

POWER

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Power and its effects, like the air we breathe, are all around us. Like air, power is essential to life. And just like the air we breathe power is subtly or grossly contaminated in ways which we are barely aware of and which we tolerate every day of our lives. We know that people power trip us and we know that we abuse our own power. Power is spoken and written about everywhere: horsepower, the power of the people, power plays, black power, power hunger, the power of love. We unleash power with a kick of our accelerator foot, we feel the power of people's eyes. We hear and read about power constantly and yet we do not really understand what it is, how it works, what it does, when it's good and when it's bad, where it begins and ends, how to get it, how to get rid of it, or how to fight it.

POWER AND RADICAL PSYCHIATRY

Power is at the core of the concepts of Radical Psychiatry. Alienation, we believe, is the essence of all psychiatric "conditions." Alienation is the feeling within a person that she is unable to think, love or feel joy; that he cannot control his own body and behavior; that she does not deserve to live or that someone wishes him to die; that he is dead or that everyone is dead; or that she is not part of the human species. According to Radical Psychiatry principles all psychiatric "conditions," except for those that are clearly organic in origin, such as brain damage, or toxic conditions, are a form of alienation. Alienation is the result of oppression about which the oppressed has been mystified or deceived. Thus stated in a simple formula: **Alienation = Oppression + Mystification.**

Oppression can only be perpetrated through the use of power. We cannot oppress others if we have no power over them. As a consequence, because power is an essential ingredient of alienation we consider all psychiatric activity to be political in nature. This is because in every instance, psychiatric intervention affects the structure of the power relationships between people. Psychiatrists deal constantly with situations in which people are the victims of abuses of power. Psychiatric intervention invariably affects those situations, either by changing them or by leaving them alone in which case psychiatric intervention, by default, supports the oppressive status quo, and becomes, once again, political.

On the other hand, liberation from alienation can only be achieved through power. We believe that: **Contact + Awareness+ Action = Liberation.**

Awareness, Contact and Action are forms of power. Awareness is the power of knowledge, Contact is the power of people when they band together, and Action is the power of aggressive behavior.

Thus, power can be good or bad depending on whether it is abused to oppress or mystify, or whether it is used to liberate. The first part of this two-part paper will deal mostly with power abuses; bad power. The second part will deal with good power, the power that we need to live in harmony with ourselves, each other and the earth. Adequate psychiatric help requires the establishment of a very important distinction: the extent to which people are victims of power abuses needs to be reacted to and distinguished from the extent to which people are personally responsible for what happens to them. Yet, the facts of oppression and power abuse are assiduously avoided by establishment-trained psychiatrists. No power-related concepts occupy any status in current psychotherapeutic ideologies. Alfred Adler, a disciple of Freud, saw power as an essential fact in the lives of people, but even he only explored how people seek power rather than how they use it or abuse it or are victims of its abuse by others. In any case, Adler's theories or the theories of other power-conscious therapists, such as Jay Haley, are not considered central in the field. Most professional psychotherapists are trained to ignore the relative power of the persons with whom they work. Generally speaking, power or political considerations are deemed irrelevant to the practice of psychiatry, and the people who

indulge in power considerations are seen as "politically biased." As a consequence, psychotherapists tend to ignore what occurs in their consulting rooms when it has anything to do with the arrangements of power, especially the manner in which certain people, who have power over others, misuse it to their own advantage.

For instance, one of the most common forms of power abuse occurs in sexual relationships. Most therapists relate to the sexual difficulties between men and women as if they were caused by bad habits, unfavorable sexual conditioning, or a mismatch. Carmen Kerr (*Feminist Sexual Therapy, IRT*, Winter 1974) points out that sexist power behavior is at the root of much sexual dysfunction. "Frigidity," for instance, is often the result of the fact that the male dominates the sexual act in such a manner that a woman (who may be quite able to come through masturbation) simply can't create the necessary conditions for orgasm. Not many therapists would see this for what it is: the result of sexist power abuse by the man and sexist submission to male power by the woman.

Why is power, its uses and abuses, ignored by psychotherapists? Mostly, I believe, because they are not taught about it. But I also believe that a very important other reason is that therapists profit from being blind to power issues. Like other people who have power, therapists would prefer their own power and its abuses to be mystified, because the mystification of power is an essential aspect of its effective and guilt-free abuse.

Also, awareness of the facts of power and its abuses between human beings would quickly lead psychiatrists to the conclusion that as soul healers, they must become advocates of the oppressed rather than "objective" observers of and commentators on the human condition. Being an advocate of the oppressed is neither lucrative nor safe; for many it would represent a drastic cut in income and living conditions.

