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## **Editorial Section**

## Editor's Note

The term 'new normal' has percolated deeply into our private and social spaces. We have each learned novel ways of being, working and belonging. Personally, I have had to revise how to have my needs met in rather ingenious ways. From 9 am walks in an almost empty park rather than starting the day sooner; to learning to switch off the video in group meetings to attend to my family's uncanny demands that seem to crop up at the most inappropriate moments; to making it a point to first check on the well-being of my colleagues and co-workers, before we launch into 'work' mode; to virtually celebrating birthdays and socializing with friends and connecting with elderly kith and kin from a safe distance; to keenly observing clients individually or in a group to make up for lack of contact and making more deliberate statements about group processes "Give me a thumbs up when you've finished the task at hand"; to being mindful about otherwise unconscious habits of personal care. The list is long, as I am certain it is for each of us.

What is incredible and doesn't cease to amaze in this scenario, is the stupendous power of each one of us (irrespective of age, race or gender), to not merely survive, but thrive despite setbacks! What an incredible gift – that of human resilience, creativity and intrinsic conservation - to outmanoeuvre restrictive practices, governments or even a pestilent pandemic. Survival of the fittest, in the true jungle sense. I suppose that just returning from a sojourn to the forests, I am naturally inclined to make this analogy. The unwritten law, however, is that the strong don't prey on the weak or diseased.

Noted conservationist and author, Jim Corbett, writes 'I once saw a tigress stalking a month-old kid (young goat). The ground was very open and the kid saw the tigress while she was still some distance away and started bleating, whereon the tigress gave up her stalk and walked straight up to it. When the tigress had approached to within a few yards, the kid went forward to meet her,

and on reaching the tigress, stretched out its neck and put up its head to smell her. For the duration of a few heart beats, the month-old kid and the Queen of the Forest stood nose to nose, and then the queen turned and walked off in the direction from which she had come’.

As intuitively as this apex predator maintains the balance of nature, so it behooves the human race, to more consciously conserve the balance between self, other and our planet. After all, we have much more evolved resources which, when combined with these natural gifts of overcoming and thriving, give us the compassionate power of really ‘being humane’. This, to me, is at the core of Transactional Analysis practice.

To the unacquainted, Transactional Analysis, is a mode of Psychology used to understand one’s self in terms of intra-psychic content and how that impacts interpersonal relationships. Practitioners integrate and apply its scientific models and tools in various fields of Psychotherapy, Counselling, Education and Organisations, to enhance personal growth through self-reflection and awareness, thereby improving personal and professional connections and performance.

In India, the nodal body for Transactional Analysts to train, certify and practice is SAATA – South Asian Association of Transactional Analysis. This journal SAJTA – South Asian Journal of Transactional Analysis, is a bi-annual compilation of scientific literature shared by Asian and International Transactional Analysis authors, of their own ideas / theories or developing existing models or application in their fields of operation. Here is a brief about each article presented in this issue:

1) ‘Putting ourselves in another’s shoes’ is a phrase often used in connection with empathy. *Aruna Gopakumar* delves into such a way of empathic therapeutic relating, by way of a thought-provoking technique of Psychodrama called Role Reversal. Narrating the proficiency of using this tool in supervision, Aruna then reflects on its value and iterates the benefits of blending diverse

modalities like Psychodrama with Transactional Analysis, to create fresh and more meaningful experiences for supervisors, therapists and clients.

2) Writing about bystanding: the act of being a passive onlooker in a situation that calls for some action, our next author *Krishnan Madhabushi* explores why we may experience this phenomenon, using previously postulated and alternative Transactional Analysis frameworks to understand the psychology behind it. In elucidating why we may find ourselves freezing up, he then goes on to share a unique perspective of how to creatively use our Free Child to actively intervene, rather than mutely stand by.

3) Do fairy tales and children's stories always really have a happy ending? As they are narrated over generations, do they retain their original flavours or do they change with time, context and with the person telling them? *Aparna Vaidik* examines these questions through a psychoanalytic framework using Transactional Analysis, a contrast to more prevalent social or historical assessments of these stories. She draws upon personal reflections of her own script in the process, encouraging deeper contemplations through these well-known tales.

4) *Suchitra Bhaskar's* article is set in the organisational context, with specific reference to women in leadership positions. Using a case example, she highlights the need for women leaders (especially in India) to gain clarity about their private and professional roles and with those insights, communicate with aplomb, both at home and at work. Another facet she highlights is working styles, which through awareness and inner reflection, we can transform from encumbrances to empowerments.

5) Focus on research within the field of Psychology, as well as within the scope of Transactional Analysis, requires concerted prominence. Our first article is such an effort by Bangladeshi authors *Monzia Mushtaq and Tasnuva Huque*. Using phenomenological data

gathering and a priori coding, they correlate the presence of specific script elements in a sample intersex population, to the prevalence of their withdrawal from society and social exclusion. The inferences drawn by the authors through their research findings and discussions, show how these two factors of psychological limitations and social ostracism are inextricably linked in a vicious cycle.

While we maintain the word limit of 2000-2500 words, we have made an exception in this last article, to allow the authors the autonomy to showcase their research study comprehensively.

We hope that as you enjoy deliberating over these articles, you are motivated to share your own thoughts and ideas through future articles. We look forward to hearing your views, ideas, questions or feedback. You could write to any author and / or us, at [journal@saata.org](mailto:journal@saata.org).

Nisha Rao

Managing Editor

SAJTA

## Theme for July 2021 Issue

***“Open Issue”***

(No specific theme)

Deadline for submissions: **April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Email : [journal@saata.org](mailto:journal@saata.org)

Please follow the [Guidelines for Writing for SAJTA](#) before you submit.



## **Editorial Board**

**Volume 7, Number 1, January 2021**

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
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# Seeing You, Seeing Me, Seeing Us

## *Effectiveness of Role Reversals in One-to-One Supervision*

*Aruna Gopakumar*

### **Abstract**

This article describes a supervision session in which a specific psychodrama technique, namely Role Reversal, was used to explore the therapist's understanding of own countertransference. It showcases how experiential processes can be combined with reflective dialogue in supervision, to produce powerful learning experiences (Hoyt and Goulding, 1989).

### **What Countertransference Is**

Countertransference may be broadly defined as a therapist's reactions to a client, including feelings, associations, fantasies or fleeting images. The term implies that it is a therapist's "counter" to the client's transference (Freud & Breuer, 1905/1974). The client projects an aspect of a relationship from their past onto the therapist, who then unconsciously identifies with and takes on the projection, confirming the transference expectation. However, the specific dimensions of that role-taking are coloured by the therapist's own script. Countertransference can happen first. "The client started it", is not necessarily true. Both are involved in unconscious dynamics, each acting out of own script and playing a part in other's script.

Countertransference is an immensely valuable therapeutic tool, when this emotional entanglement is examined by the therapist, to sort out what the client is eliciting and what emerges from their own history. The therapist who is able to identify and understand these is far less likely to act out with their clients in ways that can potentially be destructive. This recognition and subsequent personal therapy for therapists, is protective of both therapist and client.

## **What Role Reversal Is**

Role reversal (Moreno, 1953) is one of the most fundamental techniques of psychodrama. Psychodrama is an action method of group psychotherapy created and developed by J.L. Moreno.

In role reversals, protagonists step into the shoes of another and are invited to think, feel and act like the other. It is powerful because protagonists are naturally drawn to use their empathy and their imagination to take the role of the other and ‘become’ the other temporarily.

In the role of the other, they are invited to pay attention to the words they feel like saying or images that come to their mind or feelings that they are experiencing. Thus, when embodying the other, protagonists most often get in touch with what they “know” but did not attend to.

Here is an example of my experience of using role reversal in supervision.

### **Sindhu’s Story** (Name changed to protect privacy)

Sindhu came to me feeling stuck with a client who would redefine questions about feelings. She would scan Sindhu’s face for any hint of a smile and if she saw one, she would ask in a sharp tone, “Why are you smiling? Are you judging me?” Sindhu would get flustered and be on the backfoot and start explaining herself defensively. In the supervision, she spoke about not being aware of her smile. She stated that that was just one example of how she felt surprised by her client’s “attacks”. She spoke about dreading Thursdays, because those were the days she would meet this client. She felt stuck and wanted to understand what was happening in her relationship with her client. That was our supervision contract (Berne, 1966).

When I suggested role reversal to her, she accepted. We put out two chairs and recreated the therapy situation. Sindhu imagined the client on the empty chair facing her. I took the role of the Director in the drama. My role was to guide Sindhu through the session and facilitate the movement of the action, from the periphery of the issue to the core, by using a variety of

psychodrama techniques such as role reversals, role interviews, doubling and mirroring (Moreno, 1953).

Sindhu decided to start from the role of the client. She shifted into the client's chair. I started by interviewing her in the client's role. Here is a verbatim from the conversation:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Me as director</i>     | <i>How do you like working with Sindhu?</i>  |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>She is a really good therapist.</i>   |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>Tell her what you like about her.</i>   |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>(laughs). You are a good therapist, but when you ask me these questions, you know, I don't like you. You keep asking these questions that I don't want to answer.</i>   |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>Why don't you want to answer?</i>   |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>I don't know. I mean, sometimes it's uncomfortable.</i>   |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>So, would you like to tell her what you'd like from her?</i>  |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>Yeah, so Sindhu, you are really good at what you do, but you could change your style with me. We've been doing this for 40 sessions, so this is not working really. I don't want to talk about feelings, because feelings and I (makes a face) right...</i> |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>Reverse roles</i>   |
| <i>Sindhu as herself</i>  | <i>I'm picking up then you want something different from me.</i>   |
| <i>Me to Sindhu</i>       | <i>So, what is your response?</i>  |
| <i>Sindhu as herself</i>  | <i>Oh, I'm just sitting. I don't know what to say.</i>   |
| <i>Me to Sindhu</i>       | <i>What are you feeling?</i>   |

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Sindhu as herself</i>  | <i>I am feeling a little stuck and unsure.</i>  |
| <i>Me to Sindhu</i>       | <i>Can you put words to your stuckness? I'm feeling stuck because...</i>  |
| <i>Sindhu as herself</i>  | <i>Because it feels like a trap actually. Whatever I do, I am going to get a nice good one (Gestures as if she is spanking someone). As I am speaking, I'm feeling very anxious. I am feeling wary. The word that is coming to me is "pouncing" (Puts up her hands to gesture pounce). No matter which way I go, she will pounce on me.<br/><br/>(Pauses)<br/><br/>Now as I say this, I am wondering whether this is her fear or mine. (Turns to me). Hey, this is new.</i> |
| <i>Me to Sindhu</i>       | <i>That you may be picking up her emotion? How would you like to share this with her?</i>   |
| <i>Sindhu as herself</i>  | <i>(After a brief pause) I feel scared that you will pounce on me. Especially when you see me smiling. Now, as I sit here wondering about your reaction to my smiling, I'm wondering if you are scared too?</i>   |
| <i>Me to Sindhu</i>       | <i>Reverse</i>  |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>I am blank</i>   |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>You are blank?</i>   |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>I am feeling something here. (Rubs her stomach)</i>  |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>Keep rubbing your stomach and say what comes up</i>  |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>(Blurts out) This is not what I am paying her for.</i>   |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>She shouldn't ask you about your fear?</i>   |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>No. What's the point? You have to live in the moment, in the here and now. You have to go on living. And when she smiles. I get really anxious. I don't know what she is smiling about. I need to know everything. (looks distraught)</i> |
| <i>Me to client</i>       | <i>What do you imagine her thinking?</i>   |
| <i>Sindhu (as client)</i> | <i>Maybe she's laughing at me. Maybe she knows something that I don't. That's it. She knows something. She smiles and she knows something that I don't and I need to know what that is. Yeah.</i>  |

### Insights from the Role Reversal

We had a reflective discussion after the role reversal. I have put down some verbatims from the supervisee's sharing.

