Suddenly Acts of Terror Affect Me Directly: Reflections on the Coimbatore Conference

by Elana Leigh

The news of the 1 July 2016 terrorist attacks in Dhaka, Bangladesh, brought home the ugly truth of the well-known intellectual recognition that life is slippery and totally unpredictable.

The question of whether to hold or cancel the 2016 SAATA Conference—which had been in the planning for over a year by the TA community in Bangladesh and at which the ITAA Board of Trustees and general membership meetings were to have been held—was up for serious reconsideration. Moral, ethical, emotional, and practical dilemmas were no longer the subjects of experiential dinner party discussions but real. And they had to be addressed by Bangladeshis who had put their heart and soul into the dream of showcasing their country, culture, and, more importantly, their love and passion for transactional analysis. The conference theme, “Freedom Within,” was something that these people knew only too well, something that they fight for not only from the outside but from every cell in their bodies.

The decision was taken to cancel the conference in Bangladesh, and within days the South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts (SAATA) had decided to hold the conference in Coimbatore, the home of P. K. Saru, C. Suriyaprakash, I. A. Mohanraj, and K. Raguraman, the trainers who have been so instrumental in introducing transactional analysis to Bangladesh. It was a fitting and heartfelt decision. The Asha and Relations team in Coimbatore under the steady leadership of Saru immediately got to work.

Two months later, 160 delegates arrived at the Park Plaza Hotel in Coimbatore to attend a conference that was, in the end, one of the most moving, loving, intellectually stimulating, spiri-
tual, fun loving, and heartfelt events that I have attended in my 33 years in this profession.

Consciously and/or unconsciously, knowingly and/or unknowingly, we who attended were there saying "NO." We will not stop growing and living in the face of violence, and we will stand together saying “NO” to violence, oppression, and power abuse. We collectively supported our newfound family members: the TA community in Bangladesh.

The feeling of working and standing together was experienced from the smiling, gentle man who welcomed us at the door, the catering staff, the warm receptionists, the registration desk, the organizing team from Asha and Relations, the SAATA Board of Trustees, the ITAA Board of Trustees, the amazing technical team, and, of course, the outstanding, eager, and amazing delegates and presenters.

We laughed, sang, cried, learned, and struggled together with a conscious knowing that this was a unique conference where we had come together on the back of a violent attack on freedom that took many lives. We had a moral obligation to remember these lost lives alive in our determination to keep struggling with complex questions and challenges about how to live in a world in which we face constant threats to our capacity and desire to live and grow.

This conference was a manifestation of the living principles of transactional analysis, and the international TA profession can be proud of our Indian community, the members of which know and live in every part of their being what it means to be generous, loving, and incredibly smart!

Most of the conference events and presentations were videotaped so that they can be made available to trainees in Bangladesh.

Our love and thoughts are with all the people in Dhaka who were not able to experience this conference. Please know we carry you in our hearts as we do all who continue to suffer because of acts of violence and oppression.

Thank you SAATA, Asha, and Relations for an outstanding, courageous, and generous act of giving.

Elana Leigh, TSTA (psychotherapy), lives in Sydney, Australia, and often works and trains in India and elsewhere. She can be reached by email at elana@acissydney.com.au.

John Heath receiving his ITAA Service Award, fully adorned with shawl, garland, and award plaque.
Conference Afterward

Paying It Forward

By Rosemary Kurian

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free.”

As Elana Leigh closed her keynote speech with this poetry by Rabindranath Tagore, I realized that in being part of the 3-day SAATA conference in Coimbatore, I had a glimpse of a world “where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, where knowledge is free.” At the conference I experienced the love and togetherness that is the essence of our TA community.

I had not planned to attend the conference in Dhaka, but after it was moved to Coimbatore, I grabbed the opportunity to go. Although I felt sadness and anger about the situation in Dhaka, it did not feel personal to me. I decided to attend so I could benefit intellectually by meeting with such learned minds. However, what was in store for me was something I could not have imagined.