Male Supremacy in Psychiatry

No class of human beings is better trained from childhood to maintain the mystification of power than the "civilized white man." My own understanding of power comes from being raised as such. As a white male I learned, early in my life, to accept with obedience the uses and abuses of power upon me, and then later easily learned and accepted the use and abuse of power training of adolescence, academic training, and professional "discipline." As is typically the case with white professional males, I had become a master of the subtle and gross abuses of power; I was one-up and largely tuned out to the dimensions and effect of my power. The misuse of my power was part and parcel of the everyday competitive, academic and professional rat race. I was a "dynamic," aggressive, "creative professional." These positive labels for the expression of my power helped to blind me to its negative effects. Interpersonal conflicts, loss of friendships, unhappiness, antagonisms, and the incapacity for cooperation and intimate relationships with men and women alike, were the consequences of my power training and behavior but I never clearly understood the connection. I was well trained as a mental health professional whose main function was to preserve and defend the oppressive power arrangements of the status quo by being an emotionally detached, "objective" advisor to people manifesting psychiatric disturbance. Because I was unaware of and blind to racism, ageism, sexism, coupleism, and in general all of the ways that people are oppressed, I tolerated and therefore supported them, as I searched for other more "psychological" deeper causes for people's unhappiness.

The Women's Movement and the Male Psychiatrist

My own awakening to the realities of power and its abuses, still in process, came to me in the confrontation with the women's movement. I was fortunate to run headlong into powerful, determined, and compassionate women who were willing to struggle with me by refusing to submit to or go along with my mystification and abuses of power, while patiently explaining over and over what they consisted of. At first I was blind to them, but eventually I began to see the crude and subtle ways in which men oppress women and how I, as a therapist, had colluded with and contributed to them. I also saw more and more how I, as a man, was continually engaged in the oppression of women. Power and its abuses began to be clearer to me. In the last five years I have been observing and analyzing power, not only in my

own personal life and in the lives of the people that I work for and with, but in general wherever I observe the oppressive behavior of individuals upon individuals and of social classes upon social classes. As a consequence, my approach to therapy has been radically altered as I incorporated a developing feminist awareness into it. This feminist awareness expanded into a broader understanding of how young and old people, gay people, single people, fat people, and other minorities are oppressed. As a therapist I can no longer speak to people without seeing and reacting to the power abuses in their lives.

Class Analysis and Power

Those who have power and know that they do and are most adept at its use and its abuse are also those who pretend to have none or pretend not to use it (speak softly and carry a big stick). True, there are still some who have power and make no bones about it and do not attempt to mystify the fact that they will use their power to crush anyone who opposes them. But this crude application of power is not nearly as effective as the more "civilized," liberal, mystified abuse of power. It is when people are oppressed by power that is mystified that their alienation is most severe. Those who are oppressed in a crude way do not tend to become alienated since the result of obvious oppression is anger. For instance, we are likely to be self-righteously angry at a purse snatcher who steals ten dollars from us. But when the government uses ten of our tax dollars to massacre Vietnamese we suffer in confused, abject, guilty silence.

In this country we are the classic victims of "liberal," mystified oppression. We are persecuted and oppressed by smiling people who hold power the dimensions of which we are either dimly or completely unaware.

The habitual victims of power abuses are the members of large classes of disadvantaged people, the poor, the workers, third world, women, children, single people, gays, and the elderly, as opposed to the rich, bosses, whites, couples, men and the middle-aged. On the average, the members of the oppressed groups will experience a far larger numbers of injurious transactions than other people. And yet, it is essential to point out that members of every class, including oppressors, are oppressed and oppress each other (working class men push women and children around) and that some members of oppressed classes manage to significantly disrupt members of the oppressing classes (black men oppress white women, children oppress their parents).

Thus, the class struggle is not really taking place along one large front (working class vs. the bourgeoisie), but along several large fronts and many other minor fronts (many struggles, many fronts). On every one of these fronts a minority of people struggle to stop the abuses of power which are imposed on them. At any one time, even in the same room, an ex-mental patient may be struggling against a gay man who power plays her by talking fast, while a gay man is struggling against women who discount him, while women struggle against men (some of them gay couples) who dominate them, while some are struggling against bosses who exploit them and all are struggling against a system which oppresses all, and the people within it (some ex-mental patients, some gays, some women and many of them men) who support it.

The abuse of power can be seen as a transactional event observable in everyone's life many times over in the period of a day. Everyone is oppressed to a larger or lesser degree and everyone is an oppressor, to a larger and a lesser degree; this fact is, to me, the source of great hope that the abuse of power can be successfully struggled with, because it is to a certain extent everyone's struggle, from the ruling class white male to the most oppressed.

The ebb and flow of power between people is as constant as the waves that batter the shore. The shore's power lies in its stability as it towers over the waters. The waves' power is their constant movement, their fluidity, as they steadily erode even the hardest rock. The class struggle between powerful and powerless has a similar quality; it goes on endlessly and can have only one outcome. We can speed that outcome by a careful transactional analysis of power.

