

Ellipses: Cultural Reflexivity in Transactional Analysis Supervision

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Abstract

The author reviews the literature on supervision and the use of autoethnography as a research method. On this basis she then explores her own ideas for improving cultural reflexivity within models of supervision, with a particular focus on transactional analysis. She suggests that supervisory practice could be enhanced by being aware of the elliptical spaces between personal identity and the professional role, between supervisor and supervisee, and between both individuals and their cultural worlds. Transactional analysis, with its focus on cocreated interactions, offers an opportunity for mutual reflexivity and the application of this elliptical approach.

Keywords

Transactional analysis supervision, reflexivity, culture, ellipses, autoethnography, psychotherapy, counseling, anthropology

The ellipsis is a grammatical tool (...) used in English to show a pause or silence and to indicate the omission or suppression of a word or phrase. As used in modern social technologies, it represents hesitation, intention, or suspension. I use the concept of *ellipsis* (Clagett, 1959, p. 197) to express a number of statistical, linguistic, and social phenomena whereby the missing material can potentially be recovered through the supervision process. The ellipsis operates from intuition and can offer a potential source for reciprocity. I use it as a metaphor for the kinds of spaces that emerge in supervision and that are especially important to engage in reflectively in supervision that is open and sensitive to cross-cultural differences.

Autoethnography is a form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher's personal experience and connects this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings. As a research method, it is used widely in anthropology as a way of looking at the self in relation to others in a cultural context (Ellis, 2004). It offers an opportunity "to uncover, record, interpret and position, from an insider's perspective and experience, the processes supervisors use" (Stewart, 2001-online article) For me, it seems a useful tool for exploring my own position as supervisor and supervisee.

Supervision is a multifaceted process based on evidence-based practice, which makes it challenging to both learn and impart as a skill. I am suggesting it should incorporate a range of types of research evidence that are valuable in the practice of counseling and psychotherapy (McDonnell, 2011). However, insufficient attention has been given to the cultural aspects of supervision. I will describe a model of cultural reflexivity that can be used to enhance our understanding of the supervisory role within supervision in general and how it can be used in transactional analysis (TA) supervision in particular. I aim to explore the "foundations and assumptions" (Jones & Mehr, 2007, p766) of the psychotherapy supervision in the hope that doing so will guide counseling and psychotherapy research and metasynthesis so as to better inform practice decisions around supervision.

How does TA fit with cultural reflexivity? For the purposes of this discussion, I will use the following definition of supervision: "the ability to experience in the moment the situation their supervisee is describing and at the same time to observe the supervisee's own experience, behaviours and performance" (Berne Institute, 2011, p. 6). Mazzetti (2010) looked at the integration of cross-cultural approaches and TA practice. He remarked that the transaction, which takes its name from the "unit of social intercourse" (Berne, 1964, p. 28), is essentially relational and is in itself central to the cross-cultural encounter. He suggested that the TA concept of the contract as a co-created goal of OKness—with its legitimation of all the possible perspectives of client, therapist, and supervisor and their cultural sensitiveness, life stories, the scripts of each party, and so on—itsself bears witness that Berne (1961) intended TA to be a cross-cultural framework.

In my role as therapist and supervisor, trained within the TA model, I find that my earlier anthropological training enhances my observations about people's transactions, interactions, and the meanings they make for themselves. In this article, I am interested in exploring how each person's story can be heard. I question where the power lies in the

relationships within the supervision process, which reflects my particular interest and experience in multicultural and cross-cultural supervision as a supervisor and supervisee. I explore how the transactional analytical model fits with the notion of cultural **reflexivity** by offering a literature review, a review of popular models of the supervisory relationship, and some examples from my own practice. I begin in the next section with a brief survey of wider themes in the literature on supervision to establish that cultural **reflexivity** is not a major issue there. In later sections, I describe models of the supervisory relationship and then extend them through an autoethnographical reflection on my own supervision experience. The final section concludes with some suggestions for practice.