I learned, no doubt about that. However, unlike many learning experiences that encourage staying in the same place assuming that to be the end goal, each of the sessions I attended emphasized using the learning as a stepping stone to looking ahead, growing, and paying it forward. The workshops I attended were beautifully planned and tremendously experiential. Karen Pratt’s transformational learning workshop gifted me with an insight that I will use in my personal journey of change. I thoroughly enjoyed the invigorating discussions in and after the workshops. The panel discussion was so thought provoking and engaging that in my head it was almost like I was sitting among the panelists.

John Heath, in his acceptance speech for his ITAA Service Award, emphasized the importance of trusting the Natural Child and the availability of the divine spark in each of us. This resonated with me. He spoke about spirituality being the process by which human beings transcend themselves, which is what I experienced during the conference.
Although I am fairly new to the TA community, I felt deeply connected.

Then the grief I felt for our Bangladeshi team became more personal, as if those faces, which I have never seen, became a part of me. I also experienced joy knowing the Bangladesh TA community would rejoice knowing what they began came to such a beautiful conclusion in Coimbatore.

I have attended official conferences with clear agendas that are well organized. However, what was spectacular about this experience was that this brought out so much love, joy, and feelings of togetherness. I felt it by just being part of the celebrations. I rejoiced when some people received their certification. I smiled and clapped for P. K. Saru when she received her SAATA

Professional Excellence Award. Her contagious laughter and enthusiastic and creative team were such a joy to experience. I had tears in my eyes as I raised my hands to applaud for the media team and the hotel staff. I became them at that moment of accepting love. I also celebrated being me, for having the capacity to offer love and gratitude. I rejoiced over having crossed their paths at that moment in time.

I think of this time as a stepping stone to my “freedom within,” where I felt a part of something bigger than myself and yet knew that it begins with me. This is the start of my journey of experiencing myself as a part of the whole and at the same time, feeling whole and complete by just being me. I am fortunate to have been in Coimbatore to experience it, and I look forward to paying it forward. Thank you to everyone!
Elana Leigh absorbing the strokes sent her way by members of Diane Salters’s workshop.

Mumbai trainees with C. Suriyaprakash (from left): Swati Smitra, Rizwana Nulwala, Priti Sridhar, Suriya, Suchitra Bhaskar, Ghazala Ansari, and Uday Vaidya.

Participants of a dream workshop with presenter A. K. Saravanan (top row center in blue shirt).

Diane Salters doing live therapy for Elana Leigh to supervise.

Volunteer members of the conference core organizing committee.

Closing session and saying good-bye.
Successful Examinees in Coimbatore

by Thorsten Geck

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tAATA did a great job holding CTA and TSTA exams in conjunction with the conference in Coimbatore. In only a few weeks they shifted the exams that had been planned for Dhaka to Coimbatore so that candidates could take their exams as they had intended. The exams were held on 30 August and 1 September.

One TTA and one PTSTA finished their exams and are now TSTAs:

Karen Pratt of South Africa and Chitra Ravi of India.

The new CTAs are Haseena K Abdulla, Aruna Gopakumar, Anitha Rao, and Vineeta Sood, all from India.

Congratulations to all and good luck for their further professional journey through life!

The exams would not have been possible without dedicated ITAA members who served as examiners, including Annie Cariapa, Sashi Chandran, Anna Chandy, Milly De Micheli, Thorsten Geck, A. Geethan, John Heath, Marina Rajan Joseph, Mandy Lacy, Elana Leigh, Sailaja Manacha, Takayuki Muroki, P. K. Saru, Karen Pratt, K. Raguraman, Ragini Rao, Diane Salters, Sudha Thimmaiah, and Sisko Torkkeli. Many thanks to them all.