Competition: Power's Workshop

We are largely unaware of how power operates, how we abuse it and are abused by it, because we are immersed in and forced to accept its uses and abuses from the earliest moment in our lives. After spending our young lives as the victims of oppression, we quite naturally adopt oppressive roles when we grow up. The acceptance of power imbalances and power abuses is drilled into us through hierarchies and competition, both of which are as American as apple pie. We are told that "all people are born equal" which is another way of saying "I'm OK and you're OK," and that no one is better than anyone else. We are told this by judges, the Christian ethic, our constitution, and by our teachers and politicians. Yet, we don't really believe this at all because the real message is quite different. We are compelled by our training to see ourselves as better than others and to see others as our betters. To think and believe that we are actually equals, that no one is better than anyone else, that we are all complex, interesting, worthwhile and in the long run, equally important or unimportant, is a difficult conviction to achieve and to maintain.

The difficulty which we have in feeling equality with all other human beings is the result of our training and competitiveness, individualism and acceptance of hierarchies. We white North Americans are told that if pursued assiduously, competitiveness will lead us to happiness and success in life, and that if we don't succeed in life it is because we are not competitive enough or compliant enough to play by the rules of the game. (The game is good, the rules are fair, if you lose it is because you are not OK.)

We seem to live on a ladder with people stepping on our heads while we step on the heads of others, with at most two or three people on our rung with whom we feel equals. Once in a while some of us get to the top of the ladder and look down triumphantly, and sometimes we are thrown to the bottom, powerless. But we usually are somewhere in the gray middle, struggling to get up, preventing others from getting ahead of us and hoping to hold our own. The experience of hierarchies or one-up/one-down is so common to us that we think of it as a natural experience to be expected and one that we should react to by trying as hard as we can to "get ahead." Indeed, we don't really

struggle to get ahead but simply in order not to fall behind as everyone climbs over our heads.

This constant engagement in competitive behavior with its attendant mystification makes us power hungry and causes our behavior to be impregnated in power behavior.

When we begin to demystify power and we begin to see how it affects us in our everyday lives, it becomes an elaborately choreographed dance expressed in every moment in every movement, in every utterance with every person, wherever we go.

Power and Competition in the Movement

The description of competitiveness given above exemplifies what most of us, in the U.S., are exposed to in our early childhood. Some of us eventually became part of what is called the "Movement," where it is an accepted premise that competitiveness, hierarchies and the abuse of power are undesirable. Those of us who consider ourselves earnest workers within the Movement are eager to stop behaving in these destructive ways, and we have all had notorious successes as well as failures in this struggle.

In the early sixties as the Black Power movement developed, the theme was to take power away from the oppressors. Malcolm X's cry was: "Give us power; The ballot or the gun." The Black Power movement pursued the acquisition of power through competitive means. Powerlessness was undesirable and competitiveness and hierarchies were not considered part of the problem; male supremacy was not challenged. The Black Power movement was extremely successful in bringing about its aim: to increase the power of the oppressed class of black people in this country.

Probably inspired by the separatist example in the Black Power movement, the Women's Movement started their own separatist drive. Initially, the emphasis of the Women's Movement was not to grab power away from men, but to

remove women from men's power and its abuses. Women did not want to become men or be like men, and insisted on being removed from the oppressive influence of male power abuse. Some women came to feel that power, in fact, all power, was an undesirable attribute for a human being to have and should be stamped out of the Women's Movement along with the corollary of power, which is hierarchies. This wholesale rejection of power was probably the result of the fact that power was defined in male, competitive terms.

Attempts were made to create collectives and organizations in which all hierarchies were leveled and in which anyone who manifested any sort of individual powers was criticized and cowed into withdrawing such expressions. This approach had a certain amount of appeal throughout the Movement in the late sixties.

I strongly believe that the leveling of hierarchies and expressions of personal power within a group is a serious error. True, by reducing everyone's power to the lowest common denominator, we get rid of the bad aspects of power but we also prevent ourselves from being powerful and effective. Jo Freeman presents a good argument against leveling in "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."

The men in the Movement were forced to cooperate with the demands and expectations of the Women's Movement and realizing the extent to which competitiveness and abuse of power was part and parcel of their male role, many men endeavored to control their power, curb their competitiveness, reject their tendencies to create hierarchies and hold in check their tendencies to dominate women and their relationships. This had the effect of freeing the path for women within the Movement, but it also had the effect of effectively straitjacketing men so that to a large extent they became paralyzed with their powers imploded, sucked in; so that as women became powerful, strong and creative, men became lusterless, dull, passive, guilty and sulking, and scared.