Review of the Supervision Literature

In the most recent edition of their seminal *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, Hawkins and Shohet (2012) wrote that research on the effectiveness of supervision has been limited and slow to emerge, despite the fact that supervision for trainee therapists has been around since the 1920s. The two scoping searches from the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) completed by Wheeler (2003) (see also Wheeler & Richards, 2007) provided useful systematic reviews of the research but found few studies that focused on the outcomes of supervision or met the criteria for rigorous research. This concurred with the views of Fleming and Steen (2004), who saw research on supervision as being largely descriptive and relying on supervisees' reactions to supervision rather than on actual outcomes. The United States has seen more methodological studies, with an emphasis on qualified supervisees rather than trainees (Landany, 2004).

Most authors have observed that more research is needed on supervision. In the mid 1990s, Proctor (1994) wrote about the need to examine competence (Clarkson, 1994), confidence, and accountability as regards supervision and made many suggestions for its enhanced effectiveness. The contested nature of supervision research runs deep. Indeed, there is debate even about the primary purpose of supervision, whether it should be to safeguard the client (Jones 1989), support the supervisee, or facilitate the development of an internal supervisor and ensure that it is a consultative arrangement.

Supervision within the transactional analysis model has included the three functions of management, support for trainees in their reflections, management of feelings and creative interpretation of professional identity and thirdly education (Napper & Newton, 2007) In the Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst (TSTA) examination (EATA, 2014) the candidate is examined on his or her unique "supervision style and the professional and ethical values that guide their supervision" (p. 7). The capacity to reflect in and on action offers the practitioner the opportunity for continuous learning while paying crucial attention to the values, principles, and theories that inform the practice of psychotherapy. This is especially important because the regional and international professional bodies of TA embrace different cultural perspectives and influences.

Supervision has also been defined as "both exceptional clear-sightedness and a superior vantage point from which to look, but usually to help the supervisee gain access to a more advantageous position from which to consider their work" (Shipton, 2010, p2) Among the more recent debates on supervision, Papaux's (2016) article on "The Role of Vulnerability in Supervision" explored the importance of supervision fostering interconnectedness and the development of resiliency and creativity by avoiding only rote or apprenticeship learning and by being more open to sharing views and experiences. Relational supervision within TA has been considered principally by Chinnock (2011), Hargaden (2015) and others who have been open to sharing and discussing the potential power of the supervisor (e.g., Chandran, 2007). I aim to build on these debates and suggest a complementary model to them.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989, 2012) were among the first to write about supervision in the helping professions, incorporating practice with theory and research. Their model of the functions of the supervisor—as an educator, supporter, and manager engaged both in quality assurance of the supervisee's practice and being responsible for and to the organization in which they work—has been the foundation for later models and functions of supervision, including transactional analysis. They have continued to update their seminal text to take into account changes and emerging ideas in areas such as technology, ethics, global context, accountability, diversity, and cultural concerns. Their most recent edition suggests that we need to view supervision in a wider systemic context and comes to a comprehensive definition that encompasses various strands of supervision:

Supervision is a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client-practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by doing so improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession. (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, p 60)

Although it is generally acknowledged that there is a need to recognize diversity in styles of supervision training and in the experience of professional practice, it is also important to acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual's, both the supervisee's and client's identity, experience, belief systems, learning styles, pace, and areas of

competence, all of which emerge from an organic model of personal learning (Loevinger, 1977; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987).

It is worth noting that some question whether supervision makes for better counseling and psychotherapeutic practice at all and critique the evidence that claims to show that supervision benefits the client or the therapist (Feltham, 2000, p. 718). For example, Feltham argued that most supervision places too much emphasis on the sanctity of the client-therapist relationship, which could be replaced by monitoring actual practice by audiotape or videotape (p. 719).