In addition, the IBOC is pleased to announce the approval for expansion for P. K. Saru TSTA-C and Marco Mazzetti to TSTA-C. They are now both TSTA-PC.
Reflections on TA in Our Communities

Dear Editors:

Identities, integration, and boundaries were the themes of ETA’s 2016 Conference in Geneva last July. Quite often the workshops showed that beyond our work with our clients, the question of the appropriateness of our professional speech to them and our way of being as a citizen, living in a city and country, is relevant.

What did Eric Berne say about this? In his first book, *The Mind in Action* (Berne, 1947), there is an appendix titled “Man as a Political Animal.” In it he wrote this:

> In the old days, scientists left politics to the Wilsons and Hapsburgs, but nowadays it is the duty of every citizen to interest himself in world events, lest they overwhelm him and all his fellow citizens. The psychiatrists and the physicists, who are deeply concerned with studying the realities of man and nature, can no longer remain aloof, but must tell the world what they know of its probable future, even at the risk of becoming involved in outside affairs and of being criticized. It is no longer wise for scientists to refrain from expressing strong opinions and bringing strong influence to bear in a vigorous attempt to change the trend of history. (p. 292)

I tend to follow the reasoning of the founder of transactional analysis.

A book I have read and reread is *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* by Étienne de La Boétie (1995), a small volume originally published in 1576. In it he wrote this (my translation): I only would like to understand how it is possible for so many men, so many towns, so many cities, so many nations, to sometimes bear a tyrant whose only power is the one they have given him; whose power to harm is linked to their acceptance. He would be unable to hurt them if their choice wasn’t to endure just anything instead of contradicting him (p. 8). Further on, he wrote, be determined not to serve anymore and you shall be free. I don’t demand of you to push him, to shake him but to stop supporting him and you will see this giant fall under his own weight and smash into pieces when his base broken (p. 15).

I think this is echoed in an excerpt from Bill Cornell’s article in the April 2016 *Transactional Analysis Journal*, in which he wrote about Berne:

> But what was the impact of both the war itself and the Holocaust on Berne’s thinking and his work as a psychotherapist? After the war he undertook an extensive exploration of the practices of psychiatry in countries and cultures all around the world. Traveling at his own initiative and expense, he studied various psychiatric cultures and published several articles based on his travels. Then it stopped. We might never have known why had not his son, Terry (2010), told of the FBI coming to Berne’s house and office, seizing many of his papers and foreign correspondence and revoking his passport. This was post-war America, the early 1950s, and Berne found himself suspected of being a Communist sympathizer. His political and social consciousness seems to have collapsed after that. Berne’s definition of social psychiatry was radically different from the society-centered, group analytic perspectives of Burrow, Bion, and Foukkes. Berne came to strip his version of social psychiatry of any social and political critique. (pp. 141-142)

In the 1957 edition of Berne’s 1947 book, retitled *A Layman’s Guide to Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis* and revised to promote transactional analysis, Berne deleted the section on “Man as a Political Animal.” Cornell wrote, “I cannot help but think that it was his [Berne’s] 1950s encounter with the FBI and the government intrusion into his professional work that led him to depoliticize the presentation of his work as he sought to gain public and professional acceptance for transactional analysis” (p. 142).

The confrontation between the seductive proposition of La Boétie and the careful evolution of Berne clearly shows that our involvement as transactional analysts in the life of our communities and cities is complicated. In these difficult times, it seems to me that this question deserves the contribution of all of our thoughts.

Patrick Bailleau
Caniac du Causse, France

References on page 9
**Bill Cornell** is among a distinguished group of clinicians who were invited to present a video talk on the theme of “Embodied Approaches to Psychotherapy” for Confer, an online service providing videos and papers. His talk is titled “The Importance of Applying an Embodied Approach to Psychotherapy” and consists of a video lecture with slides and captions. More information is available here.

**Recently Published**

The third issue of the *SAATA Journal*, the official e-journal of the South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts, is available here. Its theme is “Relationships.” Past issues are also online here.

