second was to make sure that it represented our entire international community. For many of our authors, English is their second (or third) language, so we are faced with complicated editing tasks. Nevertheless, this past year, more than two-thirds of our authors were from Europe. Another priority has been for the *TAJ* to represent all four fields of practice, and while we do not receive as many articles as we would like from the fields of counseling, education, and organizational work, we actively seek out and encourage authors who have contributions to make from those areas. We have also worked hard with our editorial reviewers and authors to bring the articles in the *Journal* up to a high level of scholarship. This has resulted in the editorial team becoming deeply invested in what is known as *developmental editing*, a process by which the editors work closely with authors (many of whom are writing for the first time) to make sure their articles are written as clearly and effectively as possible.

> *"As delighted as I am to receive this recognition, I would be seriously remiss if I accepted the award in my name alone. The current success of the* Transactional Analysis Journal *involves a story encompassing many minds and many voices."*

By 2010, another priority became clear: The *Transactional Analysis Journal* had to enter the digital age or slowly die. The ITAA Board of Trustees decided that we would

seek an academic publisher to take over the publication of the *Journal*, and I agreed to head up the team. It became clear that the intellectual property of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* was of significant value, and both Routledge and SAGE Publications, two of the most prominent publishers of journals in the human sciences, competed to publish the *Journal*. *TAJ* Managing Editor Robin Fryer, the ITAA Executive Committee, and the coeditors worked closely and hard during that process. Robin and I spent countless hours in detailed and complex negotiations with both publishers. In the end, the ITAA Board chose the proposal offered by SAGE.

Robin Fryer, of course, has been steadfast and invaluable throughout. When I accepted the Gold Medal in Rome, I wished she had been standing next to me. She should have been.

Now, as a result of our partnership with SAGE, the entire *TAJ* archive, as well as each new issue as it is published, is easily available for access and download by topic, title, or author. As Marco noted, it is available in about 7,000 universities worldwide. The past year witnessed more than 100,000 downloads of *TAJ* articles, enormously widening the professional and scholarly readership of our journal.

There is more work to be done, but the future of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* is assured. And so while I deeply appreciate the recognition of EATA's wonderful award, the hard work and devotion of many have been an essential part of all we have accomplished over the past decade.

Bill Cornell can be reached at wfcornell@gmail.com .



In Rome, the Italian version of Gloria Noriega's book on codependency, entitled Il copione di codependenza nella relazione di coppia: Diagnosi e Piano di intervento, *was presented. It was edited by Antonella Fornaro and includes an introduction by Marco Mazzetti and an appendix with interesting discussions about the future of research on the theme of codependence written by Antonella Fornaro, Luca Ansini, Antonella Loreti, and Giulia Mariani. The book includes the Noriega Codependence Instrument (ICOD), originally published in Mexico in 2011. Eva Sylvie Rossi was also present at the table asking interesting questions. She also talked about a joint research project on the theme of codependence that is being developed between Italy and Mexico. The book was first published in Spanish in 2013 with the title* El guión de la codependencia en la relación de pareja: diagnóstico y tratamiento. *The Italian translation was done by Clarissa Ruggieri. In the photo are (from left) Laura Quagliotti, Marco Mazzetti, Gloria Noriega, Sylvie Rossi, and Antonella Fornaro.*

TA Conferences Worldwide

30 September–3 October 2015:
Lima, Peru. XXXII Latin American Congress of Transactional Analysis (CONGLAT 2015). Contact: www.conglatperu2015.com or conglat2015@gmail.com

3-4 October 2015:
La Rochelle, France. National IFAT Conference.
Contact: www.ifat.net

7-9 July 2016:
Geneva, Switzerland. EATA 40th Anniversary Congress.
Contact: www.eatanews.org

2-4 September 2016:
Dhaka, Bangladesh. South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts Conference.
Contact: psh@askbd.org .

Breathing Life into Researching: The 2015 EATA Conference in Rome

by N. Michel Landaiche, III

My first encounter with the transactional analysis community occurred 12 years ago when I observed a European TA training group. That led to my first article in the *TAJ*, "Engaged Research," a formulation that has since been central to my professional practice. Perhaps more importantly, with that first encounter I became gradually part of the TA learning community, one that has been and continues to be so important to my growth and development as a professional.