Presently, in the struggle against the abuses of power and oppression, though we have come a long way, we are only beginning to deal with the problem. While it is true that we may be making some progress in the overt and gross abuses of power and hierarchies within the Movement, it is by no means true that we have them under control in our more subtle, personal relationships. I see us as having a great deal of trouble with power; some of us are out of control with rampant competitiveness, others are walking around holding our breath, practically paralyzed in an attempt to be "good."

Even though we may no longer accept the crude, blatant competitiveness and power abuses that are part and parcel of the American way of life, I believe most of us still within our hearts carry the seeds of competitiveness, hierarchies, and power abuse. We are still deeply ingrained in hierarchies. Most of us, as we walk into a room, feel immediately one-up to certain people and one-down to others. We express the tendency to judge ourselves, and judge others in relationship to ourselves, to decide who is right and who is wrong, who is "in" and who is "out." When people disagree with us we discount their positions and try to demonstrate the error of their ways, instead of listening and entering into a dialogue. This form of behavior is as true of women as it is of men. I venture to say that if there was ever a myth that was exploded in the last years, it is the myth that women are less competitive, less into power hierarchies than men. The fact seems to be that as women are acquiring power, their behavior tends to closely parallel the behavior of powerful men who they have studied for examples on how to wield and understand power. It looks as if we are all equally unable to deal with and understand power and its abuses. At the same time, it also seems that women, in particular, are interested in defining a new kind of power, different from the abusive power that has been characteristic of men.

My opinion is that power is, per se, good. We need power, we want power, we deserve power. But power also corrupts and in order to have power without abusing it and oppressing others, we need to understand it for what it is, how it operates, how it is accumulated, how it is shared and how it is given up. We need to understand which expressions of power are harmful to ourselves and others and which are beneficial. To that end let me attempt to define power and its abuses.

Power: Definitions and Forms

I would like to define *power* in the same manner in which it is defined in the science of physics: as *the capacity to overcome and move against the resistance of an opposing force*. There are two main forms that this capacity can take: physical power and psychological power. As an example, if I need to get my car over the hill I may be able to do so by pushing it. In this case, my physical power is overcoming the resistance of gravity. But I also have another form of power — psychological power — which relies on technique or manipulation rather than physical power. With a minimal application of my own physical power, I can still get my car over the hill if I master the technique of driving the car. If I can harness the energy or power within the object which I want to move, I do not have to exercise any extensive physical power of my own; I simply have to know the technique that is required. So I can overcome the resistance that prevents my car from going over the hill by getting into the car, turning the ignition and when the engine starts, by manipulating gears and clutch with the adequate technique, get the car over the hill. The same is true when we speak of the power that we have over people.

Let me give another example of oppressive power in which you or I want something that rightfully belongs to another person. On one hand, we may have the power to overcome that person's resistance through direct application of physical force, or we may be able to overcome his resistance through a technique which makes use of his own power. Let us imagine as an example, that you are sitting on a park bench on a spot that I want to occupy. If I can take the place away from you I will have manifested my power, that is, the capacity to move you against resistance, the resistance in this case being the fact that you do not want to move. If I am sufficiently strong, I may be able to push you or lift you out of your seat, and this is an example of physical power. On the other hand, I may have the psychological power to get you out of your seat without using physical force.

Psychological power depends on my capacity to harness your energy to cause you to do what you don't want to do. As in the case of the car, it relies on a technique designed to get you to move yourself out of the bench. All psychological power techniques depend on the property in people called *obedience*. I can intimidate you out of the seat, or I can cajole you. I can cause you to leave the seat to me by creating guilt feelings in you. I can intimidate you with threats, or with the sheer volume of my voice. I can seduce you with a smile, or with a promise, or I can convince you that giving up your seat to me is in the national interest, or necessary for national security. I can trick you, con you, or sell you a lie. In any case, if I overcome your resistance to giving up your place without using physical force, I have used psychological power which relies entirely on obedience on your part.

The Abuses of Psychological Power

Most of the oppression or abuse of power that people experience is psychological in nature. People, even in the most violent environments, do not primarily experience direct physical oppression. But physical violence is all around, reminding us that disobedience is punishable, and backing up every case of psychological power abuse.

The most extreme example of psychological oppression is manifested in the *slave mentality*. The slave mentality is a frame of mind in which a person cheerfully accepts the oppressive circumstances of his life, defends his oppressors against anyone who criticizes them, and will actually fight and give up his life to bolster the oppression of which he is the victim. For instance, John, the son of a career military man, was raised under severe disciplinary conditions. All of his schooling was at military schools. He was a model student, disciplined and patriotic. After he graduated from the military academy he was sent to Vietnam where he was soon wounded. Now, a paraplegic, he is a hero in his home town and he is proud to have been able to defend his country and regrets only that his combat experience was so short. He hates the anti-war movement and is bitter about their contribution to American defeat at the hands of the communists.

