

TOWARDS THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND A REFLEXIVE BODY OF PRACTICE.

14. Re-conceptualising power and discovering restraining 'life scripts'.

Introduction.

In this chapter I reflect on power as a dimension to my dilemmas within the core group, then turn to the literature on power to find some answers. I gain a new perspective on power and the various ways in which this is exercised in relationships and feel more comfortable in seeing myself as exercising certain types of power. However, this does not fully resolve my dilemmas and I find a way forward by looking back into the past, discovering how certain 'life scripts' exert a restraining influence in relation to power, vulnerability and other men. The recognition of these life scripts and how they were operating for me in my work relationships enabled me to find a way of 'moving on' in pursuing more congruently than before what I believed to be important directions for the services and for my roles in them.

Power and powerlessness.

In thinking about power and my relationships with the two consultants in the setting of the Core Group, I realised that I had chosen (almost unawaresly) to see myself as operating outside the concept of power and its effects within relationships. In wondering why this was so and in reflecting at length about it, I became aware that I had implicitly seen the two consultants as exercising forms of power which amounted to 'power over'. This had especially been the case when change was in the offing which challenged their position as 'experts' or as autonomous agents.

I had come to understand that their position as consultants contained an inherent contradiction which afforded them power while at the same time rendering them vulnerable. Their vulnerability lay in their dependence on other professionals to carry out the 'treatments' which they 'prescribed'. The skills and abilities of the various professionals frequently exceeded those of the doctors in these areas. Doctors offset this by forging a role for themselves as 'gatekeepers' to the service, maintaining a sovereignty over this role by 'knowing best what works' and by delegating tasks to other professionals according to their 'diagnosis' of what was required. The professional socialisation of many 'professions allied to medicine' contained implicitly or explicitly a recognition of this 'right' or claim by doctors to superior knowledge and so individuals seldom challenge this arrangement overtly. Clinical psychology claims to have developed a body of knowledge which enables its practitioners to practice independently of doctors, but this creates a world of competition with doctors which can be equally disabling of collaborative forms of inquiry.

In my relationships with the two consultants, and with William in particular, I was seeking to avoid competition and seeking instead to find ways of fostering mutual inquiry from a position of mutual recognition and respect. Similarly, although the marketing meeting had thrown up issues of power in the face of imminent change, I had chosen to work outside an explicit understanding or acknowledgement of power issues. In that meeting I had seen the two consultants use 'power over' and I sought to bypass this in my relationship with them. I had sought to inquire on the 'vulnerable' side of the contradiction, to support William in gaining confidence in his therapeutic skills and to foster trust and collaboration in place of competition. I was both intellectually and experientially prepared to allow myself to be vulnerable in order to meet them at that 'place', but I had not expected to end up feeling so helpless, frustrated, despondent and 'powerless'. It was my lived experience of feeling powerless in relation to the two consultants' 'resistance' to change that alerted me to the possibility that I had underestimated power as an issue and that I had perhaps under conceptualised it. I had been operating as if the only form of power was 'power over' and I now found myself in the ironical position of feeling 'power-less' by virtue of bracketing it off and operating outside any explicit moment to moment understanding of power.

Although I had Torbert's (1991) analysis of power to draw on to aid in making sense of my experience of powerlessness, I did not consider it as offering a way through. Some possible reasons why this was so became clearer later and I will reflect on these as I consider alternative conceptions of power. I

needed to find if there were forms which fitted my valuing of mutuality and non-controlling interdependency. I first of all turned to literature on power and gender.

Power, gender and knowledge.

In turning to the wider literature on power I became immediately aware of the multiplicity of definitions and of the different ways it was seen as either linked to or inseparable from issues of gender and knowledge. This reading and my making sense of it is continuing and ever changing, but for the purposes of this thesis I wish only to give a summary understanding from that time. For this reason I will skip lightly over large areas in order to lead to the personal position I arrived at for the purposes of resolving my dilemmas within my relationships at work.