Holloway (1995) and Hawkins and Shohet (1989, 2012) studied the complexity of the criteria used for evaluation, for example, a trainee's clients achieving his or her goals, the trainee's demonstration of discrete skills, and the supervisor's judgment of how well the trainee conceptualizes client problems. The complex issue of how the quality of the relationship between supervisor and trainee can affect outcomes also merits research attention. Goodyear and Bernard (1998) speculated about why evaluation of the processes and effects of supervision has remained "relatively unexplored" (p. 277). In a literature review of effective supervision in clinical practice settings, Kilminster and Jolly (2000) referred to research (Shanfield, Matthews, & Hetherly, 1993) that found that excellent psychotherapy let students tell their story; encouraged them to understand the client, in part, by using feeling and focused constructive feedback; and that feedback from trainees themselves indicated that supervision strengthened confidence, professional identity, and an increased ability to conceptualize and intervene. The research of Kilminster and Jolly (2000) found that the supervision relationship is most effective when using supervisory feedback directly on the supervisee's process while in the supervision session.

Shipton (2010) has called for more creativity in helping others to perform their therapeutic work. I suggest that both creativity and transparency in the supervisory process enhances practice. In my experience of running a supervision group, I found that once confidence and the working alliance among members of the group grew, then my need as the supervisor to monitor the sense of safety could be shared with the supervisees. This allowed more time and space for their case presentations and interpersonal disclosures to emerge and a more participatory supervisory style to be used (Proctor & Inskipp, 2001). It also encouraged more awareness of the group members' parallel processes, which, in turn, supported their reflective learning. This is mirrored in the research on effective and ineffective supervision done by Landany, Mori, and Mehr (2013), who found that the quantifiable variables under examination—such as supervisory working alliance, supervisor style, and supervisor (non)disclosure—were inextricably linked with and influenced the outcomes for both the therapy and the supervision process. Transference and countertransference (emotional reactions), along with interpretations by therapists and supervisors, can show how feelings, behavior, and expressions toward them are based on parallel processes (Cassoni, 2007; Clarkson, 1991; Cornell & Landaiche, 2006). The research of Safran, Muran, Samstag, and Winston (2005) found that when a poor therapeutic alliance during the therapy process is taken to supervision, a more collaborative examination there resulted in less blaming of the client. Hill and Knox's (2009, p. 26) review of the empirical research literature on supervision and training identified that supervisors need to focus more closely on the therapist's relationship with clients through exploring the supervisor's and supervisee's modeling of interpersonal processes. This helps to identify the ellipses through direct observation (Jones, 1989; Kadushin, 1976) and the transgenerational script (Noriega, 2010) through which individuals and groups manifest behavioral traits indicative of their trainers' and their supervisor's influence. This is partially achieved and maintained through unconscious communication between and within individuals from one generation to another. Transactional analysis counseling and psychotherapy institutes, agencies, and professional bodies often parallel the scripts based, for instance, on Berne's own experience of marginalization and oppression (Whittington, 2012).

Supervision offers the opportunity to engage with difference through working with group dynamics to experience multicultural competence (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). The recent meta-analysis by Tao, Owen, Pace, and Imel (2015), which examined the cultural competence of therapists and collated findings from 18 studies, found that cultural competence was highly related to the strength of the therapeutic alliance, relational depth in the session, and client satisfaction with therapy. It would follow that the supervisor's cultural competence has a significant outcome on the supervisee's practice. United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) (2012) supervision policy highlights the "potential emotional pressures for psychotherapeutic practitioners" (p. 24). The document lists six pressures, among which we may note in particular the "pressure to change the client to meet the norms of the dominant society, culture, or organisations" (p. 24). UKCP also identifies issues of responsibility: "Good regard should be given to equality and diversity issues and considerations such as origin, status, race, culture, gender, age, beliefs, sexual orientation and disability" (p. 18).

In 1983 James wrote about cultural consciousness being a challenge to the transactional analysis approach, suggesting that cross-cultural concepts should be more fully included in TA teaching and training. He acknowledged that the dominant culture of middle-class, white, European-North American traditions had shaped TA's theoretical roots. Although some of this was related to that particular time and context (Heidegger, 1996) when there was little

reference to other “isms” or differences such as class, gender, and ability. Since then others have written in the TA literature about such issues, for example, Steiner, (1987); Tudor, (2002) and Batts (2005) all addressed issues of power in therapeutic relationships.