Thus it was with considerable anticipation that I attended the 9-11 July 2015 EATA conference held near Rome. I wanted to delve into that large and, for me, keenly important topic of research as it relates to theory and practice. I would be gathering with people I have come to know and love over these many years. And since it would be my first EATA conference, I knew I would learn more about this sizable part of the international TA community. More engaged research! What could make me happier?

There were over 500 attendees, with the conference hallways and rooms a veritable roil of bodies, enthusiasms, and intelligence. I saw but a bare fraction of the workshops, talks, seminars, and other presentations on offer, so my "n-of-1" report is born not of thoroughness or objectivity but of excitement for what I learned. And though what I learned could fill many pages, I will focus here on a few of the presentations that sparked my further thinking about research.

Evita Cassoni shared about her work, as part of a team, with immigrant and refugee families seen free of charge at a clinic in Milan, with the desired outcome being increased resilience in those families. To evaluate the treatment's effectiveness, concurrent research has been conducted using self-report scales, graphic-symbol tools, and in-depth interviews. These families have come from other countries where their ancestors often lived for generations and likely passed along knowledge about how to survive and thrive. That precious, hard-won knowledge was then severely disrupted, if not lost, during the sometimes traumatic process of migrating. Yet through this therapeutic research process, these families were learning to develop their own capacities for researching as a means of attending more consciously and collectively, more carefully, to their strengths, needs, and effective strategies. In other words, by teaching families to recognize the aspects of family life that contributed to resilience and generativity, their lost knowledge was being regrown. *What methods of self-study do we—as a professional family—need to develop in order to foster our own strengths and gifts?*

Moniek Thunnissen and Pierre Sebregts described a TA-based, 3-month inpatient program of group therapy for adults (ages 19 to 65) diagnosed with personality disorders. To evaluate this program offered in the Netherlands, quantitative research was conducted to compare TA-based therapy with other approaches in terms of long-term outcomes. The TA-based therapy proved most effective, with Thunnissen and Sebregts offering a more nuanced look at the variables involved in treatment and in the way



Mick Landaiche in Rome

the research data were analyzed. Their presentation would have been engaging and compelling had they stopped there. But they took things a radical step further by then coleading a demonstration therapy group with six volunteers (drawn from those in attendance), using the TA model from the program. Suddenly we went from highly intellectual discourse into the intensity of an emotional encounter with someone's actual life story. These were no longer just numbers on the pages of a journal article. Quite unexpectedly, we were in the presence of all those intangible, hard-to-measure factors that make group work so potentially powerful. In effect, Thunnissen and Sebregts quite intentionally complicated their tidy picture. I thought of the way that emotion can powerfully anchor and make relevant what we learn. *How can we pair our intellect with the depths we are capable of feeling as human beings*?

For two mornings of the conference, Gaetano Sisalli led an hour-long social dreaming group in which we were asked to share our dreams, in no particular order, with a mind to considering what these dreams might mean at a social level, particularly about our gathering as a community for the conference. By inviting contact with dreams, we were allowing ourselves to consider the less-conscious dimensions of our convening. As a small group, we let ourselves tell dream stories and follow the links in our minds. After the first hour, I felt intensely stirred up, disoriented. We went through the same process the second morning, when it was clear the dreams had evolved. But most importantly, Sisalli had recorded and transcribed the dreams from the first day, and when he read them back to us, I had the sense that his collecting our data gave us a felt sense of integration, even if the larger social context we were considering was, in some sense, beyond the scope of our cognitive abilities. I experienced this as the most profound form of researching: an invitation to contact by someone observing, gathering the data, analyzing, and sharing the analysis. It felt both containing and organizing. Something of this same respect for nonconscious processes was evident in the group therapy work that Anna Emanuela Tangolo and Silvia Rosa presented, in which the analysis of dreams revealed growth over time in the group imagoes of its members. *Can we learn simply to be with the data of experience and trust in their underlying organization and meaning*?

N. Michel Landaiche, III, lives and works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. He can be reached at mlandaiche@gmail.com .