#### *Understanding of the Client's Unconscious Communication*

Sindhu recognized the relational dynamics, "It is a tussle for control. If I were to be free with her, then I would get pulled into something, what I call "pounced on." I don't want to go there. So, I tell myself I better do what is minimally needed. I am very straightjacketed with this client". Her understanding of her own countertransference deepened.

Role reversal rests on intrapsychic experience, involving some comprehending or perceiving, what another person is experiencing within. In the debrief, when I asked Sindhu how she felt in her client's role, she said, "I felt anxiety in my stomach for almost the whole time". She paid attention to her own body sensations in the client's role.

Ray Little (2006) suggests that the Child and Parent are attached as related units. "The Child and Parent relationship is an internalized representation of an earlier experience between the self

and the other, or object, as perceived by the child... This schema is not retrievable, but it can be inferred from current behaviour or through the transference-countertransference matrix.” (Little, 2006, p.8). This means that the client’s ego state relational units are not just intrapsychic to the client, but show up in the therapeutic dyad.

In this example, the client with her sharp questions, manifested the Parent component of the relational unit. The therapist, with her flustered anxiety, identified with the Child of the relational unit. One component of countertransference is the therapist's identification with an aspect of the client's internal relational unit (Little, 2006).

By asking “Is this fear hers or mine?” Sindhu opened herself to the idea that the “dread” of Thursdays that she experienced was the client’s invitation to understand her internal world more clearly. It was unconscious communication from the client that she was terrified of being wounded again. She recognised the significance of what emerged from her in the client’s role, “What is the point? You have to go on living”. Clinging to the defensive structure of avoiding feelings and “wanting to know everything” may have felt like a means of staying alive.

The role reversal helped Sindhu become aware of the client’s vulnerability and defences, and how she was communicating the same.

There was an emergence of compassion with this understanding, “That kind of anxiety definitely needs a lot more holding on my part. I see she is so fragile in some ways. I need to be very sensitive and slow about what I do” she said, indicating a shift in her emotion towards her client and the emergence of a treatment approach. “I feel very warm towards her right now” she said, indicating her recognition of the needed relationship.

### ***Understanding of her Own Script***

The other useful outcome was recognising how her own history was leading to the emotional entanglement with the client. “I feel scared with her. The way she comes at me, reminds me of how my mom came at me”. Talking about her unresolved issues with her mother, brought up a deep sadness for Sindhu. “It feels like nothing can fill up this void”. She recognized how one of her strategies to fill up the void was to rescue her clients and do more than her share. In exploring her “helpfulness” she became aware of doing for clients “what we wanted done for ourselves” (Masterson, 1983, p, 188) to feel better.

Sindhu got in touch with “shadows from the past that remain alive in the present” (Cornell, 2016) and that “emerge unconsciously in the therapeutic relationship with the client” (Cornell, 2016, p.266). She understood, the part that the client was playing in her script. “I am a wounded healer” she said. An interesting question occurred to her, “If I actually heal, would I even be a psychotherapist?”. This allowed her an understanding of how her unconscious fantasies showed up in a professional relationship.

### ***Understanding of the Parallel Process***

Sindhu recognised the parallel process between her and the client, “She is scared of talking about feelings and I am scared of confronting her. We are both avoiding talking about things that will make a real difference”.

Addressing the parallel process resolves impasses in the therapeutic relationship. (Cassoni, 2007). Becoming aware of and naming the parallel process allowed the therapists to step out of it (Hinkle, 2008).

Once Sindhu had differentiated her anxiety from her client’s, she felt more potent and said, “Maybe it is now time to explore what is happening in the relationship”. Her recognition of the



parallel processes allowed her to understand and process her fear and move into action, thereby stepping out of the parallel process.

### ***Stepping into Her Potency***

Potency (Steiner, 1968) is a therapist's capacity to act in a manner that has the maximum positive impact on the client. It comes from many factors that include the therapist's authenticity, responsiveness, trustworthiness and grounded confidence that comes from self-awareness, knowledge and presence (James, 1977, p. 39). A therapist's potency is better served when they reflect on and understand their own doubts and anxieties.

As she reflected on her work with the client post the role reversal, Sindhu said, "I could have said, 'You don't know what I am smiling about'. But I have never said that to her. I have always started explaining myself. When there is the slightest challenge, I go on the back foot and get flustered. If I potently hold the space, then she wouldn't need to fuff around and do this this this. I can just invite her to explore her feelings and ask her about her fear. I have never been firm".

Her feelings towards her client changed. "I'm excited to be going back to work with her. I feel very warm towards her right now". The "dread" of Thursdays had transformed.

A month later, Sindhu met me for another supervision. She shared with me what had changed for her. "One of the things that has shifted is that I feel at ease and settled. I thought something dramatically different would happen in the next session. It didn't. But the way I'm holding space for myself and her is different". She went on to add, "Pressure from her came up again, but the way I was holding it was very different. I stayed steady and I pushed in a little bit into it. She asked me a very direct question like, "Is that what you think?". Earlier, I would feel flustered. But I answered very directly, "Yes, I do". She saw the client then consider what she said, rather than aggressively push back.

The outcome of the supervision was that Sindhu radiated a different energy. She modelled a new way of being to the client, and consequently invited a different response from her.

Sindhu was happy with the outcome. She said, “I showed up potently”.

### **The Efficacy of Role Reversals**

In my own journey to be a more effective supervisor, I had been asking myself these questions:

- How do I get my supervisees to trust their own knowing rather than looking to their supervisor for answers?
- How can I invite them to focus on their being with a client rather than searching for more things to do with their client?
- How can I invite them into the joy of discovery? How could they be enlivened by the supervision process?

An experiential method like role reversal offered me a powerful way to achieve the above outcomes.

### ***Trusting Their Knowing***

When protagonists embody the other in a role reversal, they are almost coerced into empathy. As they use their bodies to search within themselves to think, feel and act like the other, they increase their empathic understanding of their clients. New insights emerge from within the therapist, in the reversed role. They begin to get in touch with what they know about their clients, even though they may not know how they know it. They are sometimes surprised with what they know. This *knowing* is what Berne referred to as intuition: “knowledge based on experience and acquired through sensory contact with the subject, without the ‘intuiter’ being able to formulate to himself or others exactly how he came to his conclusions” (Berne, 1949/1977b, p. 4). Through role

reversals in supervision, therapists can be invited to pay attention to and trust their own intuitive “knowing” of their clients.

Since it emerges from them, resistance is minimized. This makes it a safe and empowering process for the therapist to access areas where they felt vulnerable or inadequate. The energy is spent on making fresh meaning with the new knowledge.

### ***Focusing on Their Being***

Role reversals rapidly move protagonists into feelings and not just stay with thinking. As they move between their own chair and the client’s chair, they experience the emotions in both roles and separate their process from the client’s. The awareness resulting from this untangling opens up possibilities of new ways of relating that most often involves changing their **being** with the client. Therapists experientially learn that what they are most powerfully offering to clients is not a set of techniques, but a relationship: “a relationship with a real, alive person, who has worked on themselves, developed not only the capacity for listening but equally relevantly for self-reflection and self-awareness” (Shmukler, 2011, p.6).

That is an important outcome from supervision. I have seen that as therapists mature, they begin to **do** lesser with their clients, and invite healing through contactful, attuned, non-judgmental presence.

### ***Feeling Enlivened***

Protagonists in role reversals often voice out “what emerges for them”, allowing themselves to be surprised by their spontaneous intuitions. The unexpectedness is enlivening and keeps everybody engaged in the present moment. Integrating spontaneity with logic, engages both hemispheres of the brain in the healing work, enhancing not just effectiveness of the process, but also pleasure (Clarkson and Leigh, 1992, p. 226).

Supervision hence becomes about “clear seeing” and about discovery, adventure, and clarity, seeing afresh (Daniel, 2013, pg.115).

### **In Conclusion**

The effect of this single supervisory session using role reversal was immediate and powerful. Sindhu’s awareness and understanding of her own countertransference deepened. She became more contactful and yet more separate, offering the needed relationship (Little, 2011, p. 23). Experiential ways of working can “sometimes illustrate the most complex theoretical points in the most concrete of ways” (Williams, 1988, p.14). Combining experiential approaches with reflections and explanations in supervision sessions, increases the efficacy of these sessions.

Witnessing my supervisee’s growth through the process was fascinating and joyful for me. I saw the process as a seamless integration of Psychodrama with Transactional Analysis. I continue to ask myself - how could we find more opportunities to blend the best of different approaches to working with clients rather than narcissistically identify with specific theoretical models (Cornell, 2020).

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# Using the Free Child in Bystander Intervention

*Krishnan Madhabushi*

## **Abstract**

This article explores the concept of bystander behaviour and its underlying psychological processes. It highlights the complex role of social conditioning and past experiences in bystander behaviour. An overview of how Transactional Analysis concepts such as games, drama triangle and discounting matrix have been used to explain and understand bystander behaviour is presented (Clarkson, 1987) (Clarkson,1993). The concept of ego state contaminations is introduced as a new lens to view bystander behaviour. The possible impact of Parent contamination, Child contamination and double contamination on bystander behaviour is explored using examples.

The Free Child energy is presented as a source of mobilizing one's resources to intervene in bystandering situations. This supplements the conventional narrative of using the Adult ego state through re-scripting and decontamination of archaic beliefs that prevent bystander intervention. Examples are provided to illustrate how the Free Child characteristics of creativity, spontaneity, playfulness and intimacy can be used with Adult awareness to intervene in bystandering situations. It highlights the vast repertoire of creative options available to us from our Free Child energy to intervene in oppressive situations.

## **Introduction**

*“(they) were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle.”*

The Annals (XV, C.E. 62-65), Tacitus

This quote dates back to the infamous reign of the roman emperor Nero (54 AD to 68 AD). Tacitus, a Roman historian, describes a scene from one of Nero's lavish parties in his gardens for

the who's-who of Rome. The day long revelry was interrupted when dusk fell and there weren't enough lights for the guests to continue. Nero ordered prisoners and the poor to be burnt on the stakes to illuminate the garden, so the festivities can continue. This abominable act is yet another example of Nero's well-known cruelty. But a question seldom asked is, who were Nero's guests?

Modern social psychologists would call them bystanders - people who do not get actively involved in a situation, typically an emergency, when someone else requires help (Clarkson, Petruska, 1987). The largest group in the system is likely to be bystanders, outnumbering the persecutors and the victims (Jacobs, 1987). History is replete with examples of persecution where a majority were bystanders: the holocaust in Germany, apartheid in South Africa and untouchability in India, to name a few. Bystanding does not happen merely in the realm of large scale societal persecutions, we see them in varying degrees in our homes, workplaces, and neighbourhoods.

Why does this phenomenon occur? Is it a lack of compassion and empathy? Are we immune to the suffering of others? It is tempting to attribute bystanding to individual moral choices. However, in reality these are complex choices based on social conditioning, past experiences and situational ambiguity, among others. Research on bystanding has attempted to unravel some of these underlying psychological processes. In this article we will briefly review how Transactional Analysis concepts have been used to understand bystanding. We will then introduce a new Transactional Analysis lens of viewing bystanding, using ego-state contaminations. We will finally explore how the functional Free Child can enable active bystander intervention.

### **Bystanding in Social Psychology**

Bibb Latane and John Darley pioneered social experiments on bystanding, giving rise to the conceptualisation of several psychological phenomena underlying bystanding. They identified a

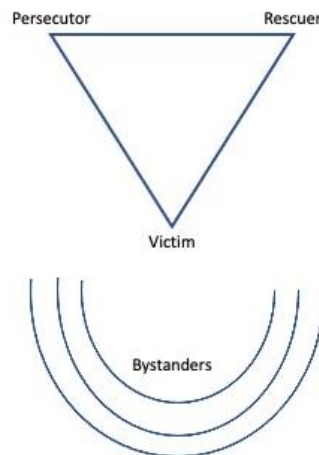


phenomenon whereby, in a critical situation, an individual's likelihood of helping decreases as the number of observers (bystanders) increases (Latane & Darley, 1968). They attributed this to the phenomenon of *diffusion of responsibility*, which is the tendency to subjectively divide responsibility to help, by the number of bystanders (Latane & Darley, 1968).