The latest issue of the *TA Times*, the Australian TA Association (ATAA) newsletter, came out in August.

**Trudi Newton** has had several articles/chapters published in the last few years. In 2015 she had an article published in the bilingual (English-Italian) *IAT Journal* (published by the Instituto di Analisi Transazionale). Entitled “Social Change and the Cultural Parent,” it was part of a theme issue on “Social Changes and New Organizations of Personality.” The article appeared in Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 75-82. She also had an article entitled “Welke voordelen kan TA opleveren bij leerlingen die hun schooloverstap maken?” (Can Learning TA Benefit Pupils in School Transition?) published in the September 2015 issue (pp. 11-18) of *Strook* (the Dutch-language transactional analysis journal), which was a special theme issue on research. In addition, in 2015 Trudi and Karen Pratt published “Educational TA Today,” a dialogue between two TA educators, in the *Journal of the Japan Transactional Analysis Association* (Vol. 38, No. 5, pp. 3-8).

Celia Simpson, PTSTA (P), writes that after initially presenting stand-alone TA 101 courses to take TA into the community and give qualified counselors and psychotherapists another lens for their work, she and training partner Carol Wain, PTSTA (P), have now run two successful Foundation Certificate years in transactional analysis in Liverpool, United Kingdom. Shown here are participants from the second group celebrating the completion of their Foundation Certificate year, “a wonderful cocreative learning experience.”

Participants at a workshop with Richard Erskine at the Instituto Mexicano de Análisis Transaccional (IMAT) in Mexico City, held 11-13 March 2016 on “The Psychotherapy of Shame, Obsession, and Habitual Worrying” (from left, first row): Verónica Ruines, María José Bua, Elisa Leyva, Tila Pérez, Tila Laclette, Sally Witemberg, Gloria Noriega, Patricia Rincón Gallardo (translator), and Clarissa Ruggieri; (second row) Glenn Villarreal, Richard Erskine, Alejandra Guzmán, Rubén Parra, Ana Castanedo, and Gerardo Fernández. Gloria Noriega writes, “We enjoyed working with Richard, who did teaching, therapy, and supervision with the participants. We have warm memories of his work and the whole group process.”
Election Now Underway for the European Representative to the Board of Trustees

There are three nominees for the position of European representative to the ITAA Board of Trustees: Vladimir Goussakovski, Alessandra Pierini, and Thomas Steinert. This requires an election, and as per the ITAA bylaws, only European members will receive ballots to vote in this election. The candidates’ statements were published in the June 2016 issue of The Script, which is available on the ITAA website at www.itaaworld.org.

European members who have a signed “Consent to Electronic Transmissions” form on file with the ITAA should have received an email sent on 8 September instructing them on how to vote electronically by logging in online. Once there, members must print their name in the designated area. Ballots without names will not be counted.

European members who do not have a signed “Consent to Electronic Transmissions” form on file with the ITAA will receive a ballot by postal mail (sent on 8 September) along with instructions on how to return it. Members must print their name on the ballot before mailing or faxing it to the ITAA at 5932 Corte Cerritos, Pleasanton, CA 94566-5880, USA; fax: 925-600-812.

Along with the ballot, there will be a “Consent to Electronic Transmissions” form, and we hope members receiving their ballots by mail will sign and return that form so that they can receive electronic communications in the future.

Deadline for ballots to reach the ITAA office: 5pm, Monday 7 November 2016 (San Francisco USA time).

Members’ Forum

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References


EXAM CALENDAR

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

For more information about IBOC exams, see www.itaaworld.org.

For further information on COC exams, see www.eatanews.org/examinations/.

International Transactional Analysis Association
Dear Claude,

For us in the French transactional analysis family, you are associated with all of our founding experiences. You paved the way for us in so many ways, and to this day, we often find ourselves walking in your footsteps.