In recent themed issues of the *Transactional Analysis Journal (TAJ)*, articles on training (Shotton, 2009) and ethics (Cornell, 2011) represented some multicultural perspectives. Shotton (2009) promoted the idea of the reflective practitioner negotiating his or her learning across a range of social and political contexts with the aid of transactional analysis as a frame of reference; he examined the tension between institutional and personal power in shaping the learner’s values, beliefs, and behaviors. In the same issue, Saru, Cariapa, Manacha, and Napper (2009) explored how it feels to be an Indian transactional analyst and how the layers of complexities and creativities come alive when trying to translate a person’s lived experience from one ethnically diverse Indian linguistic context using Western concepts and ideas. She suggested that differences can be met in spaces of learning and sharing.

In their systematic review of the research literature in the United Kingdom, Wheeler and Richards (2007) found evidence that supervision enhances the skill base of the supervisee and can lead to improved client outcomes. Some might argue that, considering 30 years of research literature, there is little empirical data to this effect—although there are many substantive case examples. In essence, I suggest that there is opportunity for more empirical research and ideas for exploring supervision in-depth particularly in the area of cross-cultural practice.

Developing a Cross-Cultural Perspective

The United States has led the way in considering multiculturalism in supervision. I feel this is because of the growing presence there of culturally and ethnically diverse clients who speak one or more non-English languages as well as the fact that more attention is being given politically to black and antiracism issues. Colistra and Brown-Rice (2011) wrote that more needs to be done in applying multicultural competencies to cross-cultural supervision. They differentiated between multicultural supervision and cross-cultural supervision. Multicultural supervision is a dynamic process in which the supervisor helps develop the supervisee’s awareness about race/ethnicity while also promoting an awareness of cultural differences between the dyads of supervisor/supervisee and supervisee/client. Cross-cultural supervision includes an understanding of all the multicultural facets impacting the supervisory process when the supervisor and supervisee are from different/diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They argued that it is not only important to address diversity in supervision but also to be aware of the personalities of both the supervisor and the supervisee and to recognize multifaceted interactions that can complicate the relationship.

Leong and Wagner (1994) raised several questions regarding what “we need to know”(i.e., via future research), including “is cross cultural supervision a developmental process and what is the role of the supervisor at different developmental stages and how does the ethnicity of the supervisor influence their role?” (p. 118). They suggested that race and ethnicity be understood as psychological variables that are conceptualized as racial and cultural identities with complex manifestations (i.e., as “shades of black”). They also suggested that questions of cultural counseling be viewed from the institutional level as well as by focusing on the supervisor, supervisee, and their relationship. This includes the supervisor not only acknowledging any cultural differences but also seeking to understand the power differentials within the relationship (see Bernard & Goodyear, 2013) and to gain knowledge of the supervisee’s cultural qualities, including gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, dis(ability), and socioeconomic status (Sue & Sue, 2003). This view was supported by Chopra (2013) in his review of the literature entitled “All Supervision Is Multicultural.” He reminded us that multiculturalism should not limit its scope to race-related issues or we can fall into the trap of the “myth of sameness” (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013, p5; Hardy 1990, 17), that is, of ignoring other multicultural factors such as age and gender.

The literature on gender and power in counseling/psychotherapy and supervision has also been mainly rooted in the United States, and research in this area has been led from a feminist perspective. This is not surprising because feminist theorists would see an analysis of power in any social context as a central tenet. Dimen (1991), for example looked at the individual client’s autonomy inside and outside of the consulting room and how intimacy and power are played out in both contexts.

Most would agree that it is the responsibility of the supervisor to initiate discussions about power and cultural differences (Constantine, 2003). The positive effects of such discussions on supervisee comfort and satisfaction with supervision were demonstrated by Gatmon et al. (2001), and it is, therefore, logical to propose that supervisors need to understand their own experiences with regard to gender, race, and culture. As a feminist psychotherapist, Taylor (2007) suggested that there is a need to reflect on how the dynamics of power and gender can act together to have a negative impact on supervision. She suggested that a feminist approach, in which there is a commitment to facilitating equality and personal power between men and women, can be useful in facilitating and improving the supervisory relationship. She argued that Bernard and Goodyear’s (2013, p47) “objectionable supervisory styles” exhibited some gender and power themes and that it is the supervisor’s responsibility to address not only the

knowledge and skills of the supervisee but to be aware of both the and supervisees own gender-role identity. This could be applied to ethnicity and other social identities as well.