Alienation, a more common and less perfect case of psychological oppression, is a situation in which people come to feel responsible for the effect that oppression has upon their own emotional integrity. As an example, hard-working

people in this country will feel guilty and responsible for the fact that they cannot make ends meet with the money that they earn or for the fact that they cannot afford decent clothes and shoes for their children, or because they cannot obtain employment, or for being hungry. Even though others are taking away the fruits of their labor, many people submit to those oppressive circumstances and blame themselves for the failure of being able to earn a decent living.

The oppression of workers, women, blacks, children, gays and old folks in this country is maintained with a minimal amount of physical power. Most of it is accomplished because each individual is alienated to the extent that they are willing to oppress and persecute themselves and be obedient in the service of the ruling class.

In Radical Psychiatry we conceptualize the way in which we collude with and internalize our oppression as the *Pig Parent*. The Pig Parent is a colloquial term that represents all of the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and prohibitions which people carry within their heads and which aid our oppressors.

For instance, John, above, quietly suffered endless indignities as a cadet. He accepted these because his Pig would constantly remind him, literally whispering in his ear, that they were tests of his manhood. Today any hints of self-pity are countered by his Pig that says: "Don't be a complainer, it's unpatriotic." It is because of this willing, internalized oppression that a fairly small number of people can oppress millions without more than occasionally raising a finger to enforce it. Clearly, a large portion of our task is to get rid of the Pig Parent, our internalized oppression, so that we don't obediently go along with the abuses of power around us.

Power Plays

A power play is a maneuver designed to get something away from an unwilling person.

I have described the manner in which a person can use psychological power to take something away from somebody else. That situation (the Rip-Off power play) is one of the two major situations where power plays are used. Other situation is one in which a person who already has taken something away from someone uses subtle power plays to keep it. "Hold-the-Line" power plays are the most common in our world because they are the ones used to preserve the oppressive status quo. The ruling class is not as actively engaged in expanding its oppressive hold on us (though it is actively engaged in ripping off the third world) as it is in maintaining and defending the oppression that exists. The situation that we live in is one of already established oppressive institutions, which are extraordinarily complex, interlocked, mutually supportive and affect every facet of our lives. For instances, sexism supports the exploitation of labor which supports racism, which in turn supports the exploitation of labor which is supported by the wholesale addiction to drugs, which supports the medical establishment, which supports the exploitation of labor, and so on and so forth. All of these separate oppressive links combine into a structure, like girders combine into a bridge, which is able to support enormous loads. This intricate, monolithic structure of oppression is intensely committed to preserving its power, and every time we make a move to free ourselves, to take back what is ours, we are confronted with a power play that is designed to preserve the status quo and to hold-the-line. The only way in which we can bring to bear power equivalent to the powers that oppress us is to band together in an organized way. No individual or small group of individuals, no idea or single political line can possibly overcome the structures that oppress us. We need all the people with all the approaches we can enlist in our struggle for liberation.

However, oppression is not a mystical process occurring where we cannot fight or understand it. Oppression is made up of all of the separate oppressive transactions, each one of which can be confronted separately. Let me analyze the case of a psychiatric nurse, Alice, who decides that she no longer wants to wear a white starched uniform to work, because it is an extra expense which she can hardly afford and because it is uncomfortable, difficult to keep clean, and ugly.

Her first move might be to go to her supervisor and simply ask whether she can start wearing street clothes to work every day. The first Hold-the-Line power play will be "It-Says-in-the-Bible." "It-Says-in-the-Bible" is basically a

reference to some canon or tradition, written or unwritten, which prohibits her from getting what she wants. The supervisor might say, "There is a rule that says that you cannot wear street clothes." Or, she might get a rule book and open it up to the page where uniforms are described. Let us assume that there is no such rule book and that Alice presses the supervisor further for justification of the rule. At this point the supervisor might go to the next power play, which would be perhaps to say, "Well, I'll bring this up at the next supervisors' meeting; why don't you talk to me next week?" This power play is called "Stalling." Any excuse to put some time between a person's request and a response is clearly going to weaken the person's resolve. Let us say that after a week the supervisor does not return with an answer and a week after that, Alice, undaunted, returns to the supervisor to ask about her uniform. The supervisor might now resort to further stalling techniques, such as, "I was not able to bring the subject up at the meeting; there were far more important things to talk about than whether you should wear a uniform or not." And Alice will be put off for another two weeks. Alice comes back and insists again; the supervisor might now use a status quo power play called "Love-It-or-Leave-It." She might say something like, "Perhaps you are not satisfied working here; we have found that there are simply those people who do not enjoy this type of work. Perhaps you should look for a job somewhere else. We will be happy to recommend you." This power play is a veiled threat to the security of the person and can take other forms, for instance: "I see that your review period is almost over. I think we should set up a conference to evaluate your job performance; how about next Monday?" or pulling out Alice's personnel folder and saying, "I see that you had trouble at your previous job; it seems you have difficulties adjusting to working conditions." This type of a power play is usually sufficient to intimidate people into submission, but let's assume that Alice is not easily intimidated. She continues to insist. At this point, the supervisor may bring a person in the "chain of command," a man, to bear on the situation. This person might be paternal and nurturing and might attempt to mollify Alice, or he might be a stern authoritarian individual who might attempt to scare her. In any case, the subtle power plays to Hold-the-Line will continue until either Alice gives up or some effective method of silencing her is found. Clearly, Alice as an individual has very little chance of overcoming the barrage of cascading power plays which will be applied to her. It is not very likely that she can get what she wants without organizing and enlisting the power of a number of other nurses to bring about the desired end result, and when she does that, she can count on an even more intense application of power plays at increasing intensity.