Some writers see power as a separate entity, characteristic or attribute which individuals or social groups possess with which to influence outcomes in the field of human affairs. Others, writing explicitly from a post-modern perspective, see power as inseparable from gender, knowledge and 'subjectivity'. The latter come mostly from within a critical sociology and largely share the view that power and gender are inherent in social structures and relationships. In other words, power and gender are social products, constituted and lived through language and other social practices, and experienced differently according to place in history, class, sex, race/culture and so on. (e.g. Radtke and Stam 1994). Within this view there is no one universal experience of power or gender.

This latter view of power and gender sees the more traditional views (defined as characteristics or attributes possessed by persons) as essentialist, reflecting a foundational reality or essence outside our social construction of 'it'. Much writing on power in this post-modern vein draws upon the work of Foucault on power and knowledge. Foucault (1980) maintains that power and knowledge directly imply each other. There is no power relation independent of some body of knowledge, nor is there a body of knowledge which does not presuppose and constitute at the same time a set of power relations. Furthermore, he sees power in relational terms, as not only the possession of individuals but as a process occurring between individuals within relationships.

"Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate through its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application." (p98)
(cited in Radtke and Stam, ibid, p4)

While some feminists argue that this approach is blind to the experiences of women, others have used it to theorise about gender relations. Kerfoot and Knights (1994) are such an example. They wish to depart from a 'power-over' view implicit in much theorising about women's unequal social position. This view of power as the property of some to the exclusion of others, and beyond the individual, "sets up a dichotomous relationship between the individual and the social world, between powerful men and powerless women as largely internally undifferentiated categories, and imputes passivity to all women." (p70)

They see Foucault's alternative theorisation of power as providing a point of departure. Power in his conceptualisation exists only in its exercise and operates through the production of particular knowledges - around discourses of gender and sexuality, pleasure and morality, sanity and madness, and the law as examples. Within this view, power is in reciprocal relationship to subjectivity, where subjectivity can be defined as "individual self-consciousness inscribed in particular ideals of behaviour surrounding categories of persons, objects, practises or institutions. Subjectivity is constituted through the exercise of power within which conceptions of personal identity, gender and sexuality come to be generated." (p70). From here they view individuals as capable of actively positioning themselves within, or of finding their own location amongst, competing discourses, rather than only being passively positioned by them. Therefore they see gendered subjectivities as fractured, historically shifting, constantly unstable, and potentially multiple.

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(Methodologically speaking, this leads them to advocate an examination of local practices and conditions because they will contain and reflect wider power relations, and will be more easily amenable to empirical investigation.)

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Implications of an alternative perspective on power.

This view was interesting to me on several counts. Firstly, it occurred to me that my implicit constructing of the consultants as capable of exercising 'power-over' in the face of change positioned me as potentially 'power-less' in relation to them. This was particularly true in my relationship with William where I had not conceptualised the power aspects of relationship I attempted to develop in alternative ways. This failure had rendered me susceptible to becoming 'power-less'.

Secondly, there must be multiple forms of power available to exercise within the concept of subjectivity as being historically shifting, continually unstable, potentially multiple and gendered. If so, then this may help me identify alternative forms of power, so that I am not positioned and do not position myself as being only within 'power-over' relationships. I needed to identify these.

Thirdly, I considered the implications of moving away from seeing the consultants as possessing power in relation to my not-possessing power, towards seeing us as transacting with each other within a wider set of social practices which were constituted and defined by discourses around what forms of knowledge were publicly privileged within mental health services. This gave rise to the question 'how do individuals and groups 'position' themselves differently among alternative discourses without explicit dialogue, without collaborative inquiry?' I had attempted such a venture and had become 'stuck'. Was this because we had not been able to achieve collaborative inquiry? If so, was that because we were being 'positioned' by discourses about what constituted acceptable forms of relationships and admissible knowledge both as men and as mental health professionals (doctors and psychologists). Did these discourses exclude differing forms of being men and professionals, silencing and submerging the experiences of being vulnerable, open to others and 'not knowing'. Clearly yes - my own experiences earlier in the research were testament to this. So how could I continue to relate to these men who perhaps had not made that particular journey, without being excluded by their continued reliance on mystery-mastery strategies in the face of uncertainty, vulnerability and change?