Models of Supervision

In this section I discuss major models of the supervision relationship so as to show how they could accommodate greater cultural reflexivity through adopting an autoethnographic approach.

The core of the supervision relationship is the subject of a range of models, qualitative inquiry, and literature that seeks to characterize the space in-between that regulates the inescapable uncertainty involved in evoking the client's reality. To adapt the Kantian philosophy in a poetic spirit (Kant, 1950, p. 71), we may say that this space of in-between does not represent any property of things in themselves, nor does it represent them in their relation to another person. Space does not represent any determination that attaches to the objects themselves; space remains even when abstraction has been made of all the subjective conditions of thought and intuition. I am suggesting a model that can illuminate the spaces between words, feelings, and thoughts, which I have come to refer to as ellipses.

As a supervisor, I have found that the *seven-eyed model* (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) offers the best fit in mapping the territory of theory, practice, and research because it implicitly recognizes Deleuze's (2006) observation that "thought thinks its own history (the past) but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) it [must] be able finally to think otherwise (the future)" (p. 98). As we will see in what follows, the self-reflexive/self-story of the autoethnographic methodology brings into awareness those difficult moments when space is encroached on or overlapped in the discourse and becomes conflicted. By insisting on the experiential nature of linking theory to practice and practice to experience, we see that mechanisms for mirroring, transference, and countertransference are better understood through contextual analysis and that transgressions are better understood as being located in space and not time.

Figure 1 of the seven-eyed model of supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, p 87) has the potential to illustrate the different elliptical spaces of the existential life positions and/or marginalization and oppression.

Figure 1: The Seven-Eyed Model of Supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, p87)

Their seven eyed model of supervision has an additional mode which focuses on the wider context in addition to the original six modes; the client's life and experiences; the interventions and techniques of the therapist; the relationship between client and therapist; the internal experience of the therapist; the supervisory relationship between supervisor and therapist (and client) ; and the internal experience of the supervisor. (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012 pp 86-89)

I suggest that there are gaps in the processes between the individuals and the systems/structures as demonstrated by the seven-eyed model. It seems to me that it insufficiently shows what each individual brings or doesn't bring to the relationship. The circles on the diagram offer a level of containment but also are boundaries and therefore limited. Rather than working within each circle we could be looking at working between each circle i.e. in the ellipses. This model can be used as a spatial tool to bring into awareness missing material from one context to another. It can illuminate intentional and unintentional omissions within the supervisory relationship.

Within transactional analysis, Berne (1963) developed a model of personality by relating it to the anthropological concept of culture and its ability to understand how thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values inform human behavior. Drego (1981) offered a TA-culture way of understanding how meaning is made. The Cultural Parent model (1983, p225) is informed by the three ego states (Parent, Adult, and Child), through which the rules of the group are transmitted within and between groups. The process of articulation in supervision was identified by Drego (1981, 1983) (Figure 2).

Figure 2 : "Personality" of a Culture (reproduced from Drego, 1981, 1983)

In the Cultural Parent model, ellipses in the shape of ovals are used to signify the personality structure of group culture. Etiquette represents the Parent ego state or "what one is supposed to do" ; Technicalities represents the Adult ego state or "what one has to do," and Character represents the Child ego state or "what one might like to

do” (Berne, 1961, p. 112).