Alice was able to stop wearing uniforms only after she organized eight of the twelve nurses on her service. What she wasn't able to accomplish in six months of individual struggle happened almost overnight when she moved together and decisively with her co-workers.

Obedience

For simplicity's sake, Alice was given a personality free of the internalized collusion with her oppressive circumstances. That is, she was presented as an insistent, aggressive, brave person, without a Pig Parent. But she and most other people are not that fortunate. Every time someone power plays us, a host of supportive reactions spring up from within us: we feel guilty, we feel we are being obnoxious, we are ashamed of our need, we question its validity, we hear voices that tell us to give up, we are afraid. Consequently, we stop struggling or we don't even start. All of these reactions can be summarized under the label of obedience. Obedience is an important "virtue" which parents seek to educate into their children; just another example of how childrearing is often an unwitting proving ground for the oppression which we are expected to endure throughout life.

Obedience does not operate only in obvious hierarchies such as hospitals, factories, or the armed services. It operates also in one-to-one situations where there are no apparent hierarchies or where hierarchies are mystified. For instance, consider the following:

Salesman: You ought to buy this encyclopedia.

Parent: We can't afford it.

Salesman: How much is your child's education worth?

Parent: Well, let me see, maybe we can afford it.

or:

Client: What is your position on Women's Liberation?

Therapist: Why do you want to know?

Client: I guess I really don't *need* to know...

Both of these are examples of obedience in response to power plays. The first power play is designed to create guilt ("Aren't you ashamed?"), and a disobedient reaction would be: "None of your business," or sarcastically, "No, I am not," or; "Yes, but your books would certainly not help," or; "I resent your attempts to sell your books by creating guilt in me!"

The second power play is designed to stop a request by demanding a rational explanation for it ("If you can't prove it you can't do it"). A disobedient response would be: "Answer my question, please," or; "Don't answer a question with a question," or; "Because if I don't like your position I'll quit therapy!"

Disobedience is an important human quality which I as a parent encourage in my children because it renders psychological power plays practically useless. Disobedience is an essential skill in their preparation for the adult, competitive marketplace.

Scarcity

In the competitive marketplace the value of an item is determined by the need for it and by its scarcity at any given time, rather than by any inherent or intrinsic value. Thus breathable air, even though indispensable for life and therefore extremely valuable, has no market value, because for the time being it is in abundance.

Scarcity of an item is a necessary condition for the appearance of power plays in a situation. Scarcity of food, of space, of commodities, of the things that we need or believe that we need, increases their value to us. When things become valuable because they are scarce they become the object of power plays. Conversely, anything that is freely available and which is not in scarcity will not be seen as valuable and will not be the subject of power plays.

Scarcity can be real or it can be artificial. There are certain things that we absolutely need to survive, such as food, water, air. These can be in actual short supply in which case the scarcity is real. If there is a famine in the land and there isn't enough food to go around, this is a real scarcity. However, a lot of scarcities that we experience are artificial. Artificial scarcities can be the result of the fact that someone has "cornered the market" by simply taking the item out of circulation. This is the specialty of monopoly capitalism: the creation of scarcities so that the demand goes up and large prices can be exacted. Some greedy capitalist is probably dreaming of producing and exploiting scarcity of air, right now.

Another form of artificial scarcity is the establishment of large numbers of needs in people for things that are not really necessary to their survival. For instance, while we need food to survive we do not need deodorants, cosmetics, fancy clothes, or the vast amount of consumer items which many of us work hard to make the money to be able to purchase. The creation of these needs in people results in a generalized scarcity of human energy, as more and more effort is put into obtaining the consumer items to satisfy these artificially created needs, which cannot ever really be completely satisfied.