Fourthly, within this analysis, I began to see how my reading of Torbert's (1991) conceptualisation of power had not helped me out of this position. Rawl's theory of justice upon which he based his transformative power of balance contained many unexamined assumptions. It was based on the notion of a society modelled on the family in which the parents coached the children in their development of a moral and ethical world view. There was no mention by Torbert about the assumptions behind 'family' and 'moral development'. Connell (1994) criticises classical theories of the state and models of liberal power as being gender-blind and hence likely to reflect patriarchal world views. Citizens are unsexed in such theories and are abstracted from social context. He cites Pateman (1988) who argues that the fraternal 'social contract' of Rousseau and later liberalism is based on an implicit sexual contract requiring the subordination of women. He also cites Kearn (1984) who specifically critiques Rawl's theory of justice as embodying a social contract implicitly between men, presumed to be heads of families and in charge of wives and children (and therefore, according to my developing understanding, a patriarchal arrangement which does not admit of women's experience nor of alternative forms of power and masculinity for men).

Theories of moral development have also been challenged as being gender-blind. For example, Gilligan (1982) and Belenky et al (1986) have contested mainstream theories as excluding the voices of women. Their own works have shown that women tend to make moral decisions and think about themselves and the world in terms different to those of men. Gilligan found that women tended to make moral decisions based on notions of responsibility and care for the actual others involved in their lives, whereas men tended to appeal to notions of rights based on abstract and generalised theories of justice. Belenky et al found that women's epistemologies and catalysts for development were by and large

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different from those found among studies on male development, although they themselves studied only women. The extent to which these 'different ways of knowing' are gendered and sex-linked is still a matter for debate.

It is not clear from Torbert's work the extent to which the theories of development upon which he based his developmental model of leadership address the implications of gender difference. In my reading of his work the presence of the communion tradition remain implicit and muted and so I saw his strategies for action inquiry more aligned with the agentic. I will return to Torbert's model of power later in this chapter.

I next turned to contemporary 'men's studies' to look for answers to my questions. Perhaps this emerging domain of work could provide me with non-oppressive forms of power which would serve the interests of both the masculine and the feminine, and agency and communion, as I attempted to live them. I found little of direct relevance to forms of power. Much of this area is again within a critical sociological tradition and left me wondering how I could affect change at the level of individual experience.

Bach (1993) critiques men's studies and observes that much of the literature falls into either of two camps. On the one hand, there is sociological analysis which seeks to understand how dominant forms of masculinity are produced and institutionalised through a variety of social practices and discourses. Such institutionalised standpoints legitimise and privilege certain experiences, knowledge and practises over others. These standpoints, according to this analysis, exclude and dominate women and those men whose masculinities do not conform to the institutionalised standards.

On the other hand, there is a type of analysis, including both sociological (e.g. Connell, 1987) and more 'popular' individual/psychological (e.g. Keen, 1992) which seeks to uncover alternative forms of masculinity through inquiry into men's lived experience. Within this analysis, self-transformation occurs through men taking up alternative standpoints on masculinity which organise their experience and which provide non-oppressive forms of being and living. Bach identifies a dilemma between the two types of analysis. The individual is either 'overly determined' and without choice, or alternatively is 'unfettered' in a choice of alternative 'selves'. Neither alone are justifiable as a basis for transformation.

Bach maps out an inter-subjective theory of self which transcends these two polarities, interesting to me in itself and an area I am still pondering upon, but not germane to my immediate purpose. I note it here because it articulated some of my unease at the popular men's studies literature I alluded to earlier in looking for an analysis of gender.

French (1994) sees power as being conceptualised as either 'power over' (dominance) or 'power to' (ability). It was the latter I was seeking to understand more and it was in the organisational literature where I found two sources which more readily met my needs.

Power in organisations - individual and relational.

Power and conflicts of interest.