From 1974 on, you went to the United States and immersed yourself in the counterculture there. You explored group dynamics at Lewin’s National Training Laboratories, gestalt therapy with people close to Fritz Perls, bioenergetics with Lowen, and encounter groups with Rogers, all the while becoming involved in interracial actions and antisegregation claims. And there you met with transactional analysis.

You were part of the first TA training group in France, with Raymond Hostie, and in 1978 you became one of the first two French Certified Transactional Analysts. Not only did you contribute to founding the Institut Français d’Analyse Transactionnelle (IFAT), you became IFAT’s second president (from 1976 to 1978). At that time, you, along with Rémy Filiozat, also organized the first European Transactional Analysis conference to take place on French soil, in Aix-en-Provence.

From the start, you took part in a Belgian-French group working on harmonizing translations of TA terms into French. You participated in the editorial and management board of Actualités en Analyse Transactionnelle, our French-language TA journal, from 1996 to 2001. You were among the founders of the Paris school of TA in psychotherapy, Ecole d’Analyse Transactionnelle de Paris Ile-de-France (EAT). The students in the school who benefited from your teachings recall your b enevolence and welcoming smile. The outstanding practitioner in you was never far from the thinker, pondering the coherence, significance, and articulation of practices and theory.

You were always interested in groups. After your psychology studies, you started working as a psychologist, then as a psychopedagogue in various schools and teaching institutions. You chose to live in communes, in the early 1970s, with a very international group. You accompanied groups of women to discover Mexico (where you met Ivan Illich), Egypt, and India (where you met Pearl Drego, long before either of you had heard of TA!). In each place, you met women who were engaged in social and economic development.

Another important theme for you was to get away from the coldness of psychoanalysis as you had known it in your early therapy and training. To approach your own emotional side, you experimented and trained in reparenting and regressive work in various forms with transactional analysts such as Eleanor Feller, Stan Woollams, Richard Erskine, and George Kohlrieser. After reaping benefits from that, you also found limits to that kind of work, which led you to take another look at psychoanalysis.

All these interests and preoccupations were explored by you in international groups. You really cherished this aspect, your international view of TA. But especially, you always brought your joie de vivre, humor, culture, and benevolence to everything you did in TA, including your thinking and teaching. The smile that lit up your face, your warm and strong voice, your ever so relevant and appeasing remarks when there were debates in our institutions—we shall miss all of that.

Thank you, Claude, for what you have passed on to us. We, your students, colleagues, and friends, shall carry these treasures long and far.

Jean-Pierre Quazza can be reached at jean-pierre.quazza@orange.fr. This piece was originally written for the IFAT community and is available online here. Our thanks to Laurie Hawkes for translating it.
The ITAA invites you to consider nominating a worthy recipient for the 2017 Eric Berne Memorial Award (EBMA). The following information and materials must be submitted to the EBMA Committee, c/o Thomas Steinert (email below). All documents must be submitted by email in electronic form (Microsoft Word or Acrobat PDF).

1. Name(s) of author(s) nominated
2. Publication citation: Full reference for journal article, book, or publication in which the contribution being nominated has been published
3. Area of contribution: Specify one of the following categories as the area in which you think the most significant contribution has been made: (a) theory, (b) research, (c) applications, or (d) other areas not covered by these.
4. A brief title for the contribution: For example, the concept in theory, a descriptive title for the research project, the specific practice application, or a title for some other relevant area
5. A nominators’ statement (1500 words maximum) supporting the nomination as an original and highly significant contribution to transactional analysis in the designated area. This statement must include discussions of the following:
   - The originality and innovation of the contribution within transactional analysis
   - The relationship to previous work in transactional analysis and related theories or fields of application, including research where applicable
   - Evidence of the impact the contribution has had on the development of the field of transactional analysis
   - Any other statements about the contribution that need to be considered by the committee in the opinion of the person(s) making the nomination

Each nomination needs to be supported by a single nominators’ statement. If more than one individual is making the nomination, the nominating group will prepare a common statement and select a nominators’ representative.
6. Individual, group, or organization making the nomination: Please supply the name, address, telephone number(s), fax number(s), and email address of the nominator (or nominators’ representative) the EBMA committee may contact if additional information or material is required to consider the nomination fully.