### **Bystanding in Transactional Analysis Literature**

Petruska Clarkson made significant theoretical contributions to bystanding from a Transactional Analysis perspective. She viewed the phenomenon using multiple concepts, which we will briefly review. Importantly, she clarifies that bystanding occurs *outside of awareness and not due to malice or neglect*. Hence, the concept should not be used to make people feel not-OK, but to educate ourselves better and invite responsible and creative interventions (Clarkson, Petrūska, 1993).

### ***The Fourth Role in the Drama***



***Figure 1: Modified drama triangle (Clarkson, 1987)***

Clarkson added the role of an audience to Karpman's original drama triangle roles of persecutor, victim and rescuer (Karpman, 1968). She proposed that a drama almost always has an audience and called this audience bystanders (Clarkson, 1987). Just like the three original roles involve discounting of self, others or the situation, this fourth drama role also involves discounting

through passivity. Clarkson's modified drama triangle is reproduced in *Figure 1*. She argues that the bystander role interferes with the functioning of the integrated Adult (Clarkson, 1993).

### ***Discounting Matrix***

Latane and Darley originally identified three key preliminary steps which an individual has to take, before deciding to intervene in an emergency:

- Noticing an event
- Interpreting it as an emergency
- Deciding that it is their responsibility to act (Latane & Darley, 1968).

They later added two more steps:

- Choosing a form of assistance and
- Implementing the assistance (Latané & Darley, 1970).

Failure to help can be the result of failure in any of these steps. Clarkson observed a striking parallel between these steps and Schiff's discounting matrix which refers to the discounting of a problem at multiple levels:

- Existence
- Significance
- Solvability and
- Personal ability (Schiff & Schiff, 1975).

She synthesised these two sources and came up with a set of five questions to better understand bystander:

- Am I aware of what is happening in my environment?
- Is help needed?
- Is it my responsibility?

- What are the viable options to intervene?
- What action am I taking? (Clarkson, 1987).

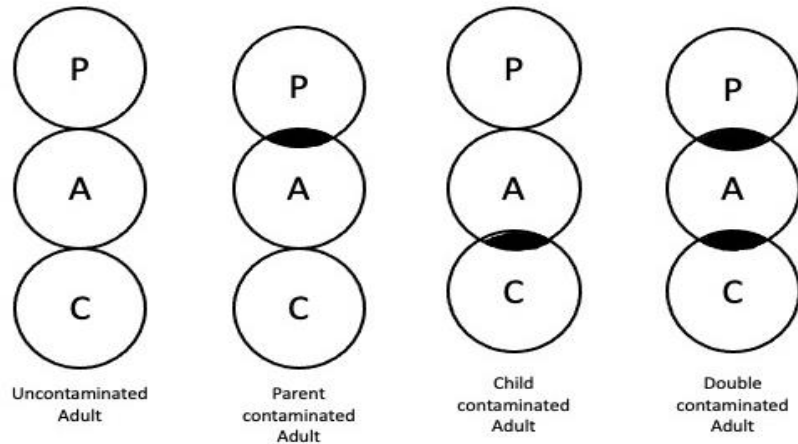
This synthesis provides a powerful lens to guide our understanding of bystander intervention.

### ***Games***

Clarkson describes twelve bystanding games which meet the criteria of bystanding, including games such as “It’s none of my business”, “It’s more complex than it seems”, “I want to remain neutral”, “I am only following orders”, “My contribution won’t make much difference”, etc. Each of these Games are self-explanatory and appear familiar to us in a bystanding context. For example, bystanding when one observes a child being physically punished by a parent could represent a “It’s none of my business” game and not involving oneself in the challenges facing the planet due to climate change could represent “My contribution won’t make much difference” game. Each of these games also involves a discount. In the former it is the discounting of one’s responsibility towards a problem and in the latter, it is the discounting of one’s personal ability to intervene.

### ***Bystanding and Contamination***

An emotionally healthy individual is able to operate from the ego state which is most useful in a given situation - such as Parent for nurturing, Adult for problem solving and Child for having fun, with the awareness that these are separate. However, many-a-time, Parental prejudices and Child fears are misconstrued as Adult reality. A person’s ego state boundaries breakdown when the Adult is contaminated by the Parent and/or Child ego states (Woollams & Brown, 1978). This is illustrated in ***Figure 2***.



*Figure 2: Ego state contaminations (Woollams & Brown, 1978)*

Parent contamination occurs when Parental slogans and prejudices are treated as facts, without awareness and active analysis. In a bystanding context, this can manifest in several forms. One recurrent slogan from my childhood was to “mind your business” which leads me to avoid situations which do not directly concern me, even as an adult. Lamentations of how “all politicians are bad” and how “nothing changes in this country” have shaped my avoidance of active social and political involvement. Constant verbal and non-verbal messages to “not challenge authority” could lead us to not confront sexist, homophobic and racist remarks by authority figures. More subtle forms of contamination include messages picked up about class, gender and other societal differences which lead to instinctive choices in bystanding scenarios. A social experiment found that when two men pretended to be unconscious near a train station in London, the one who was well dressed received immediate attention, compared to the other who was in ragged clothes, though there was no other difference in their behaviour (Coolpsychologist, 2009).

Child contamination occurs when old experiences are used to inaccurately assess here and now reality leading to phobias and delusions being perceived as truth. I recall, that as a six year old, I was punished with the rest of my class even though I was not involved in the ruckus that brought on the punishment. I decided to not even be seen in the vicinity of “trouble makers” for

fear of being punished along with them. This also precluded any scope of intervening in emergency situations. Thus, the contamination of my Adult by the archaic child experience affected my ability to intervene in bystander scenarios.

Double contamination is observed when unquestioned acceptance of parental beliefs and child experiences occur simultaneously. One of the significant blocks to bystander intervention is the perception of danger to self. Over protective parents could convey repeated messages about staying out of danger such as “don’t talk to strangers”. The child would imagine the worst outcome if it doesn’t follow these rules: I will get kidnapped or I will get killed. This could lead to heightened threat perception and delusional consequences, which are misconstrued as an Adult assessment of danger instead of the Parental message and Child fear that it is. One of my childhood messages was not to stop and observe any disturbance, be it an accident or an altercation, especially if there is a crowd. As an adult, I would instinctively look away from such scenarios, let alone intervene. Intrapsychically, I was experiencing double contamination: staying out of trouble as per parental advice and avoiding the nightmares that the child feared would follow, if I even looked.

Contaminations contributing to bystander intervention can take many forms depending on individual experiences. The intent of this exploration is not to provide an exhaustive list of such contaminations but to help us become aware of the influence of these contaminations on our Adult ability to assess a bystander scenario, based on the here and now reality.

### **Creative Bystander Interventions**

Bystander interventions can take many forms and can be looked at as a spectrum of possible choices. For example, response to perceived domestic abuse at a neighbour’s house could take many forms – asking for help from another neighbour, disrupting the scene without confrontation (“ringing the bell”, as described below), confronting the persecutor directly, calling the authorities,

etc. Bystander intervention is not only about taking a side or being an activist, even the smallest of acts that disrupt the dynamic of the drama that is playing out is a valid intervention.

It follows from the previous section that decontamination of the Parent and the Child would be included in active bystander intervention. This would form part of the broader script work that one would engage in their quest towards autonomy and developing an integrated Adult ego state. One way to intervene is to release the energies of the Free Child. The Free Child is characterised by creativity, spontaneity, playfulness and intimacy. We can draw upon each of these attributes to intervene in bystander interventions creatively. It is important to note here, that structurally the Adult makes the choice to function using the Free Child energy. In this section, we will explore some of these options with examples.

### ***Artistic Expression against Oppression***

We can derive inspiration from creative bystander interventions of the artistic community over the years. The celebrated South African photographer David Goldblatt, chronicled the daily lives of blacks and whites in quiet ways, depicting the devastating impact of the apartheid regime, while insisting that his work not be used for political and propaganda purposes (Charlotte Jansen, 2020). As a white male, he was a bystander in the scenario and chose to use his camera as a weapon of intervention. Though his was not the intervention of an activist but of an artist, it still is an example of bystander intervention. An example which blends art and activism is the Theatre of the Oppressed, which is a form of theatre that strives for social change by giving voice to those who cannot speak for themselves (Sophie Coudray, 2017). The audience is drawn into participating in the performance and transformed from spectators into “spect-actors”.

***Spontaneity***

The most fitting example of using spontaneity to intervene is the famous story of the young child who called out that the emperor was in fact naked, while the rest were fawning over his non-existent clothes (Andersen, 1837). In a contemporary context, this translates to merely calling out the reality of the persecution without necessarily directly confronting the persecutor. This is an intuitive and spontaneous intervention which may not necessarily flow through the discounting questions posed by Clarkson, described earlier (Clarkson, 1987). For example, a spontaneous and genteel “oh my, that’s sexist” in response to an inappropriate comment by a colleague may make them pause and reflect. These spontaneous interventions can take the form of non-verbal interventions as well, such as wide-eyed surprise or clearing one’s throat, indicating that the remark was inappropriate.

***Looking AT instead of Looking Away***

We can even make an impact by simply witnessing an event actively, instead of looking away. By introducing a pair of eyes in an oppressive situation we make the persecutor aware of their surroundings and make the victim feel supported. A colleague who volunteered in a local school recalled how her mere pausing to witness a child about to face corporal punishment made the teacher withdraw his raised hand. In this case the persecutor may have become conscious of his actions more acutely in the presence of a witness. This form of bystander intervention was used in a campaign against domestic violence, which highlighted how a simple act of showing up could alter a situation. This campaign, named “bell bajao” (“ring the bell”), invited people to merely show up at the doorstep where one senses domestic abuse, even without confronting the persecutor directly. In cases of public harassment, when one may not feel safe to directly confront the persecutor, simple gestures such as standing alongside or conversing with the victim or glances

that let the victim know that they aren't alone, or the perpetrator become aware that they are being watched, are possible forms of bystander intervention.

### ***Intervening with Intimacy and Compassion***

Intimacy with the persecutor or the victim helps intervene from an I am OK-You are OK position. A colleague recalled how she observed her host came down heavily on her house help for spilling tea. While leaving, the colleague spent a few minutes enquiring about the help's background and complimented her for the tea. Without referring to the incident, a simple act of compassionate intimacy may help alleviate the victim's hurt. While this may appear to be a passive response, it is a choice which may be easier to judge from afar. However, the fact that she decided to not merely walk away from the scene, qualifies in the spectrum of bystander interventions. Intimacy and compassion towards the persecutor could also be a form of intervention. I recall sharing with a friend how frustrating it must be to manage an ailing aged parent, when I observed her snapping at her parent. The empathetic observation opened up the floodgates for her to share the underlying feeling of helplessness and love towards the parent. While in the moment, my friend was being a persecutor she was internally struggling with the pain of care giving and the looming possibility of losing the parent.

### ***Come Let's Play***

Humour and playfulness, used appropriately, can be effective ways to intervene in bystandering situations, as it allows for diffusing the situation and doesn't assign blame. For example, playfully reminding a friend making an ageist remark, that's it is just a matter of time before we will all end up there. Observing the plight of a neighbour's dog being beaten up as punishment for entering her yard, a friend intervened by playfully engaging with the dog instead of confronting the owner's behaviour.



The examples above do not preclude the use of direct Adult responses to bystanding situations. Instead, they highlight the vast repertoire of creative options available to us from our Free Child energy to intervene in oppressive situations.