The first source I will take from is that of Morgan (1986). He takes a pluralistic look at organisations, considering the construct of organisation as a set of images which offer a range of perspectives or vantage points according to whichever 'image' is used. One of the images or metaphors which he uses to examine organisations is that of 'organisation as government', seeing it as offering a means of unravelling the politics of day-to-day life within . He suggests that the term 'political' in its original conception stemmed from the view that where interests are divergent, society should provide a means of allowing individuals to reconcile their differences through consultation and negotiation, as in Aristotle's use of the term. Morgan therefore adopts the term 'political' to acknowledge the interplay of competing interests which occurs in an organisation, and the term 'government' to acknowledge that attempts are made to create order and direction among these competing interests. By using these perspectives he believes that important qualities of organisation can be grasped which are often overlooked or ignored.

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It is within the political metaphor that Morgan addresses the issue of power. He adopts the view that "Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when, and how." (p158). He acknowledges the problematic nature of the concept of power with its many definitions, ranging from an entity or characteristic someone possesses, to a property of a social relationship where individuals are carriers and express some more fundamental and deep structures within our social organisation. His essential basis for understanding power is that it has a great deal to do with asymmetrical patterns of dependence whereby one person or group becomes dependent on another in an unbalanced way, and also to do with an ability to define realities in such a way as to lead others to perceive and enact relations in a particular way.

Morgan draws on a range of different conceptions of power in order to create an analytical framework to help understand and identify the ways in which organisational members can exert their influence. He lists a series of 'sources' of power which he sees as a useful set of tools with which to decode dynamics of organisational life. He sees this list as incomplete, but nonetheless giving individuals a choice, if they so wish, to orient themselves in a politicised way. My interest in this list of 'sources' of power was that it made available to me descriptions of power and power relationships which met my experience, which mapped onto my developing analysis of power, and which potentially served my understandings of agency and communion.

I will summarise a description of each item in Morgan's list, then afterwards comment further on their implications for me. I note here that within each of his descriptions there are dimensions of both 'power over' and 'power to'. In most, he makes these explicit, and where he does not make explicit the facilitative or 'power to' dimension I will add my own speculations in brackets.

Morgan's (1986) list of 'sources' of power is as follows.

- *Formal Authority*. A form of legitimised power that is respected and acknowledged by those with whom one interacts. It can arise through personal charisma, tradition, or the rule of law. Most typically in organisations this form of power is bureaucratic and is afforded through the position one holds with its associated rights and obligations.
- *Control of scarce resources*. Resources include money, materials, personnel, skills, access to technology, and access to support from customers and the wider community. Scarcity and dependence are the keys to the exercise of this type of power. [Correspondingly, I see the sharing of scarce resources and the fostering of mutually enhancing interdependence as a facilitative form of exercising power]
- *Use of organisational structures, rules, and regulations*. These can be viewed as either aids to task performance, or alternatively as products and reflections of a struggle for political control. Structures, rules and regulations can be seen as defining contested terrains which are forever being negotiated, preserved or changed.
- *Control of decision processes*. Morgan sees three elements of decision making as being: decision *premises* in the form of vocabularies, structures of communication, attitudes, beliefs, rules and procedures; decision *processes*, referring to the 'how, when, where and with who' of decision making; and decision *issues and objectives*, referring to the various constraints, alternatives, values and outcomes.

Power or control can be exercised by the extent to which individuals or groups can shape these three elements, some of which are more invisible or implicit than others.

[I see that a facilitative power can be exercised by inquiring into these elements and holding them up explicitly for examination and negotiation].

- *Control of knowledge and information*. The structuring of attention to issues which define 'realities' for decision making by controlling the availability of

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/d_quinlan.html

knowledge and information. Can also be use of 'expert' knowledge to weave patterns of dependency.

[Alternatively, in my view, 'expert' knowledge can be used to weave patterns of mutually enhancing inter-dependence and relative autonomy.]