In one of several roundtable discussions at the conference, Sabine Klingenberg talked about the dilemmas facing TA practitioners in the organizational field, particularly with regard to establishing a research practice. She noted that competition among practitioners blocked the development of community so necessary for learning and science. The business market for organizational consulting does not demand academic rigor in practice, leaving little incentive for bearing the costs associated with research. Added to this, consultants often relate to organizations as if they are not living, human organisms but rather more like machines or abstractions. Yet it occurred to me that those in the organizational field are also uniquely positioned to consider the larger systemic context in which TA practitioners operate. And with this ability to think at a broader level, I hypothesized there may reside an untapped capacity for evaluating what Giles Barrow identified as a "schooling script" operating within the TA community, that is, a compulsion to overindoctrinate those who come to us to learn rather than daring their autonomy. Barrow cautioned against rushing into any kind of research project to evaluate the effectiveness of TA until we have decontaminated that particular script. Otherwise, we cannot know what outcomes we are trying to achieve, and we cannot be true to our collective aspiration. *What are the particular gifts that each of the fields brings to bear on understanding this larger endeavor called transactional analysis*?

In these descriptions, I have not even begun to articulate the important discussions that took place with regard to research methodologies and societal processes that might be driving a demand for research, irrespective, at times, of practice implications or relevance. The conference presented the work and thinking of professionals engaged in research; it also looked critically at the social function and use of research outcomes. The fact that there were no easy or pat answers seemed to reflect the reality of the situation. We are, as professionals, in a field of nearly infinite richness and data that are likely always outside the scope of our capacities for full comprehension. Researching, therefore, does not provide answers so much as represent an ethical decision to continue learning, to remaining open not just to the data but also to the experiences our students and clients bring to us from their own infinite, turbulent worlds.



A Martian's View of the Rome Conference

by France Brécard

France Brécard, arriving in Rome for the EATA Conference on "Beyond the Limits: Verifying the Development of TA Theory Through Research," stumbled on Eric Berne's Martian friend, freshly off his flying saucer. So, instead of writing the conference article we had requested from her, she sent us some of his reflections about what he experienced at the gathering.

I was going to Rome to meet the Pope, an important man, I am told, but I wound up instead among a group of people who seemed pretty interesting. So I decided to stick around and do some observing. They were lined up, collecting some papers and name tags, occasionally crying out, rubbing faces, or hugging. My automatic translation device was going crazy because there were so many languages being spoken, but I managed with a little tinkering.

I followed the herd to a large room, where my automatic calculator came to a head count of about 500. No more embraces or calling out to each other; they all sat quietly listening to people on a stage who were talking about research and development. Right up my alley—we Martians are very keen on research!

First, a certain Marco, president of all these people, gave a speech welcoming everyone to his country and talking about the importance of research. He mentioned my friend Eric Berne, who seems to be an idol of sorts among these people and who was also into research. Apparently Eric used to say that when someone had a Don't Exist injunction, their birth certificate had mistakes on it. Now we Martians don't have birth certificates or Don't Exist things; we are born in machines, and scientists program us according to what is needed for the community. On Earth, it seems, some people would like to do things that way but haven't figured out how yet.



Mark Widdowson with his 2014 EATA Silver Medal certificate, which he was finally able to pick up in person in Rome.

I did understand, however, that human parents are a little like our scientists: They try, more or less consciously, to influence the way their offspring turn out. And when things don't go smoothly, the kids get something called "psychotherapy" or "counseling." A university professor, John McLeod, gave a brilliant talk about how to conduct research on these peculiar activities. He said that what best determines a successful outcome is not so much the practitioner's method but his or her competency, which does not necessarily depend on how much training the person received but, rather, on the personal therapy he or she has had. Hmm, I thought, it seems some people are trying to quantify things that are difficult to put into figures! That intuition of mine was corroborated in a presentation by someone called Bill Cornell, who said how difficult it was to quantify the subjective and that therapy, being above all a relationship, made examining it in scientific terms and trying to convert it into numbers unrealistic. So, I gathered that the people at the conference were trying to be seen as scientists, although they work with unquantifiable data. Quite a challenge, though John McLeod gave some directions and perspectives.

There were interesting looking workshops and presentations on too many topics for even a Martian to

attend in full: depression, impasses, dreams, scripts, conflicts, games, research, neuroscience, change, and, in every room, "transactional analysis." I chose dreams, something Martians don't do. I liked the idea of something happening to us in our sleep that tells us what we

> *"I gathered that the people at the conference were trying to be seen as scientists, although they work with unquantifiable data. Quite a challenge."*

don't know about consciously, or at least not yet. I especially liked the social dreaming times when some people met and recounted their dreams without comment or interpretation. Apparently all those dreams were about what was happening in the whole of the conference. It was fascinating, funny, moving, sometimes spooky or trivial, and always surprising. On the second day, the leader, Gaetano Sisalli, gave a summary, and each of us said a couple of words to conclude our two sessions. From my point of view, all these dreamers were rather torn because they wanted to go forward and yet to remain in what they knew and were comfortable with. Some of them called it an *impasse* or an *intrapsychic conflict*. Sounded intriguing to me.