### **Conclusion**

Given the overwhelming scale of injustices around us, it is not possible for us to intervene in every scenario. Bystanding may well be inevitable. However, history is also replete with examples of bystander intervention contributing to meaningful changes, for example child labour, climate change, cruelty to animals, etc. Small independent acts of intervention might seem meaningless. However, several small interventions combined together in a complex system can be a catalyst for change. Hence it is imperative for us to develop a deeper awareness about the psychological processes underlying the bystanding phenomenon.

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# **Fairy Tales, Orphans and Happy Endings: *A Psycho-historical Analysis***

*Aparna Vaidik*

## **Abstract**

As a professional historian and a Transactional Analysis amateur, I have been intrigued by the writings of Eric Berne, Stephen Karpman and Fanita English, that draw on fairy tales to advance psychoanalytical theorisation (Berne, 1972; Karpman, 1968; English, 1996; Le Guernic, 2004). In this article, I explore the ways in which Transactional Analysis theory can illuminate dimensions of these fairy tales and the children's stories that historical analysis misses out on and, in doing so, examine the commensurability between psychoanalysis and History.

## **Introduction**

For quite a few years I have been offering undergraduate courses on English-language children's stories set in the world of British colonies. For a historian, these stories open a doorway into the cultural realm of colonial India, Africa, Britain and USA. My courses explore the different ways in which human societies engaged with the 'Other' and, in doing so, reconstituted each other. This cultural dialogue was evident in the way colonialism sought to colonize the mind, body, history, culture, geography and the aesthetic sensibilities of the people of the Empire, and also in the way it reconfigured the British and American sense of nationhood.

## **Historians' Disbelief**

Historians have generally been suspicious of psychoanalytical reading of the fairy tales. This is most apparent in American cultural historian Robert Darnton's scathing critique of Bruno Bettelheim's psychoanalytical reading of fairy tales (Darnton, 1984; Bettelheim, 1977). Darnton argues that Bettelheim undertakes an anachronistic and reductionist reading of Freudian ideas, evident in some erroneous presumptions that he makes about these fairy tales.

- First, Bettelheim presumes these tales to be only for children;
- Second, he believes that they all have a happy ending which provides the child protagonist with the inner catharsis and helps resolve his/her psychological problems;
- Third, Bettelheim's analysis imbues these tales with a timeless unchangeability.

Darnton instead asserts that these tales are primarily peasant tales that were told to adults and children alike, as they gathered round the hearth in the evenings. Citing the different versions of these tales without happy endings, Darnton shows that these tales do not necessarily always have one; and, that the numerous variants of each tale cannot be flattened into one set of images as presumed by Bettelheim. In Darnton's view, the distinctions between different versions of the tale are crucial for a historian as they provide a doorway into the society or the social context in which they are told and re-told. The tales are an invaluable record or a 'trace of the past', the allegorical breadcrumbs that Hansel (of the 'Hansel and Gretel' fairy tale in which a brother-sister duo are abandoned in the forest. Hansel drops breadcrumbs or white pebbles, in different versions of the story, in order to make a trail that will help them return home), leaves behind for the historian to retrace his/her footsteps into a bygone age and to understand how the tales move from one society or period of history to another; why some tales travel and many don't; and what gives the tales that do travel their translatability across time and space. After all, the tales we analyse are also, much like Harry Potter, the tales that survived.

While Darnton's approach remains invaluable for understanding the historical importance of these tales, it does not quite resolve the question of happy endings that Bettelheim talks about. In the tales that do have a happy ending, what purpose does the happy ending serve if not to provide emotional succour to the raconteurs and the listeners? Is there a particular connection between the psychological profile of the tales' protagonists and the happy endings?

Here, in order to explore these questions, I employ the lens of Transactional Analysis and, specifically, focus on the oft-repeated literary figure of the orphan that appears in almost all the stories I have in my courses. From Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli to Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan to Lee Falk's Christopher Walker (or The Phantom), the protagonist was invariably a young boy orphaned at an early age who was shown trapezing through the crowded bazaars or dense jungles of India or Africa as he grows into manhood. Interestingly, this rather versatile literary image of the orphan child was a recurrent one even in the sixteenth century peasant tales and children's stories that Bettelheim and Darton analyse, and it continues to appear in stories till today. From Charles Perrault to Grimms' Brothers, Charles Dickens, Hans Christian Anderson, Mark Twain, J.K. Rowling to the superhero genre, all draw on the figure of the orphan. That is, from Cinderella, Peter Pan, Rapunzel, Snow White, The Little Match Girl, Oliver Twist, Pip, Tom Sawyer, Jane Eyre, Emma, Spiderman, Superman, Batman and to Harry Potter, all are orphans (Gymnich et al, 2018).

### **The Orphan Protagonist and the Happy Ending**

I focus here on the figure of Mowgli, to take the analysis forward. Mowgli is an orphan child who is raised by the wolves in a jungle. He has a bear and a black panther as his mentors who teach him the laws of the jungles. The story weaves together Mowgli's various adventures in the jungle with other animals and with the humans in the village on the outskirts of the jungle. Mowgli is constantly pursued by Shere Khan, the old and villainous man-eating tiger, but he is protected by his wolf-family and his mentors. Mowgli's story ends on 'a happy note' with Mowgli eliminating his persecutor Shere Khan and returning to the village to be with his beloved, the world that he was supposed to belong to. He repays his gratitude to his animal-mentors by becoming a forest guard, taking the responsibility as a protector of the jungle and its animals.

The two predominant injunctive messages discernible in Mowgli's psychological profile are – Don't Belong and Don't Be You. With the death of Mowgli's parents, he is abandoned in a jungle full of wild beasts and predators where he is ill-adapted for survival. This feeds his primal fears. He is adopted and raised by Raksha, the she-wolf and his wolf-family showers Mowgli with affection. However, despite growing up in a loving atmosphere Mowgli was different from his wolf-brothers which leaves him unsure of his belonging with the wolf pack.

His being a classic feral child who, like Peter Pan, was between and betwixt; the man cub, half-human and half-animal, captures his lack of surety about his belonging (Hotchkiss, 2001). Unlike his brothers, he struggles to keep up with them when running across fields, is slow to learn how to hunt, takes time to absorb the importance of not violating the laws of the jungles, has to continually make efforts to keep himself out of harm's way. The inner conflict heightens as he grows up and is unable to choose between staying in the jungle or to go to the human village. The story thus romanticizes Mowgli's 'struggle' to be who he is.

One also finds an enactment of the Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968) in Mowgli's script roles. The story begins with Mowgli being the victim of Shere Khan, who kills Mowgli's parents and orphans him. Mowgli is rescued by Akela - the wolf leader, Raksha – his wolf mother, and his mentors and teachers Baloo - the Bear and Bagheera - the Black Panther. Each mentor demanded unquestioned obedience from Mowgli who, in turn, refused to accept responsibility, continually violated the rules and got himself into trouble from which he had to be repeatedly rescued. Shere Khan, not satisfied with having killed his parents, continues to prey on Mowgli and repeatedly attacks him and the wolf pack. For Shere Khan, Mowgli's survival is constant reminder of his failures and infirmity that can be fixed only by annihilating Mowgli, and, he consequently, continuously plots against him. Mowgli finally makes a switch to persecutor when he learns about

Shere Khan's plan to attack the village where humans like Mowgli resided. This leads to a showdown and Mowgli, despite being unequal to Shere Khan in strength, overpowers and kills him. It was Shere Khan's turn to be the quarry or the victim.

The killing of Shere Khan positioned Mowgli as the rescuer and restorer of 'the natural order' of the jungle which was being disrupted by the cannibalistic tiger. It also restored Mowgli's humanity for only a human could kill Shere Khan. It enabled Rudyard Kipling, the author, to script a tale of retributive justice where Shere Khan is depicted as having reached the end that he deserved and thereby taking the burden of guilt off Mowgli's shoulders. The characterisation of Shere Khan as pure evil prevents the reader from seeing the darker elements of Mowgli's persona and imbue him with the moral righteousness.

Interestingly, despite Mowgli being the hero of this story, it is his persecutor Shere Khan who ultimately becomes his rescuer because it is his killing (or sacrifice) that restores Mowgli to his rightful place amongst the humans and thus closes the drama triangle's loop. This was also the fulfilment of Mowgli's fantasy that 'someone will rescue me', the hope that somehow something will happen to extricate him from his misery. It explains why Mowgli repeatedly gets into trouble and then needs to be rescued. The happy ending was nothing more than a fantasy generated and maintained by Mowgli's scripty racket system (Caracushansky and Giampeitro, 1987). The happy ending thus had little to do with an inner catharsis but was really a fantasy that held his script in place. This was a resolution occurring well within the allowance that his script made.

### **Script Echoes**

As I explored the intersections between psychoanalysis and history, my mind kept returning to the question of my own subjectivity and its implication in the process of analysis – a central tenet of psychoanalytical inquiry but a lesser concern for a historian (Roth, 2016). The question of

the implication of the historian's self in the act of interpretation was another element that Darnton's analysis had not paid attention to (Chartier, 1985).

Taking this line of inquiry forward, why did I choose the orphan stories as the point of departure for my courses on colonial India? Was there a psychoanalytical link circling back to my own self that had missed my eye as a historian? Interestingly, the authors of most of the fairy tales and children's stories with an orphaned protagonist had invariably been either orphaned, abandoned or lost a parent at an early age. This was true of the Grimm brothers, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Hans Christian Andersen and Rudyard Kipling. Their biographers talk about their desperate need to belong; their reliance on their imagination to feel authentic; and the fact that they saw 'struggle' as the centrepiece of their lives, much like our protagonist Mowgli (Wilson, 1964). The stories they wrote were indeed a projection of their conscience. Were they of mine as well? Did the elements of Kipling's and Mowgli's scripts echo mine? Were my courses, while claiming to interrogate and engage with the 'other', really about the 'self'?

The journey with Transactional Analysis began uncovering elements of my own script and therein lay the answers to my fascination with these tales. A discussion on group imago defined by Eric Berne as 'any mental picture, conscious, preconscious or un-conscious, of what a group is or should be like' (Berne, 1963, p. 321; Clarkson, 1991) led to the discovery that each time I was in a group I re-enacted my family group imago. In this imago I located myself in a tiny corner if not completely outside the ameboid-imago with my parents and sibling forming a closely-knit unit.

This was revelatory of my rather strong Don't Belong injunction. I have a history of not being part of or quitting family, friends and work-place groups, claiming that I was being asked to bend to unfair rules or simply feeling disconnected and lost in a group situation. It also manifested



in overdoing things in order to be accepted in the group, seeking validation for the work done and then leaving in a huff, claiming that I hadn't received my due. Groups evoked fascination and fear at the same time because of a deep longing to belong and not knowing how to belong. Desiring intimacy but not knowing how to be intimate. A familiar and safer location was always outside the group from where I could watch the group with no compulsion to participate or having to share my vulnerabilities or articulate my needs. The script payoff that I collected each time I left or stayed away from a group was of feeling of being unloved ('I have no friends, I feel lonely').

This in turn also strengthened the drivers Be Perfect ('I am unloved therefore I should be perfect to get people to love me'; 'I am not enough and therefore I need to do more;') and Be Strong ('I don't have needs', 'I can do this on my own', 'I don't need to depend on people', 'I am not allowed to complain because my pain is not big enough'). The belief 'To be deep, one must struggle' valorised the struggle that came with it. Thereby suffering instead of happiness became the measure of self.

While Mowgli was a real orphan, I was a metaphorical one. His Don't Belong driver and his 'struggle' resonated in me. This is what I call a Script Echo – a sound that is repeated as it is sent back off a surface – the deep resonance of Mowgli's script with mine despite being separated in space and time.

### **Conclusion: The Tales that Survived**

I had set out to explore the ways in which Transactional Analysis could illuminate elements in fairy tale analysis that historical method missing out on. The psycho-historical exploration of Mowgli's script and its happy ending (or the lack of it), serendipitously became a doorway into my own script. Well, I cannot complain because I had already been forewarned by historian Joan

Scott about the pitfalls of psychoanalysis that ‘it introduces disturbing notions about unconscious motivation’ (Scott, 2012).