Just as artificial scarcities can be created in commodities such as food and shelter which are essential to survival, artificial scarcities also can be created in human resources. Love, recognition and affection between people has been made scarce, through people's adherence to the rules of the stroke economy, which limits how and when people can give each other strokes. Consequently, people will power play each other over strokes, monopolize them, barter, sell, cheat and lie over them. Defeating the rules of the stroke economy produces an abundance of strokes which reduces people's tendency to power play each other over them.

The ultimate manifestation of scarcity over human resources is the scarcity over power itself. People's personal feelings of power over themselves, over all aspects of their lives, and over their destinies, have been curtailed and become scarce so that power too has become a competed-over human resource. Because we feel powerless, we seek power, for power's sake. Thus, we want to take power away from each other and we compete over nothing, just to establish or seize that false feeling of self-determination and competency which comes from dominating others. Meanwhile we let the power monopolists, our leaders and rulers, accumulate more and more power.

I believe that just as in the case of strokes, the scarcity of feelings of power is artificial, the result of a carefully controlled economy of power the rules of which we faithfully obey.

All of the artificial scarcities that we are prey to, of commodities, of love, of power, keep us off-balance, obedient, pliable, too concerned with the moment to struggle against their causes. Thus artificial scarcities benefit the ruling class in two ways: because they result in higher profits for commodities and because they keep us constantly in the red with our heads barely above water, struggling just to survive.

To defeat the scarcity of power we need to free up our personal powers. Not our powers to dominate, or be strong at the expense of others, but our powers to be strong from within ourselves and with others--the powers of survival, sex, energy, love, communication, knowledge and unity with nature, which all of us have and need to reclaim so that we may give up our acceptance of hierarchies, competition and power plays in our lives.

THE SEVEN SOURCES OF POWER

An Alternative to Authority

Tolstoi's definition of power as "the combined will of the masses vested in one person" perfectly illustrates the problem with the concept of power. Most thinking about power addresses only the kind of power that involves control of many by a few.

The subject of power was not part of my education or thinking (although certainly part of my behavior) as a psychologist or psychotherapist until about 1969. After working out the script matrix (Steiner, 1966), I began to see that the diagram was more than a visual aid representing the transactions of the three main players of the family drama: the parents and the child. The script matrix showed the parents above and the child below, thus realistically representing a dimension that goes beyond the transactional into the realm of power or the relative capacity of the players to affect each other (with the offspring at an obvious disadvantage).

I saw clearly for the first time that the young child is in the classic position of the oppressed: not totally powerless, but one-down in relation to the parents who are one-up. Because the view of the child as oppressed and overpowered is not universally accepted, some people disagreed with the unevenness I postulated in the parent-child relationship and even argued that the child often has the upper hand. At that time, my work as a therapist was less active in the area of parent-child relationships than in the relationships of the adult men and women who sought my counsel. It was while mediating in the "war of the sexes" that I saw in stark relief the one-up and one-down maneuvers people use to stay in control and to maintain or advance their position in life.

Eventually I saw beyond these control maneuvers or power plays to the variable of human power itself, a factor in human life far more central than the domination of others through power plays. Power, which I believe is best defined as *the capacity to produce change*, is a more extensive faculty than manipulation or control of others, itself an extremely limited form of power.

The Powerless and Authoritarian Scripts

One of the most common and damaging scripts, which is shared by most people and is therefore largely unnoticed and taken for granted, is the script of powerlessness and its mirror image, authoritarianism. The seeds of this script are sown through one-up/one-down transactions in childhood. The script teaches the child that power equals control and that control is the way to bring about change and to be powerful in the world. It denigrates other sources of power, reducing the multidimensional realm of human potential into a unidimensional "ladder of success" on which people line up, some above, some below, stepping on each other as they struggle to climb to the top.

The deeply ingrained banal tendency of people to line up in the competitive one-up/one-down continuum constantly has the potential of getting out of control. This occurs when the peculiar chemistry between authoritarian and powerless people produces a polarization in which those in a one-down position collude with an authoritarian person to develop a symbiosis in which power is relinquished by the many to one who willingly takes it from them. Thus the Master/Slave, Leader/Follower one-up/one-down relationships in families, schools, and workplaces can become a social tide that sweeps whole countries or continents. It is during this process that some Bystanders, unable to stand life in the Master/Slave continuum, become Resisters (Jacobs, 1987).

What makes people Resisters in a situation where authoritarian powers attempt to establish control? In my opinion, people who resist domination are powerful in their own right, independent of their place in a hierarchy. How does one acquire this kind of power? The totality of a person's power or charisma depends on the development of various sources of power such as knowledge, communication, love, passion, transcendence, grounding, and control, each of which adds to a person's capacity to have an effect in the world. The individual with a sense of power in the world responds badly to others' efforts to control. Resistance comes naturally in such situations, just as passivity is the natural consequence of powerlessness.