I also learned that some therapists dream for their clients and through doing so understand how to deal with their narcissistic patients (I'm told quite a few Earthlings are narcissists). It seems some clients also dream about what is going on in their therapy and that their dreams show how the group work is coming along.

Since I couldn't get to all of the presentations, roundtables, discussions, and encounters, I asked people I ran into what they thought about this conference. They all said they had found the workshops top notch and informative. They also appreciated research becoming better known in TA. So I guess all the people who took trouble organizing this conference can be satisfied.

Another thing about these odd people: They don't just work, they also like to drink, eat, dance, and give speeches. There was a gala one night, which began by taking a bus through Rome to the top of a hill where the party was held. Something called an "aperitif" was served around a lovely pool, and everyone drank, ate delicious little bites, laughed, hugged, and talked. I started enjoying the hugging bit—I must admit it does feel quite nice. We then went up higher for supper before descending again for dessert near the pool. Everyone formed a circle around Marco, the president. He seemed happy and moved as he handed out medals honoring special people. One went to Mark Widdowson for his work on research into depression and another to Bill Cornell for all he had done for the scientific journal of the association. More hugging, applause, hurrays, cameras flashing. Both medal recipients looked really proud and touched, and I thought, what a good group of people this is. They really seem to know how to relate to one another. Maybe we Martians could learn from them because we tend to be a bit shy in our ways of loving.

As the conference ended we all said good-bye with more hugging and kissing. I was sad to leave them and wondered whether I really needed to see the Pope after all. I mostly wanted to save all the warm memories I had from the conference so I could tell all my Martian friends about them. Maybe next year we'll come as a whole delegation as I'm told there will be a similar gathering in Geneva, Switzerland, next summer. Sounds intriguing!



The gala evening during the Rome Conference began and ended around a lovely pool.

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Research Conference Spurs Interview Project

by Alexandra Gheorghe

This year's EATA TA Theory Development and Research Conference in Rome stirred up much talk about how we, as transactional analysts, might develop our future practice and theory by understanding our history and being aware of its impact. To support this endeavor, we are committing ourselves to collecting video interviews of transactional analysis practitioners who have helped develop the theory throughout the history of transactional analysis.

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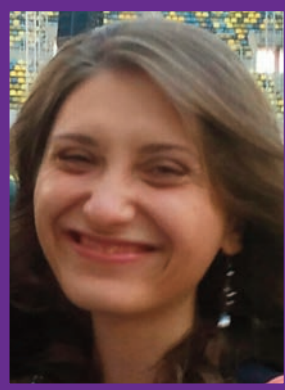
This idea stemmed from our wish to see different authors express their ideas live. We believe that conversations—be they one-on-one interviews or moderated discussions between several people—create new ideas. Here is a summary of what we would like to achieve:

- We intend to conduct interviews with TA authors and practitioners. We will record these interviews in a video format and make them available online.
- We will take on the challenge advanced at the EATA Conference in Rome to support communication between TA and other approaches. We plan to do that by moderating discussions between authors and practitioners from different TA schools as well as those from other approaches. These discussions will have a set theme.
- We also intend to look at how practitioners and authors from various fields of TA may work with and think about specific concepts.



Alexandra Gheorghe



Diana Deaconu



Marina Vasile

Our hope is that this project will support not only the development of transactional analysis theory but also our larger community. We find it of immense value to come into contact with our "parents," the people who helped to develop TA before our arrival. We can already encounter their ideas in written form. The interviews are meant to offer a more dynamic perspective on their work.

If you are interested in contributing to our project as interviewers or interviewees, please write to us:

Alexandra Gheorghe at ale.gheorghe@gmail.com,

Diana Deaconu at dianardeaconu@gmail.com,

Marina Vasile at marina.vasile@gmail.com.

We look forward to any questions, suggestions, or comments.

TAJ Theme Issues

"The Practitioner's Vulnerability: Professionalism and Protection"
Guest Editors: Steff Oates and Ann Heathcote
Deadline: 1 January 2016

"The Sense and Nonsense of Research in the Human Sciences"
Coeditors: Bill Cornell and Mark Widdowson
Deadline: 1 July 2016

See submission requirements here.