The Script Echo or the psychic resonance between two seemingly disparate and yet similar scripts – Mowgli’s and mine – also gives us an insight into the translatability and adaptability of some tales in different spacio-temporal contexts. Further, tales are not really timelessly unchangeable as Bettelheim suggested, because they do change according to the context in which they are being received, retold and heard. It’s not for anything that there are three hundred different versions of Ramayana. It acquires an original meaning as it was being told the first time each time its retold. In this much no telling is a mere retelling (Ramanujan, 1987, 1991).

As literary theorist Michael Bakhtin reminds us: ‘The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes one’s “own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intent’ (Bakhtin, 1992, p.294).

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# Women at the Crossroads of Leadership

*Suchitra Bhaskar*

## Abstract

This article presents Transactional Analysis frameworks that can be applied by consultants and human resources professionals who work with and support women leaders during transitions. Through an illustrative case, it explores application of organisational role concepts (Schmid, 1994) in communication and conflict avoidance and working styles (Hay, 1993), to enable leaders to become more self-aware.

## A Case Study

This is an illustrative case of Tara (name changed for anonymity), a highly ambitious IT professional who was recently promoted to lead the country as a business manager, with a team of 800 engineers. Tara sought my services to coach her during her role transition.

Following is a short transcript of one of our initial coaching conversations.

*Tara: (Coachee): "I am considering quitting from my role," she said in a shaky, feeble voice. "Or I may take a sabbatical to work things. This could be 'the end' to my corporate career!"*

*Me: (Coach): Hmm.. tell me more, how are you feeling as you say this?*

*Tara: "I feel overwhelmed, living with a constant guilt that I am not doing justice to the various roles I play...am afraid I may suffer a mental breakdown if I go on like this any longer"*

*Me: Hmm.. this seems to be a very trying and emotional time for you. What's going on in your mind?*

*Tara: "It's a constant tussle each day...managing work and home. My recent promotion has added more responsibilities. I am now answerable to the board and to manage results of a large team. It was my dream to be the country head for my organisation. My work requires me to be 'always on'*

*for my stakeholders and constantly guide my team. While I am grateful for the trust that the organisation has bestowed on me, I feel am not doing justice to it. There is always so much to catch up with...*

*And, in the midst of this, am neglecting my child, who needs my time in her growing up years. Dad's failing health needs my attention and care too... I feel trapped in a pressure situation with no let-up...*

*I don't think am doing justice to any of the roles fully...Perhaps, as a woman, I'm not cut out for leadership. Sometimes, I wonder if my team has accepted me as their leader, I feel strung up"*  
*Her eyes welled up with tears as she said "I can't do this any longer".*

Tara went on to explain the tears, the internal dilemma she faced, the war between her heart and mind. One part of her was urging her to stay back home and take up the role of primary caregiver for the family, while her mind questioned her decision to relinquish a position that she had aspired to and worked towards for years.

While Tara was proud of her corporate identity as an inspiring woman leader, her life stage, various roles she played, and perhaps her gender had proved to be her Achilles heel. Standing at the leadership crossroads that countless women stood, there were no formulaic solutions to help deal with her issues in the short term.

## **Background**

India has the third-lowest global representation of women managers, ahead of only South Korea and Japan. In 2019, women held only 8% of management roles, 9% of business management roles, and only 2% of CEOs in India are women. (Catalyst, 2020). This was despite the fact that 32% of women were hired at the entry-level (Economic Times, 2019).

Tara represents numerous women caught in such a leadership quagmire. What causes women, like Tara, to fall off the leadership ladder. Some of the consistent factors quoted during exit interviews and research (Women in the Workplace, 2016) enumerate-

- Focus on family priorities
- Inability to balance work and careers
- Lack of sponsorship, and mentoring by seniors
- Not being considered for career advancement opportunities.

I share here reflections from coaching such ambitious women transitioning to high stake leadership roles. Also added are insights from my own experience as an HR professional, transitioning into multiple roles and organizations.

This article is a snapshot of Tara's journey and how she worked through this phase of transition. Together, we explored two concepts of Transactional Analysis that offered her clarity and a new lens to look at career decisions and her options.

### **Tara's Journey**

Tara had an exceptional track record as a young engineer trainee who joined the organization over 15 years ago. Enthusiastic, ready to take up more, she demonstrated a keen interest to learn new skills and technologies that constantly evolved at a rapid pace. Her technology certifications kept her skills current and ready for challenges that the customers came up with. Last year, Tara was promoted as Vice President Engineering and Delivery Head –for India. The management entrusted her with a large portfolio of business and people responsibilities confident that she could stretch and deliver just as she had done in her past projects.

Decisions on leadership promotions are undertaken based on professional excellence in the current role with an 'expectation' that the person will *inspire others* to deliver results in a larger

role. However, organizations do not spend enough effort in communicating clearly what a role change entails, demarking responsibilities, decision-making rights, authority matrix, etc. leading to role confusion.

In subsequent conversations with Tara, we narrowed her confusion and stress to the ambiguity she faced about her roles and expectations that her stakeholders had from her. The objective of the coaching engagement was to enhance her impact as a leader, we delved deeper into the variety of professional roles she played in her elevated role and what had recently changed.

- i) Clarity and awareness of her different roles
- ii) Setting clear expectations, encouraging support and acceptance from the various stakeholders (peers, her team) and she from them
- iii) Becoming a more self-aware leader

#### **I. Understand Roles and their Impact on Communication**

A role is a coherent system of attitudes, feelings, behaviours, perspectives on reality, and accompanying relationships (Schmid, 1994). Schmid suggests that personality is better understood in light of dealing with three world roles - the Private world, the Organisational World, and the Professional world.

The three-world model (Schmid, 1994) was used to gain an appreciation of Tara's roles as a representative of the Management for India in her *Organisational role*, as Head of Engineering and a Supervisor to her team in her *Professional role*, and her relationships in her *personal role*. This helped her structure her communication, align with her team to avoid stress and conflicts.

Tara, as she took over her new leadership position, felt misunderstood in many situations. The role ladder model (Schmid, 1994) helped her understand the interplay of various roles she played as a leader and how it impacted her communication.



**a) Role Ladder Model**

Bernd Schmid (1994) explains the importance of roles and the nature of the relationship between role holders is essential to communication. He elaborates that communication is not only an exchange of messages but is impacted by the *definition of the roles in which we communicate, the contexts we refer to (or create), and the relationships we share*. A lot of this happens so automatically, that this process escapes our attention (Schmid, 1994)).

The functional ladder model (Schmid, 1986,1991) helps in understanding these interactions better. Conflicts arise when a transaction intended for ‘one role’ and is responded to from another role, outside of one’s awareness.

Tara had a friendly relationship with some colleagues, (who were now her direct reports). After being promoted, Tara continued her friendly consultative approach with them and discussed work during their lunch sessions together to retain closeness, and gain acceptance as their leader. She understood why her friendly gestures operating from her ‘private role’ was met with silence as the team interpreted her questions to be emanating from her ‘professional role’, as their boss.



*Figure 1: Role Ladder Model (Schmid, 1994)*

The role ladder model brought a moment of epiphany for Tara. She realised that she has options to shift her communication based on context and content. As a leader, she understood the need to think through and structure her messages and how others could interpret them differently if not given a context.

Tara had received a recent 360 feedback and her team's responses included statements like, "We would like you (Tara) to take decisions more independently". She realised the need to clarify role expectation with her team so that her actions to consult them is not misinterpreted. She, thereby, clarified that while decision making was primarily her role as a manager, she would continue to seek their inputs as she wanted to operate in a consultative style.

#### **b) Managing Role Expectations**

The integrated view of various roles and their diversity reveals the need to clarify role expectations from various stakeholders. As we saw earlier, with the three roles, expectations differ, hence, contracting (Berne, 1966) is useful to maintain a healthy balance, increasing transparency in communication, and reducing conflicts.

##### **i) Expectations from Tara's team**

Another aspect highlighted in Tara's 360-degree feedback was that she did not offer freedom to operate to her team. As someone working on freeing her time for more strategic aspects of her role, Tara agreed to work on a reflective exercise: 'A Day in the life of V.P- India Operations' (Tara's current role).

During this exercise, Tara realized that she inadvertently extended herself to her subordinate's area of operation. Since she had the technical knowledge, she felt tempted to lend her expertise and take away learning opportunity from the team. The team, in turn, perceived it as

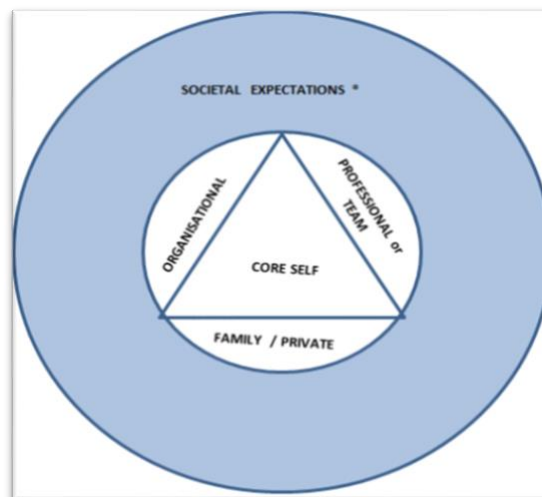
interference and missed their operational freedom. With this awareness, she went on to list her day-to-day meetings and engagements, identified tasks she wanted to focus on and ones to avoid.

ii) Expectations from Society

In my work with women leaders, in addition to the three roles proposed by Schmid (1994), I have observed *Societal Expectations* having an ‘overarching influence’. The societal expectations of do’s and don’ts hold significant influence in the Indian cultural context.

Tara’s perspective on societal expectations was that women cook, nurture family, and take sole responsibility in managing the house. She believed when the woman chooses to pursue a job or career, the ‘unspoken expectation’ is that she will continue to take sole responsibility towards family along with her professional pursuits. Her societal expectations were still set into times when men were not expected to support women at home with chores or upbringing of children.

So, it was up to her as an aspiring career woman to figure out ways to deal with professional challenges and balance responsibilities at home, raising the ubiquitous work-life balance challenge that most women complain about. Tara faced the dilemma of work taking precedence over family and the guilt that she was unable to fulfil societal obligations. With awareness about how her choices or the lack of them stemmed from her own ideas of societal expectations and assumptions



**Figure 2: Adapted from Organizational Role Model (Schmid, 1994) Modified to the Indian Context**

about professional role deliverables, she took the following remedial actions:

- i) Tara shared her professional aspirations, challenges, and obligations with her family. This discussion helped to clarify the expectations she had from her family and similarly what they had from her. Her family's sense of pride in her professional success gave her much needed permission to expand to her full potential. They agreed to support her professional aspirations and encouraged her to set boundaries on bringing office work home, especially during weekends.
- ii) Tara understood the significance of setting expectations in her professional role. She set clear expectations and boundaries to re-contract with her team. This freed up her time to focus on important organizational issues. In the process, creating a more enabling environment for her team, with regulated supervision.

## **II. Leader Self-Awareness**

Tara recognised her need to be self-aware in the context of her professional role at the workplace. The concept of 'Working styles' (Hay, 1993) based on Drivers (Kahler, 1975) and its application and tips to change was the lens we used to explore this aspect of her need.

The role clarification and the 360-degree feedback were tools that Tara used to introspect and reflect on her leadership style and context. This introspection helped her identify her strengths. She also understood how these could come in the way of her success when applied out of context. We used working styles (Hay, 1993) to identify strengths and patterns that limit her effectiveness. "Working styles are subconscious attempts by us to behave in ways that will gain us the recognition we need from others; they are also programmed responses to the messages we carry in our heads from important people in the past" (Hay, 2009).