Seven Sources of Power

The following paragraphs outline seven sources of power which have their origin in the ancient theory of the *chakras* of Kundalini yoga: earth, sex, power, heart, throat, third eye, and cosmos. These seven power sources, of which control is but one, better represent the rainbow of options which is power than the colorless, unidimensional power based solely on control.

Grounding: The capacity to stand one's ground, to occupy the space that we are allotted, to be rooted and to be comfortable while standing, walking, or running upon the Earth is an important source of power.

Each source of power can be underdeveloped to the point of nonexistence or overdeveloped so that it crowds out other sources of power. A person deficient in grounding is physically unstable, easy to push around, easily frightened, unsteady on his or her feet. When overdeveloped along these lines, a person is stubborn, stony, unmovable, and dull.

Passion: The powers of passion and its most common manifestation, sexuality, are capable of mobilizing and invigorating people as nothing else can. The power of passion is the power to create, to recreate, to transform;

in short, to inflame with energy and produce sudden change. When underdeveloped in this area a person is unexcitable, boring, and gutless; when fixated in it, a person is driven by sexual passion and the fanaticism and violence that result when such strong drives are repressed.

Control: The capacity to aggressively manipulate the environment and people, either physically or psychologically, is the form of power that has crowded other forms of power from awareness. The extreme form of control is represented by our culture's highly valued "competitive personality," the individual who is highly competent in the use of power plays and sees every interaction as an opportunity to test who is better, who is right, who knows more, or who has more of some commodity. Underdeveloped control power produces individuals who cannot deal with their internal or external environment. They cannot control their feelings, what they say or do, what they ingest; they are generally unable to get what they want from others, and are perceived by others as losers.

Love: Knowing how good it feels, everyone wants to love and be loved, yet few people recognize love's power. The power of love is enormous; it is capable of overcoming vast obstacles. Its power binds people, thus enabling them to work together. Love has the power to nurture, to heal, and to instill hope that can propel a person out of the most dire situations. When the power of love is underdeveloped, a person is cold, incapable of experiencing loving feelings or of benefiting from one's own and other's strokes, unable to nurture and be nurtured, unable to love himself or herself. When this form of power is overdeveloped or fixated, people feel driven to excessive sacrifices and to giving themselves away to others while neglecting themselves.

Certain sources of power are stimulated or squelched by different cultures, thus giving rise to cultural scripts. In our culture, the power of love is encouraged for women and discouraged for men; in contrast, control is encouraged for men and discouraged for women. This leads to troublesome interpersonal inequalities which reinforce the one-up/one-down scripts in the population.

Communication: The power to produce in someone else the feelings and ideas that reflect one's own is the power of communication. It is essential for effective and satisfying relationships, for transmitting knowledge, and for solving problems between people.

As with the other forms of power, communication works in conjunction with other sources of power. Communication can work in combination with control, in which case the effect (browbeating) will be different from the combination, say, of communication and love or communication and sexuality. Ideally communication works in conjunction with knowledge and love so that, rather than browbeating someone in order to convince them, a person communicates to share truthfully and nurturingly; thus the recipients can compare what they already know with what is being communicated and form their own, new opinion.

Knowledge: The four sources of knowledge are science, intuition, wisdom, and vision. Scientific knowledge is derived from the methodic observation of variables and their effect on each other. Intuitive knowledge is derived, not from systematic scientific observation, but from holistically grasping the laws of nature. Wisdom or historical perspective comes from knowledge of past events either through personal experience or through the study of history. Vision is the enlightened capacity to see what lies ahead, not through extrapolation, which is a scientific form of knowledge, but through the actual perception of future events. Ordinarily, only science is considered to be a valid source of knowledge. Wisdom, intuition, and vision are increasingly discounted in that order: Wisdom is for old people, intuition for women, and vision for lunatics. Nevertheless, each of these forms of knowledge has validity and adds to a person's total power. Ignorance is the consequence of the

underdevelopment of this form of power; excessive reliance on the power of knowledge is the consequence of its overdevelopment.

Transcendence: Transcendence is derived from a person's unity with the universe. It is the power of the consciousness of one's participation in every aspect of the cosmos, such that existence is detached from any particular material form. With this understanding, one does not fear death or the future because unity with the universe cannot be disrupted by events. One can "rise above" a situation and maintain one's sense of power regardless of material conditions. Underdevelopment of transcendence causes people to see themselves as separate entities and renders them insensitive to other living beings and the environment. When overdeveloped, this power causes detachment from earthly connections, a sort of floating away which can be seen as a mystic state but is more often seen as schizophrenia.

This multilayered view of power implies that the fixation on control as a source of power is a restrictive script that renders large numbers of people powerless in the face of individuals who occupy the high positions on the control hierarchy. The greatest antidote to authoritarian power in which a few dominate the many, is for people to develop individual power in its multidimensional forms and to dedicate themselves to passing on power to as many others as can be found in a lifetime.