Examples using snapshots from autoethnography are offered in the following section and illustrate a space between culturally inherent beliefs (etiquette), the training and practice of becoming and being a psychotherapist (technicalities), and the ways of experiencing and making meaning character (Drego, 1981, p224). The ellipse is “[in] effect a space between the body and language” (De Certeau, 1988, p. 230), and the metaphor is used as a way to illuminate personal identity and the professional role between supervisor and supervisee. The creation and interpretation of the space is a felt experience of diverse movements, words, and/or gestures that offer the possibility of coexisting with another. These ideas are consistent with what Winnicott (1971, p 51) referred to as a *reparative potential space* and a *perverse play space for discovery*. The ellipses in the Cultural Parent model (Drego, 1981, 1983) can be mapped onto Hawkins and Shohet’s (2012) seven-eyed model as spaces between the concentric circles ; the spaces can be seen as a motif in the spatio/temporal plane across the psychological contract and spiritual journey wherein the ellipses generate a relational space for the supervisor, supervisee, and client. The ellipses are moments of meeting which are mediated interactions. This, in turn, generates meaning through the observer and the observer’s internal process which is a mechanism for self-awareness and professional development. The spaces that open up between the internal, intersubjective, and interpersonal is also a gap for gaining greater insights.

Examples From My Experience as a Supervisee and Supervisor

Autoethnographic research—that is, research on supervision practice that is carried out specifically by a practitioner of supervision—is a systematic method of reflection on our work as therapists. Autoethnography provides a methodology (buttressed by its own critical literature, for example Pennington & Prater, 2016; Siddique, 2011) for including the inner life of the supervisor—considered as both subject and object of the study—as evidence. Ideas of transference and countertransference (emotional reactions), along with interpretations by the therapists and supervisors, provide a framework for exploring the feelings, behaviors, and expressions that arise in parallel between supervisor and supervisee (Cassoni, 2007; Clarkson, 1994; Cornell & Landaiche, 2006).

I see the relational and reciprocal potential of two or more individuals encountering a co-created space in which supervision takes place. The individual builds her or his sense of being in the world, and **reflexivity** offers the opportunity for the disrupted biography or stuck story to be narrated or repeated, as usually happens with the client’s story in therapy. The process and direction of relating remains ongoing. The different cultural frames through which language, belief, and experience are shared means there is always a range of alternative versions of explanations and understanding that can be brought into existence. I offer experiences from my own practice as supervisee and supervisor, framed by an ethnographic approach, as data with which to extend the models just reviewed.

Supervision involves individual narratives (Clandinin, and Connelly, 2000) and/or storytelling. It is about fragments, fictions, and frictions from different times and places coming together to make or unmake a story (Siddique, 2012). The story in supervision is essentially oral, with brief glances, perhaps, at a written script or hastily scribbled notes. Stories can be found through the reclaiming of memories. In transactional analysis, this can be understood as a life script within a script matrix. Interpretation of these life stories or life scripts is in terms of mythical stories or re-enactments through music, drama, and play within the psychological and social interactions of communication. Levi-Strauss (1962) believed that cultural stories and myths are present through each culture being understood and interpreted through repetitive structures and processes. There seems to be a link, therefore, between Levi-Strauss’s perspective and Berne’s idea of life script.

As supervisees, in revealing the client in the supervision session, we are exposed in the act of doing therapy. Such experiences can be shaming, naming, or blaming and can be linked to the concept of the victim-persecutor-rescuer game such as the term “alcoholic” described by Berne (1964). I remember feeling quite dejected once about a long-term client I had been working with and of whom I was fond. The client came to the session and shared a catalogue of her misdemeanors and concerns about relapsing back to drinking and a sexual encounter with a man she had met at a nightclub. I expressed in supervision how shocked I had been about the sexual encounter with an unknown person. My supervisor responded, “Don’t you know, Salma, the best way to get over a man is to get under another man.” That response was met with laughter from other supervisees in the group. I remember at the time forcing a smile due to group pressure. I felt that the group seemed to collude with the supervisor’s comment, and there seemed little empathy for my cultural/social position. I felt exposed, misunderstood, and discounted for my particular cultural views. As an anthropologist and psychotherapist, it seems to me paramount to understand and work with the contexts of the client, supervisee, and supervisor (Krause, 2008), to work in a culturally sensitive way, and for all to acknowledge the various aspects of power. On reflection, I could have challenged the supervisor’s comment rather than seeing myself as the victim of cultural insensitivity or discrimination. I could have explained my cultural views and asked the group to consider different ways of my dealing with the potentially embarrassing situation; then we all could have learned about the nature of power, oppression, and culture.