Here is a comprehensive table listing the working styles, strengths, and derailers of each, and the strategies that one could deploy to overcome these derailers at the workplace.

### Working Styles- Strengths and Derailers

| Working Style        | Strengths   | Derailers  | Skills and action to address derailers   |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>PLEASE PEOPLE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Great in collaboration</li> <li>✓ Team consensus builder</li> <li>✓ Popular Manager</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Worrying about others opinions</li> <li>➤ Finds tough to say "no"</li> <li>➤ Managing conflicts, speaking up</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Avoid taking up unrealistic deadlines and unimportant tasks</li> <li>○ Ask questions to clarify and not assume</li> <li>○ Be firm, Assertive and address conflicts ( Skills to be built over time)</li> </ul> |
| <b>BE PERFECT</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Excellence driven</li> <li>✓ Attention to detail</li> <li>✓ High quality output</li> <li>✓ Sets high standards</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could miss deadlines</li> <li>➤ Tends to micromanage.</li> <li>➤ Tough to please as boss</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set realistic standards of performance and accuracy</li> <li>○ Practice asking yourself the consequence of a mistake – let go when not serious</li> </ul>   |
| <b>TRY HARD</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Commits 100%, feels Responsible</li> <li>✓ Great team player and collaborative.</li> <li>✓ Agreeable</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tends to overcomplicate, Takes on a lot at same time</li> <li>➤ Time management</li> <li>➤ Prioritisation issues.</li> <li>➤ May tend to procrastinate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create plans with milestones and targets- review and stick to it</li> <li>○ Stop from going off tangent in conversation ( contract with someone trusted who helps you with it discreetly)</li> </ul>          |
| <b>HURRY UP</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Takes initiatives</li> <li>✓ Enthusiastic &amp; experimental,</li> <li>✓ Meets deadlines</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Always in a hurry</li> <li>➤ Slip on details , finds tough to say "no"</li> <li>➤ Not realistic in assessing feasibility</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set interim targets and deadlines</li> <li>○ Stop interrupting when others speak</li> <li>○ Learn to relax and slow down</li> <li>○ Planning and prepare in advance</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>BE STRONG</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Calm even during crisis, Tough skinned,</li> <li>✓ Self motivated,</li> <li>✓ Resilient leadership</li> <li>✓ Can do attitude</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Not share feelings,</li> <li>➤ May not engage and get into a shell during conflicts</li> <li>➤ Not collaborative in solutions</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask for help even if problem is trivial</li> <li>○ Express feelings openly when asked</li> <li>○ Connect with team beyond work and task reviews</li> <li>○ Smile and engage more</li> </ul>                   |

Figure 3: Working Styles- Strengths and Derailers, Adapted from Hay, J. (2009). *Working it Out at Work*

Tara identified ‘Be Perfect’ and “Please People” as her predominant working styles. She understood the advantages and pitfalls of each of her working styles and came up with a range of strategies to deal with them.

She saw how her ‘Be Perfect’ made her seek excellence in everything she did and review her team’s output multiple times, pushing them hard to improve the work output etc. She realised that these were derailers and that total perfection is an elusive goal that was causing her stress both at work and at home. Connecting the dots on why the team felt operational freedom was missing, she chose to delegate more and encouraged the team to take ownership and responsibility of the output.

Similarly, she identified that her ‘Please People’ tendencies too played a significant role in making her workplace stressful. Numerous instances of her not being assertive, accepting more responsibilities despite being over-worked, and not standing up for her team even when they were in the right, came up in a flash. She admitted that some of the confrontational, and even assertive

conversations, stress her out, so she may need more handholding to develop the skill and confidence over time. It was at an awareness level, and she was ready to work through this gradually over the coming months. We discussed how she could use three-cornered contracts (English, 1975) to clarify and set expectations with the various stakeholders, thus, practicing assertive communication.

### **Recent Update on Tara**

Tara did take a short break to sort out the health issues of her parents, took a brief vacation in her native with family, and returned energised.

Over the past few months, Tara has opened avenues to ask for more support and also push back where the deadlines were not realistic and stressing her out.

She facilitated a team session for prioritisation of deliverables and responsibility mapping, which resulted in increased ownership and a feeling of accountability in the team. She concentrates more on her core responsibilities such as reviews, mentoring junior members, etc. allowing senior team members operational freedom.

### **Conclusion**

When we look at the issues identified and solutions gained from an organisational perspective, it explains why numerous initiatives like policy changes to attract and retain women employees, affirmative action (equal opportunity initiatives), and generic leadership training programs under the diversity agenda have fallen short of expectations to attract women in leadership positions.

What could help in addition to the above is a customised preparatory program for women in the *cusp* of leadership transition. Training programs that evoke self-awareness and builds skills to influence change offering clarity on what it takes to manage multiple roles and shifts that one needs

to make to succeed. Active sponsorship and mentoring by women leaders like Tara could motivate others to learn and follow.

Having said this, the solution for the average Indian working woman may not be as smooth as it was for Tara. This is a deep-rooted expectation that has passed over generations, hence will take sustained community work to change. Especially dealing with the challenges pertaining to societal expectations, we need widespread societal action, awareness building through media messaging to build a new narrative. The examples from Tara's case illustrates that steps taken in a timely manner can help women handle role transitions with greater ease.

I am hopeful that soon many Tara's would move into senior management roles and their success will inspire others to follow their path to success.

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# The Vicious Cycle of Social Exclusion and Social Withdrawal in Intersex People

*Monzia Mushtaq and Tasnuva Huque*

## **Abstract**

Intersex people in Bangladesh face social exclusion. As a result of continuous exclusion since childhood, they develop certain intrapsychic and personality patterns that make them withdraw from the mainstream society continuing their lived experience of being excluded.

This research aims to explore if there are any specific Injunctions and Drivers which contribute to the social exclusion of intersex people. This study uses the phenomenological methodology and a priori coding. The findings showed that ‘Don’t Be You’ and ‘Don’t Belong’ injunctions were significant. Moreover, ‘Don’t Be Important’, ‘Don’t Grow up’, ‘Don’t Think’, ‘Don’t Be Close’ and ‘Don’t Exist’ were also present. Among Drivers, ‘Be Strong’, ‘Try Hard’, and ‘Be Perfect’ were found. All these Injunctions and Drivers were major reasons and maintaining factors for the social exclusion of these individuals.

**Key Words:** Intersex, Injunctions, Drivers, Social Exclusion, Social Withdrawal

## **Introduction**

### ***Intersex People:***

According to Intersex Society of North America-ISNA, (2008) “Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male (para. 1).”

In Bangladesh, laymen see intersex individuals as people as those who apply makeup and wear clothes similar to a female but have body language, postures and gestures like a male (e.g., aggressive or demanding). They are locally called as Hijras. They are a hidden population. Many are ashamed and not empowered (Rooyen, 2015).

***Social Exclusion:***

Social exclusion is “exclusion of certain people from the prevailing social system and its rights and privileges, typically as a result of poverty or the fact of belonging to a minority social group” (Social exclusion, 2020). Gender expression is a matter of individual choice and the dichotomy in genders is a limitation on human potential (Rooyen, 2015). Intersex people face discrimination, are socially excluded and are at the receiving end of stigma, prejudices, and superstitions since birth or from discovery of intersex traits (Carpenter and Hough, 2014). Infanticide, abandonment, and the stigmatization of and by families is prevalent (Grady, Helen; Soy, Anne; 2017). Further, according to Jones et al. (2016) “intersex people face discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, sport, with an impact on mental and physical health, and on poverty levels”. In some cases, they are also victims of medical interventions in infancy and childhood that are explicitly intended to make intersex bodies conform to social norms for a specific sex or gender (Carpenter & Hough, 2014). It is clear that intersex people face a range of health and human rights issues.

As a result of the social exclusion that intersex people experience from birth, their lives are impacted in a variety of ways. For example, frequent negative feelings such as sadness, anger, anxiety etc. have a detrimental impact on their quality of life. As a result, they have a negative perception about self, others, and the world in general leading to social withdrawal. All these internal factors, in turn, further contribute to their experience of social exclusion.

Hence, it is important to explore their internal worlds to identify the issues that hinder them from identifying themselves as a dignified part of the society. Therefore, this study explores their internal worlds by identifying injunctions and drivers that were present in the intersex participants

of this research. This new knowledge will help inform future interventions and research with this population.

***Injunctions and Drivers:***

Studying injunctions and drivers help explore childhood messages and coping behaviour. Berne (1972) defined **injunctions** as “repeated and traumatic early parental messages that lead to chronic dysfunction in vital areas of life”. It is assumed that they are often non-verbal and transmitted at the psychological level of communication (Stewart and Joines, 1996). Children decide either to accept these parental messages or to fight against them (Goulding & Goulding, 1979).

As a result, injunctions are negatively formulated messages that limit autonomy (Lammers 1994). Gouldings (1970) identified a pattern of twelve hidden ‘Don’ts’ that people seemed to be following which limit their experience of themselves in the world. The 12 injunctions listed by Gouldings (1976) are:

|                            |                  |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Don’t be or Don’t exist | 5. Don’t Be You  | 9. Don’t Belong        |
| 2. Don’t                   | 6. Don’t Make It | 10. Don’t Be Close     |
| 3. Don’t be a Child        | 7. Don’t Feel    | 11. Don’t Be Important |
| 4. Don’t Grow Up           | 8. Don’t Think   | 12. Don’t Be Well/Sane |

Many of these injunctions were identified in the present study to understand the psyche of these intersex individuals.

The concept of **drivers** (also called as counter injunction) was identified by Taibi Kahler (1975). Drivers are brief observable behaviour which are indicative of underlying defensive processes (Kahler and Capers, 1974). According to Johnsson (2011) “a driver is based on the child's perception of what creates conditional recognition... is expressed as a way of dealing with

the internal stress created by the injunctions”. The counter injunctions, given in later childhood, are mostly verbal; involving both constructive regulations, prescriptions, on how to survive in the world in a positive way and inappropriate messages that are associated with a driver (Johnsson, 2011). Kahler and Capers (1974), identified five common Drivers. These are: Be Strong, Be Perfect, Please others, Try hard and Hurry up. Even though Drivers are not-OK counter script messages (Kahler with Capers, 1974); Drivers or Driver-related habits can be positive (Hazell, 1989) and represent aspiration (Clarkson, 1992).

### ***Impact of Injunctions and Drivers***

When a child receives these parental messages, the child responds to the injunctions by making negative decisions, which possibly cause difficulty in later life. In later childhood, the child learns some counter injunctions and drivers to cope against the impact of these injunctions. As an adult, that person’s thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviours are influenced by those drivers and injunctions, particularly observed during stressful moments. When injunctions are triggered for a person by a mix of coinciding stressful events, it may lead to not OK feelings (Hay, 2013).

In his paper “Understanding the Power of Injunctive Messages and How They Are Resolved in Redecision Therapy”, McNeel (2010) proposed that the child makes two decisions – a *despairing* and a *defiant* one. From certain parental messages, the child perceives that there is something wrong with him or her. Either he/she accepts it and makes it a despairing decision or tries to fight against it and makes a defiant decision. Moreover, he/she develops coping behaviours to resist the injunctive message and master the circumstances. These coping behaviours tend to be extreme, often impossible to achieve and so are doomed to failure. Iron-clad habits, prejudices, isolating oneself (being “shy”) are some examples.

Experiences in the outer world and working of the inner world of an individual are interlinked. Therefore, this study aims to explore specific injunctions and drivers that contribute to and maintain social exclusion through social withdrawal in this population.