- *Control of boundaries.* Boundary here is used to refer to the interface between different elements of an organisation. By monitoring and controlling boundary transactions, an individual can monitor developments within and without the organisation and initiate timely interventions, and can interpret what is happening and influence the definition of organisational realities. Such boundary management can be used to either integrate or isolate.
- *Ability to cope with uncertainty.* An ability to deal with unpredictable or discontinuous situations which have considerable implications for all or part of the organisation. These can be environmental or operational. Power or influence is afforded by the degree to which the individual/s have requisite skills and are central to the operations. Such power can be preserved by ensuring uncertainties continue.
- *Control of technology.* This can be overt or covert, facilitative or obstructive.
- *Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of 'informal organisations'* Built around an identity of interests or mutually beneficial exchange. Membership of interlocking informal networks allow the exercise of interpersonal influence which can shape attitudes and values. The building of these can incorporate both 'friends' as well as 'enemies' in the interests of reaching beyond immediate issues to build for the future. These processes can remain highly informal and to a degree, invisible. They can also be institutionalised, such as through professional associations, or can be "power behind the throne" arrangements.
- *Control of counterorganisations.* The exercise of a countervailing power when one is not part of the 'establishment', through formation of alternatives such as: trades unions, consumers associations, lobby groups and so on.

[In my experience in health care, the inclusion of service users groups in the defining and setting of quality standards can have the effect of providing alternative frames to the 'insider' views of the professionals.]

- *symbolism and the management of meaning.* The shaping or defining of realities so that members act in ways which further the individual's or the organisation's interests. Authoritarian leaders impose, whereas democratic leaders derive through careful listening and dialogue. This form of power can be exercised through use of imagery, theatre, language, symbols, stories, ceremonies, rituals. Use of gamesmanship is recognised, where individuals may use high profile "brawling" or subtle "fox-like" tactics to shape key impressions.
- *Gender and the management of gender relations.* Includes both the open forms of discrimination and harassment as well as the less visible assumptions underlying the culture of an organisation which privilege male values at the exclusion of the female. The individual is inevitably part of a set of power relations which shape and are shaped by gender realities, and hence must find a strategy for countermanding them. The gender biases are to be seen in the language, rituals, myths, stories and other modes of symbolism shaping the organisation's culture.
- *Structural factors that define the stage of action.* This dimension is founded on the view that people are agents or carriers of power relations embedded in the wider structure of society. Thus whichever form of power an individual or group

exercises, it can only do so to the extent it is meaningful in a wider ecology. For example, the factory worker's power to slow production is ultimately sourced by the structure of productive activity which underpins the organisation and society. This view requires an historical perspective which understands the logic of change shaping the social epoch in which people are living. It is this multiple structuring of experience which gives rise to pluralist forms of power.

[This conceptualisation allows for multiple framings of events and hence greater 'degrees of freedom' about how one can participate in order to achieve transformative relationships.]

- *The power one already has.* This is based on the principle that "power is a route to power" and Morgan sees it as having three forms: an 'investment' metaphor in which a favour given can be drawn upon at a later date; a 'honey-pot' metaphor in which the presence of power attracts and sustains people who wish to feed off that power, and in so doing further the power of the holder; and an 'empowering' metaphor in the form of 'success breeds success', where a positive feedback loop can be created when an individual experiences progress or success and is energised to achieve further. Morgan sees this latter form as a transformative power.

Morgan's theorising about power (as opposed to his descriptions) is more implicit than explicit and I had several problems with his descriptions which I will briefly describe and attempt to resolve. A systemic perspective does not view any one element of a system as having 'control over' any other element as the elements are linked to each other by patterns of mutual interaction and interdependence. The use of the word 'control' by Morgan connotes a linear causality. However, at the level of individual experience I allow that I can feel 'controlled' at any one moment. The word 'influence' would better allow for the notion of circular causality embodied in a systems perspective. Any use of the word 'control' would be best prefixed with an imagined 'as if'. Similarly, the language Morgan uses sometimes connotes power as an essence to be wielded unilaterally. However, I borrow from Foucault to imagine these form of power as both exercised by and exercising of individuals and groups.

Finally, I see that some of these sources of power can either be used to create hierarchies of influence, or alternatively non-hierarchical and mutually enhancing interdependencies - perhaps both/and according to the constructor/s and their purposes.

My second source came from Marshall (1984) and she is more purposeful about making explicit the underlying value system by which she clusters various sources of power together.

Power which serves agency and communion.