On another occasion I became acutely aware of the supervisor's power when a female Muslim therapist in my supervisory group started to recall incidents in her workplace, where she felt undervalued and continuously experienced her narrative being disrupted or interrupted. She spoke about the reactions she received from clients and colleagues as a therapist in a hijab. As a black, Muslim woman myself, I could identify with her story. I needed to work with her and my reactions to begin to resolve the impasse for the client's narration of the story. I needed to offer alternative scenarios and reactions to the ones received in the original encounter(s) so the supervisee could re-author the outcome of the story, for example, by considering her life script and/or other alternatives for responding. I could pass on the learning from my experiences to her. I realized for myself that when you exist in-between different cultural stories/scripts, you can annotate your own "Grace Notes" (see Siddique, 2016) for being in the world. Elements of these encounters, which may come out of difference or indifference, are what transactional analysis refers to as transgenerational or cultural scripting (Noriega, 2002) in which relationships are shaped by the unconscious communication between individuals, groups, and organizations and can be repeated indefinitely unless challenged. There were the dangers of colluding and repeating a potential misuse of my power and a distortion of my authority as a supervisor. I needed to transfer my learning from my experience as a supervisee when I imagined I was engaging in an open and here-and-now dialogue but then felt misunderstood so that the oppressive power of the supervisor would be rendered neutral with my own supervisee. If I ask myself, in the act of producing this autoethnographical account, what could have been different, I realized as a Pakistani Muslim woman in this encounter my cultural default or assumed position was of subservience because I know that on one level my experience of authority has been negative. I find myself in this liminal space, feeling vulnerable and not knowing how to respond. The writing of this account helps me to recognize a level of cognitive and cultural distortion.

Redfern (2014) suggested that "good supervision provides a space in which reactions, comments, challenges, feelings and two-way feedback can all be shared" (p. 26). I had felt unable to do this with my own supervisor and the group but was determined that the same process was not paralleled with my supervisee. I am aware that my autoethnographical examples might be countered by Rappoport's (2005) comment that "in a narcissistic encounter, there is, psychologically, only one person present [in my case the supervisor]. We are all in danger of becoming narcissistic and exploitative. I may have adopted the process of the co-narcissistic" (Rappoport, 2005, p2) by agreeing and trying to get along with the supervisor to please him. I felt ridiculous because I was not seeing the humor experienced by the group. Therefore, I found myself unable to act for fear of ruining the fun for others during supervision. I was left feeling about myself "What's your problem?" In this past supervisory relationship, as a supervisee I had difficulty in holding on to my own experience, with no sense of the supervisor wanting to find out more about the relationship with my client. In hindsight, the most significant lesson I learned is related to a phenomenon that Gilbert and Evans described: "One of the typical symptoms of oppression is that there are no resources available to address the oppressed [individuals or] group's concerns and dilemmas" (as cited in Redfern, 2014, p. 29).

How we define, organize, understand, and experience supervision is shaped by the society in which we live and the context in which we find ourselves. Within supervision, the supervisee brings her or his story to individual or group supervision and tries to remake the story which the client tells and how they responded with a degree of potency and coherency. The process of telling and retelling the story can, in itself, be transformative. Mazzetti (2013) provided some helpful suggestions for questions the supervisee may ask in supervision sessions: What am I feeling during the session? Why do I feel what I am feeling? Why does the other person want (unconsciously) me to feel what I am feeling? (p95)

Conclusion

Transactional analysis models, with their emphasis on transactions and patterns of communication, can be helpful for reflecting on power dynamics and can illuminate the possibility of unhealthy roles, dynamics, and positions. In supervision, we place ourselves within our cultural context and bring our cultural myths and stories to bear, which then influences how we present our clients. We must look for reconnection within the fragmented stories presented in supervision. Anthropologists have proposed ways of doing this by offering a cultural and/or political critique—"In a splintered world, we must address the splinters" (Geertz, 2000, p221). Therapists, supervisors, and trainers can do this by collating different splinters/fragments from outside as well as inside the therapy room.