### **Literature Review:**

#### ***Social Outcomes in Intersex People***

Rooyen (2015) studied social inclusion or exclusion of intersex people living in South Africa and found that intersex people do not live in the mainstream society; many are ashamed, and not empowered. She also emphasized that these issues that intersex people have are due to “the numerous medical and social mistakes brought on due to social dichotomy or a binary way of thinking [by society]”. Moreover, they have limited gender identities and are inadvertently forced to conform. Further, an elevated risk for experiencing victimization was also found in a research with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), and gender-nonconforming youth (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008; O’Shaughnessy, Russell, Heck, Calhoun, & Laub, 2004). Intersex people face similar victimisation as a result of being a minority like the LGBT community. Khondaker (2009) also mention that “Hijras face prejudice and discrimination in every turn, marked out by their sexual difference, they are hounded out of schools and hence lack the necessary qualification to set proper job”. As a result, this population faces a variety of psychological challenges.

#### ***Psychological Challenges in Intersex People***

Significant negative psychosocial adjustment such as suicidality, depression and anxiety are found to be present in the intersex population (D’Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006; Pilkington & D’Augelli, 1995). Research showed high rates of suicidality among LGBT populations in the United Kingdom (e.g., McNamee, 2006) and linked suicidality to negative experiences resulting from stigmatization (Johnson, Faulkner, Jones & Welsh, 2007). Minority Stress Model also posits

that lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals are at increased risk for mental health distress because of their stigmatized sexual identities (Meyer, 2003).

Overall, there is limited research with intersex individuals. The existing literature with LGBTQ population helps us understand the social impact and psychological risk this population is in. However, the body of research does not inform us about the intrapsychic processes in this population that contributes to their social withdrawal. Knowledge of injunctions and drivers helps us to understand this better and help fill the scientific lacuna and create informed interventions for this population.

### ***Injunctions and Drivers***

Some researchers have studied injunctions and drivers in different populations. For example, Cole (1993) found that in people who are suffering from chronic pain, parental injunctions may create difficulties to adjust and move forward to the degree that their pain and disability allow. Injunctions affect the responses of these individuals to pain and disability. McClendon and Kadis (1994) proposed that the power of injunctions is created through shame affect. Here, 'shame' refers to the disruption of a positive state and not as commonly associated with being shamed. "Ramond (1994) suggests an additional injunction – Don't Change – as the basis for a script that prevents the children of immigrant families from integrating into the culture when they are the first generation born in a host country" (Hay, 2013). This might be considered as a form of gossamer injunction, with an apparently positive maintenance of the culture of the parents' origin leading to an 'inability' to integrate.

Danijela Budiša et al (2012) conducted research titled "The presence of injunctions in clinical and non-clinical populations". The results showed partially expected validation, with statistically significant difference between the nonclinical and clinical part of the sample. The

clinical group had statistically significantly higher scores on the 12 injunctions studied. For example, subjects with depressive characteristics had seven injunctions which were more pronounced - Don't Feel, Don't Exist, Don't Be Well, Don't Be A Child, Don't, Don't Think, and Don't Be Close Injunctions. Therefore, studying injunctions and drivers will throw some light on the intrapsychic processes of intersex people and its relationship with the experience of social exclusion.

In Bangladesh, Transactional Analysis theory lacks research that is standardized. The review of literature reveals that no research has been conducted with intersex people. Our review also concludes that only very few research studies discuss social exclusion. Hence, to address this dearth, we conducted the present research.

### **Objective**

To explore specific injunctions and drivers in intersex people which contribute to and maintain social exclusion in this population.

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative research approach using the phenomenological methodology was used to conduct this research. "Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013). Data were collected using the interview and observation methods.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A total of 15 intersex people of Bangladesh were selected from two slums as the participants of the study. They were of the age range between 24-40 years. They had not attended formal

education and were from lower socio-economic status. The participants were selected through purposive sampling technique.

### **Data Collection Method**

In-depth interviews and observation method were used to collect data for the study.

#### ***Interviews:***

Open ended in-depth semi-structured interview guide (with a demographic questionnaire) was developed through the review of existing literature. It contained 24 questions like ‘How do you feel about yourself?’, ‘How mainstream people perceive you?’, ‘What made you feel happy in your childhood?’, ‘What made you feel sad in your childhood?’ etc. Clarification questions were used to enhance internal validation. The original interview structure was reviewed by three CTA trainees.

#### ***Observation:***

Naturalistic and Structured Observation techniques were used to collect data in this research. As the intersex people were not comfortable coming into the lab, we opted for naturalistic technique which involves observing subjects in their natural environment (McCleod, 2015). This helped us observe their general behaviour and non-verbal gestures in their natural settings. *Structured* observation (also known as systematic observation) is a data collection method in which researchers gather data without direct involvement with the participants (the researchers watch from afar). The collection technique is structured in a well-defined and procedural manner (Structured Observation, n.d.). We used this to collect more information about non-verbal behaviours of the participants. Differences between individuals in their nonverbal behaviour were also analysed.



**Procedure**

Participants were contacted by visiting their homes. Individuals who were interested were informed about the study and consent was obtained for participation and recording of the interviews. In the consent letter, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, rules of confidentiality and ethical consideration of the study. As the participants were illiterate, the informed consent was verbally explained to them and demographic information was written by researchers. The interviews took place in their homes which were in the slums. The interviews could only be taken in a room where there were many other participants, hence the interview setting lacked privacy for individual interviews. While each interview was taken, some participants also engaged in other activities like receiving phone calls, whispering to each other and laughing occasionally. The interviews lasted between 80 to 100 minutes each. They were given compensation money of 500 BDT for their time as they were not willing to give the interview without any monetary commitment.

After the interview, the participants were observed in their natural environments. When they were talking to mainstream people, researchers observed their non-verbal cues like eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, etc. Non-verbal behaviour was also recorded during the interviews. When they were sharing their painful stories, any incongruence between their verbal and non-verbal cues was noted.

**Data Analysis**

We used the deductive approach to analyse data. All interviews were transcribed by the authors to ensure that the quality of data was maintained. The data was coded manually using a priori codes. **Figure 1** depicts an example of how a priori codes were used to analyse the data:

Injunction

| SI No | Clue  | Thought   | Injunction   |
|-------|---|---|--|
| 1.    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attempted suicide</li> <li>▪ Actual or attempted physical self-harm</li> <li>▪ Actual or attempted physical harm of others</li> <li>▪ Thoughts or fantasies of physically harming self or others</li> <li>▪ Physically harmful addiction or substance abuse</li> <li>▪ Feeling of worthlessness, of being unwanted or unloved</li> <li>▪ Reports of physical abuse by parents</li> <li>▪ Memories of parental statements such as: "I wish I'd never had you", you hurt me when you were born", if it hadn't been for you, I could have..."</li> <li>▪ Death of a sibling in the person's early childhood</li> <li>▪ Unwillingness to 'close escape hatches'</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I don't deserve to live</li> <li>▪ If I die, may be mother will love me.</li> <li>▪ I'll kill myself to get you.</li> <li>▪ I should go away.</li> <li>▪ I will stay here and you won't break or defeat me</li> <li>▪ Deep in my heart I hate my life (look what a mess it is).</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;">don't be or<br/>don't exist</p> |
| 2.    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maladaptive over cautiousness</li> <li>▪ Habitual dithering between course of action</li> <li>▪ Never getting started on projects</li> <li>▪ Demand if I do, demand if I don't do</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whatever I do seems wrong</li> <li>▪ I won't move until it (the world) feels safe</li> <li>▪ There are many things in life I won't do (but would like to do).</li> </ul>   | <p style="text-align: center;">don't</p>                       |

Figure 1: An example of the guidelines for a priori codes (Stewart, 1987; McNeel, 2010)

After coding, the data was analysed across interviews, to check which injunctions were most prominent. All the steps of the data analysis were taken cautiously with reflection.

Checking and auditing in all steps of the analysis, as well as careful archiving of each step for later checking were done. The analysis process was also systematic and organized, so the researcher can easily locate information in the data set and can trace provisional results of the analysis back to the context of the data (Elliott and Timulak, 2005).

**Ethical Considerations**

All participants were provided detailed information about the nature, purpose and possible future utilization of the research verbally, so that they could make an informed choice regarding their participation in the study. Written consent form was also prepared and provided to the participants and was verbally described. As the research involved sensitive issues, it was presumed that the respondents might experience some distress during the interviews, therefore, potential references for free mental health care were provided.

The participants’ right to withdraw from research was clearly stated and maintained throughout the study. As the research involved collection of sensitive and personal information, privacy and confidentiality of the participants were given the highest priority. All interviews were conducted in a place approved by the respondents.

**Results**

The following tables show the injunctions and drivers identified from a priori coding.

| <b>A</b> | <b>Responses (clues)</b>   | <b>Injunctions identified</b>                |
|----------|--|--|
| 1.       | Could not fit into families.   | <b>Don’t Belong<br/>and<br/>Don’t Be You</b> |
| 2.       | Society doesn’t like them.   |  |
| 3.       | They are ‘different’.  |  |
| 4.       | Feel not OK with themselves.   |  |
| 5.       | Feel not OK in the society.  |  |
| 6.       | As children, heard very negative comments about their bodies and gender. |  |
| 7.       | Mothers rejected them.   |  |
| 8.       | We’re not invited to important social functions in the family.           |  |
| 9.       | They said “people see to us badly as if we did something very nasty”     |  |
| 10.      | Often confused who they are (not male, not female)                       |  |
| 11.      | Family does not love them, concern for them.                             |  |
| 12.      | Feels inferior most of the time.   |  |

| <b>B</b> | <b>Responses (clues)</b>  | <b>Injunctions identified</b> |
|----------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1.       | Not capable of doing anything.  | <b>Don’t Be Important</b>     |
| 2.       | Always create trouble.  |                               |
| 3.       | Feel unwelcomed and unwanted.   |                               |
| 4.       | Feel worthless.   |                               |
| 5.       | Think “my wants never will get priority”, “I don’t deserve to be important” |                               |
| 6.       | They criticize themselves   |                               |

| <b>C</b> | <b>Responses (clues)</b>          | <b>Injunctions identified</b> |
|----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.       | Did not receive nurture and care. | <b>Don’t Think</b>            |

|     |   |                              |
|-----|---|------------------------------|
| 2.  | No guidance from family.  | <b>and<br/>Don't Grow Up</b> |
| 3.  | Grew up by themselves.  |                              |
| 4.  | Not open to different opinions. Pseudo independence. Act violently to fulfil their demands. |                              |
| 5.  | 'Don't know', 'Can't think', about opportunities in their life.                             |                              |
| 6.  | Feel not good enough.   |                              |
| 7.  | Blank expression and distracted quickly   |                              |
| 8.  | Think "if we do something, that will wrong", "other siblings got all the benefits"          |                              |
| 9.  | Take risks in their work.   |                              |
| 10. | Feeling of anxiety, restlessness  |                              |

| <b>D</b> | <b>Responses (clues)</b>  | <b>Injunctions identified</b> |
|----------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1.       | Report not feeling anything.  | <b>Don't Feel</b>             |
| 2.       | "should not feel sad"   |                               |
| 3.       | Avoid feeling questions.  |                               |
| 4.       | Did not express sadness (restricted tears)  |                               |
| 5.       | Said "there is no benefit of feeling pain, no one can understand", "no problem in life" |                               |
| 6.       | Gallows laughter  |                               |

| <b>E</b> | <b>Responses (clues)</b>   | <b>Injunctions identified</b>                 |
|----------|--|---|
| 1.       | Refused to mingle with family  | <b>Don't Be Close<br/>and<br/>Don't Trust</b> |
| 2.       | Rigidity in body. Closed posture.  |   |
| 3.       | Only attached to their mother and nobody else.   |   |
| 4.       | Family members rejected them. As children they heard comments like, "we never wanted you".                                     |   |
| 5.       | Critical of self.  |   |
| 6.       | Cannot trust others.   |   |
| 7.       | Long for love but don't find secure relationships.   |   |
| 8.       | Think "it's better not to be very close with others because they will leave", "if I want to be close , people will not accept" |   |

| <b>F</b> | <b>Responses (clues)</b>                                       | <b>Injunctions identified</b> |
|----------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1.       | When people treat them like curses, they feel like dying.      | <b>Don't Exist.</b>           |
| 2.       | Do not find any meaning in life.                               |                               |
| 3.       | Feelings of emptiness, rejection, not wanted, being abandoned. |                               |

|    |                                       |  |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|
| 4. | Self-harm, violent act towards others |  |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|

| G   | Responses (clues)   | Drivers identified |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| 1.  | Hide authentic feelings and cover up using anger.                 | <b>Be Strong</b>   |
| 2.  | Resist expression of other emotions.                              |                    |
| 3.  | Show aggressive attitudes.  |                    |
| 4.  | Frozen expressions and body.                                      |                    |
| 5.  | Never satisfied with what they do.                                | <b>Try Hard</b>    |
| 6.  | Used ‘try’ very often.  |                    |
| 7.  | Highly frustrated with struggle between expectations and actions. |                    |
| 8.  | Very specific about time, fee, etc.                               | <b>Be Perfect</b>  |
| 9.  | Used ‘could be’, ‘may be’ very often.                             |                    |
| 10. | Fastidious and particular about matters of cleanliness.           |                    |
| 11. | Highly specific about how things have to be in their homes.       |                    |