7. Copies of the publication(s): One electronic copy of the article(s) or book chapter(s) in which the contribution being nominated appears must accompany the nomination. If the article or book chapter was written in a language other than English, then an English translation must be included, along with the publication(s) in the original language. No more than three articles and/or book chapters may be submitted.

8. Notification of the nominee: It is the responsibility of the person(s) making the nomination for the award to notify the author(s) of his or her intention to do so and to provide him or her with a copy of the written materials submitted to the EBMA Committee. The nominator is to verify to the committee that he or she has done so either by submitting a copy of the letter to the nominee or a statement to that effect. Without this verification, the nomination will not be accepted, except in those instances in which the award would be made posthumously.

9. Unpublished material and work published after December 2013 are not eligible for nomination at this point.

The deadline for Eric Berne Memorial Award nominations is 1 December 2016. Send nominations to Thomas Steinert at itaa@thomas-steinert.de

See next page for more awards.
The ITAA Service Award was established to recognize members of the ITAA who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of the ITAA and to its development as an organization that promotes transactional analysis internationally, supports its members, and offers a social benefit to the public. Honorees will be recognized for their commitment, the nature of their service, and the “I’m OK, You’re OK” manner in which they conducted themselves in the process. The nominee will have demonstrated a generous spirit of service, responsibility, and effectiveness in his or her contribution to the life of the ITAA. The deadline for this award is 1 January 2017.

The Hedges Capers Humanitarian Award was established to recognize ITAA members who have made significant, enduring contributions to humanity in keeping with the ideals and ethics of the ITAA. These contributions are primarily seen as activities that promote the welfare of humankind, especially through the alleviation or elimination of pain and suffering. ITAA members who make such contributions often do so at the cost of personal risk and/or sacrifice. The humanitarian activities may form a lifelong pattern or be expressed in a single, widely noted occurrence. The deadline for this award is 1 January 2017.

The Muriel James Living Principles Award honors ITAA members who have advanced the growth of transactional analysis by personal example as well as by contributions of an exceptional and lasting nature. Personal example involves consistently living the principles of transactional analysis, which includes, but is not limited to, clear Adult thinking, joyful creativity, compassionate ethics, and a lack of gaminess in transactions with others. Such a person models egalitarian relationships and promotes an “I’m OK, You’re OK” atmosphere in both professional and personal arenas. The nominee will have demonstrated commitment, concern, and caring for both individuals and the world community and will be active in the international advancement of the principles of transactional analysis either professionally or personally. The deadline for this award is 1 January 2017.

The Robert and Mary Goulding Social Justice Award was established to recognize individuals who have broadened the application of transactional analysis through their teaching, training, writing and/or direct professional work in the promotion of social justice. The nominee will have advanced through professional work and personal modeling the core principles of the Gouldings’ theory: self-determination, personal responsibility, direct action, and affirming relationships. The nominee will have contributed, in his or her own way, by any or many of the following: disclosing unfairness, challenging injustices, protecting unfair practices, confronting perpetrators, questioning values that support injustice, enabling understanding and respect, encouraging equalitarian values, facilitating awareness of institutionalized injustice, funding social movements, and even mounting public protests. The deadline for this award is 1 January 2017.

Any ITAA member may suggest another member for the Service, Capers, James, or Goulding award by submitting in writing a detailed nomination that includes the nominee’s name along with a narrative account of the reasons the individual deserves recognition, attaching all relevant documentation. The guidelines for making nominations for all of these awards are posted online at http://itaaworld.org/itaawards.

Send nominations for these awards to ITAA Secretary Mandy Lacy at mandy@lacyconsulting.net.