What has emerged for me, as the heart of this article, is how the experience of supervision is linked to ideas of the observer and the observed. The supervisor has super-vision (is the observer), and the supervisee rarely has the option of freeing himself or herself from that gaze (of being observed) because the supervisee can become attached to their story and often repeats what has just been experienced and needs challenged to relate to a wider perspective and context (Kurpius, Gibson, Lewis, & Corbet, 1991) What has been experienced in the supervision is the opportunity

to negotiate boundaries for meaning between self and others through recognizing the space between the doing and the being. The telling of the story becomes an act of narrating the past into the present of the here-and-now experience (Jacobs, 2012), with the supervisor as the observer who has the potential power of defining the “truth.” There are similarities between what, the idea of boundaries and ego states to the ego states of Parent, Child, and Adult (Berne, 1961). This theoretical model illustrates the ellipses, or liminal spaces, in which meaning is negotiated by the recognition of the existence or the absence of power, energy, or intention. Ellipses challenge the more fixed binary opposition of communicating. Every culture has linguistic structures which hold a relationship between opposing ideas or concepts such as life and death, good and bad etc (Levi-Strauss, 1962). The elliptical spaces can open awareness and offer exploration of differences and ways to tolerate omissions, uncertainty, and one’s personal identity.

The supervision process is created by the individualized experience of therapy and supervision, which creates the power dynamics of the observer and the thing to be observed (Kurpius et al., 1991). It seems to me that bearing witness (as described by Poland, 2010) is an alternative to the enactment of power dynamics. This can be considered as reparative not only for the supervisor and supervisee dynamic but also in the transformative space of the therapy room to help others bear unbearable experiences. Once the process comes into awareness or consciousness, there is a separation of the observer and the observed into circles, spaces, or ellipses, these being foci for thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Sharing ourselves through dialogue and emotions with others, and ultimately with ourselves, moves us, through the I–It relationship to the I–Thou encounter (Buber, 1923/2013), which is a relationship that can transform individuals by the encountering itself. The space or ellipse opened up between two people—in this case, the supervisor and supervisee—is what needs further exploration.

Anthropology has something to offer us as therapists. As Krause (2012) pointed out, anthropology may have placed too much emphasis on culture and psychotherapy too little. Anthropology has tended to emphasize a pre-constituted continuity, social structure, and history, whereas psychotherapy has focused on the stories and dialogues affected by particular individuals, situations, and personal experiences. We could consider more of both the anthropological and the psychotherapeutic perspectives, thereby creating more inclusive theories as a way of clarifying assumptions and practicing with more cultural reflexivity.

Transactional analysis can learn from acknowledging and reflecting on power differentials in society, or it could articulate and even promote domination and discrimination through inattention to cultural reflexivity. Subjectivity and personhood are situated in specific contexts that influence the way the other is seen. All operate within their own contexts—historical, political, social, emotional, and cognitive—which affect any and all relationships in the supervisory process. Hawkins and Shohet’s seven-eyed model is linear, with power normally seen as an element of control and surveillance. There could be more consideration of the spaces between positions and process, like the ellipses, to allow for more feedback to supervisors from supervisees (Redfern, 2014) and more sharing of knowing the other, always with the aim of dispersing power.

Cultural **reflexivity** is the co-created dynamic of othering. When two or more individuals meet in the supervisory situation, they encounter meanings, desires, and motivations that offer a way out of the rigidity of the language of psychotherapy—including the prescribed professional positions of trainee/trainer and supervisor/supervisee—and ultimately give shape to the *analytic third* (Hargaden, 2015). “Individuals must innovate rules in a bricolage of their own identities” (Lash, 1999, p3) in order to transcend the world and make it anew. There is, therefore, a debate to be had about acknowledging the cultural situatedness of psychotherapy, to which this article hopes to have made an initial contribution.

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