**Discussion**

The study aimed to identify those injunctions and drivers that contribute and maintain the experience of social exclusion in intersex individuals. First, our research found that the injunction Don’t Belong was very prominent in all the participants. For example, a participant recalled ‘one day my uncle came at our home to invite for his son’s wedding program and told my father not to bring me there, that time I felt so humiliated’. Along the same lines, Mushtaq (2016) further highlighted the difficulties intersex people face - ‘Despite being connected to a family, the third gender people are basically alone. They try their level best to adjust with their family at any cost to obtain mental relief, but most often they experience rejection, and humiliation from their family members.’ The same is evident in our results as well and indicates a strong presence of Don’t Belong injunction. Moreover, there is an urge to express and make others understand that they love their family members, however, they don’t express it. In McNeel’s (2010) work, he mentioned that the despairing decision in “don't belong” injunction is “I can’t show how much I care”. As a result

of the existence of the Don't Belong injunction, the experience of social exclusion gets further reinforced. All the participants shared that they left their families early into their life as they felt like they were not accepted. As a result, they joined different hijra communities to avoid mainstream society and its humiliation. It is clear that social exclusion led to social withdrawal through the Don't Belong injunction.

Another prevalent injunction was Don't Be You. The participants shared that from their childhood they were used to hearing negative comments from their surroundings about their gender and body structure; therefore, they cannot accept themselves as the way they are. Quoting a participant, his/her mother used to say 'I never wanted you, why Allah has given me you? Why not a boy or girl?'. The participants have received a lot of direct and indirect criticisms about who they are. Similar results were found by Charlie (2018) and he mentions how "it is incredibly difficult for people affected to accept themselves and their own body." An intersex individual, Anick (aged 24) shared his experience as "I was taught to hate my body from a young age. I was made to feel like I was a freak." (Lindahl, 2019). When they recall those experiences, they feel guilty, sad, and think that they are not okay. Being rejected for who they are, they isolate themselves from society. Therefore, social exclusion triggers the injunction Don't Be You leading to social withdrawal. Feeling of worthlessness was also very common among the participants. Majority believed that they are not valued as a person. The Don't Be Important injunction seemed very prominent here. Ghattas (2015) has also documented that "Intersex adults may have difficulty finding a job due to lack of education, physical impairments or a lack of self-esteem caused by social stigma". McNeel (2010), mentions "I am worthless" as a despairing decision in the Don't Be Important injunction. In social settings, they try to hide their inner feelings and prove they are not worthless by showing aggressive behaviours such as dominating others to prove their power

and also to meet their own needs, similar to the coping behaviour of this injunction - “Always trying to have an effect: often interrupts, dominates, exaggerates’ (McNeel, 2010). Because of this coping behavior of intersex people, mainstream people avoid them, show a high level of rejection towards them leading to social exclusion. Moreover, since intersex people have a negative core belief that they are not important and valued, they avoid asking for assistance from society as they perceive that they don’t deserve to be respected. Many participants said that they are the curse for this world and they should not be respected. Such negative values (and Don’t Be Important injunction) increases their social withdrawal and they remain distant from the society. The loop of social exclusion and social withdrawal is maintained.

Further, as they lack self-acceptance and mistrust others, they have a fear of rejection. They do not feel comfortable being close with gender conforming people. Majority of the participants (14) shared that during their childhood, their primary caregivers (especially father) rarely adored them, rarely provided positive strokes (verbal/nonverbal), especially warm touch to soothe them. They expressed that they have a strong craving to be attached to a loved one. One participant said, “we cannot have romantic relationships; we don’t deserve it. We know males stay with us till we can give them money, and they will never marry us; so, we cannot trust that we can be loved”. It indicates a Don’t Be Close injunction along with Don’t Be Important. McNeel (2010) added “looking for love (in all the wrong places)” as the coping behaviour of this injunction. For example, one participant shared that she was betrayed by her boyfriend and felt lonely and generalized that all mainstream people are bad, they can’t be trusted. Here it is apparent, how various experiences and injunctions of Don’t Be Close and Don’t Be Important further reinforce Don’t Belong. As they do not feel comfortable to be close, they are not valued by others and in turn don’t feel that they belong. They exclude themselves as much as possible. McNeel (2010), mentioned coping

behaviour of Don't Belong injunction is "a pattern of isolating oneself". Overall, social exclusion is leading to social withdrawal in these intersex individuals.

Social exclusion, social stigma, and their own internal beliefs make it difficult for them to find meaning in their life. Therefore, they have self-harming tendencies, suicidal ideation, and attempts, which points to their 'Don't' Exist' Injunction. This can also be traced back to their childhoods with parental messages of being unwanted and rejection as they were told they shouldn't have been born. Finally, injunctions of Don't Feel, Don't Grow Up and Don't Think were also very visible in their responses and non-verbal communication. They do not express their inner feelings. Expressing them seemed useless to them. They do not use their present resources and follow their previously learned aggressive behavioural patterns. They use slang whenever they have to face mainstream people's unwelcomed behaviours (that may reinforce them not belong into the society), are not willing to accept others' proposals or opinions, act violently to have their needs met. McNeel (2010), mentioned the coping behaviour of Don't Grow Up is "expressing a pseudo independence". Mainstream people are very fearful about these behaviours, they do not want to allow them in their community, they just shut the door especially when new-born children are home and intersex people demand money. As a result of this tussle, the pattern of injunctions leading to social exclusion and then social withdrawal is maintained.

In terms of drivers, we reported that intersex people hide their emotion and try to overpower. According to Tomlinson (2020) The 'Be Strong' driver tells us that "we are not ok to show emotions and we should tough it out and get on with it". This was their way of surviving a harsh world while contributing to a void where people fail to understand their pain and sorrow. It was apparent that Be Strong driver was the primary driver in the participants. As society perceives them as emotionless and harmful, they reject them. Therefore, intersex people also do not feel



comfortable expressing their emotions and withdraw from mainstream society and retreat into their own space. Be Strong is a constant double-edged sword – the emotions get ignored while social exclusion gets reinforced. The researchers also observed ‘Try Hard’ Driver, because the participants were mostly not satisfied with what they had done and became tense and anxious in appearance. Moreover, they reported that they put a lot of effort to fulfil their needs and were still not satisfied. When they do not perform up to their expectations, they show a high level of frustration. ‘Try Hards’ get frustrated and tend to struggle with events and feel that they have failed (Tomlinson, 2020). They use ‘try’ very frequently in their language. Presence of the ‘Try Hard’ influences their experience of social exclusion.

Lastly, they are particular about cleanliness in their residence and also very specific in their demands. They conveyed that everything has to be in a certain way. People with ‘Be perfect’ driver may have thoughts like “I must be perfect, wonderful and correct in every way.” When intersex people demand money going door to door or at public places, they show their rigidity over the amount of money they expect and state their views. They try to prove that they are right in their way of asking. Mainstream people are very fearful and/or get irritated by this. They also do not make an effort to understand these intersex people.

When they go out of their communities, all these factors limit them, and they seldom use their Adult Ego states. This plays a crucial part in their social exclusion. They unconsciously use counter injunctions to protect themselves from being hurt and remain distant from society.

### **Limitations**

1. Some participants expressed socially desirable answers.
2. Even though the researchers bracketed their assumptions, there is a chance of researcher’s bias in data collection and analysis.

3. There were factors like noise, interviewing in the presence of others and lack of privacy that may have compromised the quality of data.

### **Recommendations**

1. Providing mental health services to intersex individuals is crucial. This will help them accept themselves the way they are, heal past trauma, gain self-confidence, and be resilient. Mainstream integration is possible by creating awareness, improve their ability to deal with the emotional turmoil and hassles of daily life effectively.
2. Widespread awareness drives to educate mainstream people.
3. Some reformative measures to be implemented taking into account their strengths so they feel they are a dignified part of society and are contributing to their community as well.
4. More research on what can help include them in mainstream society is required.

### **Conclusion**

Intersex people in Bangladesh are socially excluded since birth and as a result suffer from psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, panic attack etc. This research studied their intrapsychic process and found that the presence of injunctions ‘Don’t be You’, ‘Don’t Belong’, ‘Don’t be Important’, ‘Don’t Grow up’, ‘Don’t Think’, ‘Don’t be Close’ and ‘Don’t Exist’ and the drivers ‘Be Strong’, ‘Try Hard’, ‘Be Perfect’ are significant outcomes as well as major reasons and maintaining factors for the social exclusion of these participants.

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The *South Asian Journal of Transactional Analysis* welcomes contributions from all fields of practice - educational, counselling, organizational and psychotherapy. No field or practice or theoretical frame of reference will be privileged in the evaluation of manuscripts submitted for review and publication. All theoretical perspectives within Transactional Analysis, not limited to quantitative and qualitative research, case studies, literature surveys, book reviews and reflective essays, are welcome.

### Submission Requirements for Authors

Only original material—not previously published in English and not under review by another English-language publication—is eligible for consideration and inclusion in the *SAJTA*. As an exception, any paper previously published in a language other than English will be considered if professionally translated into English prior to submission.

If you are an author considering a submission to the *SAJTA*, the first step is to determine that your paper is well written in terms of content, structure and style. The second step is to prepare your manuscript according to the following technical requirements and then to submit it as a Word document via e-mail to the *SAJTA* Managing Editor at [journal@saata.org](mailto:journal@saata.org).

To be published in the January issue, your manuscript has to be mailed by **15 Oct** of the previous year and for the July publication, by **15 April** of the same year.

### **General Writing Guidelines:**

- Your manuscript is in word format, no longer than **2,000-2,500 words** (not including any bibliography, references, keywords and author biography). Please bear in mind that additions or deletions during the course of iterations, would impact the final word count. Hence this number is to be adhered to.
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- Follow **APA style** of formatting, references, citations and bibliography (<http://www.apastyle.org/>).
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- Write scientifically on topics - **original thoughts, research, application in professional or personal context, reviews, experiences, opinions** - which can be explained primarily using **Transactional Analysis concepts**.
- Double-check **Transactional Analysis terminologies and their definitions**, e.g., names of games, components of script, drivers, injunctions etc. Transactional Analysis full form, not TA, to be used. All terminologies to be in small case, e.g., script not Script.
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- Use **diagrammatic representations** where appropriate, labelling figures and tables.
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Once you have met the above submission requirements and timelines, you will receive a ‘receipt of your submission’ mail in a week. Over the next 3-4 weeks, your manuscript will be anonymously reviewed by at least two of *SAJTA*’s co-editors, who will assess basic readability (i.e., professionally written English, clarity and novelty of the ideas presented, relevance for the transactional analysis community and its contributions to the evolution of transactional analysis theory, principles, and practice) as below.

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