Marshall (1984) draws upon a pool of sources to develop a mutli-dimensional model of power which serves her theorising on gender, agency and communion in offering alternatives for women managers in organisations. She seeks to move away from conceptions of power which are competitive, a matter of individual ownership, motivated toward control and expressed through doing. Instead she seeks conceptions which are communion based and which "can be cooperative, based in joint ownership, directed towards influence and expressed in individual's quality of being" (p.108). The theme of power was 'fine print' to me in my earlier readings of agency and communion, and at this point became 'bold print' when I considered my above discomforts with Morgan's (1986) list of 'sources' of power.

Marshall's model has four dimensions which map onto characteristics of both traditions of agency and communion. While there are similarities between some of her factors and those of Morgan's, Marshall is more explicit in how she groups them. These four dimensions of power are as follows:

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/d_quinlan.html

- *Over others.* This dimension relies on traditional notion of power as a personal resource with which to influence decision-making in one's own interests. It informs relationships which are essentially asymmetrical. It includes: coercion; reward; ability to access organisational rewards and punishments for others; power arising from formal position and legitimate authority; expert knowledge; personal charisma.
- *Structural factors.* In this dimension the individual's power arises from their position in the organisation, where the value placed on this form of power is dependent on the wider values within the organisation. It includes: centrality to organisational tasks; handling uncertainty and risk; relative numbers within group membership; visibility; and power through providing new perspectives.
- *Through/with others.* This dimension reflects power as arising by and through relationships which are essentially symmetrical. It includes: informal networks; politics; coaching/mentor relationships; and being attentive to wider community issues.
- *Personal power.* A dimension which addresses individual aspects of power which reflect a range of bases of independence of being and doing. It includes: competence; wholeness; self-esteem; autonomy; definitional sensitivity and capability; stamina and resilience; change and regeneration.

Unlike Morgan, Marshall seeks to make explicit her views on power as relational, even though traditional views such as the 'over others' dimension encourages spurious notions of independence. Furthermore, she seeks forms of power in which symmetry is achievable in relationships and avoids assigning credits, such as in her third 'through/with others' dimension. Her fourth 'personal' dimension is intended to further the notion of self-esteem as being grounded in self-validation rather than in ease in public relationships.

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Re-positioning myself in the concept of 'power'.

I do not wish to look at each potential source of power in detail and consider the degree to which they were available to me within my network of work relationships. What was important to me was that I recognised them all as being present in my setting and myself as having participated in and as exercising many of them. This recognition had the effect of positioning me well outside the 'power over' relationship with doctors. It was possible to see this aspect as being present, but as being alongside many other sources and forms. I had access to many and it shifted my view of being powerless in the face of the doctors reluctance to collaborate in making those changes which would bring us in closer relationship with other departments and agencies. I felt I had some 'flesh on the bones' of power as a set of concepts which allowed me to see possibilities for disengaging from the current patterns of relationship within the core group. I had a richer conceptualisation of power which mapped onto my experience and which fitted with my developing set of theoretical frameworks and values.

Having said this, there were several other implications which arose for me in considering this array of sources and forms. Firstly I could see that at times I may have vacated legitimate authority by not taking charge of psychological treatments in an agentic fashion, which may have confused others who were initially requiring clear and unambiguous directions. This effect for them may not have been facilitating of growth and change. In speculating on the nature of power, Morgan (1986) sees it as having a "great deal to do with asymmetrical patterns of dependence whereby an individual or unit becomes dependent on another in an unbalanced way" (p185). It was exactly this conception of power with which I was most uncomfortable and I sought at all times to avoid "unbalanced" dependency in relationships. I saw this unease with asymmetrical dependency as being a life-long dimension in my view of the world, neither wishing to fuel dependence in others nor to become 'tied down' myself by such dependency. However, the contradiction about achieving more symmetrical relationships which

involved 'balanced interdependency' is that one may need to start from an original position of temporary asymmetry and dependence in order to move towards the former.

A second implication was that I was able to see a little more clearly how Torbert's (1991) concept of a transforming power of balance had not spoken to me at this time, despite its intentions to seek mutuality. I had distanced myself from his developmental model of leadership as I felt it located me as separate-from rather than connected-with the people with whom I worked, and in a hierarchical arrangement rather than in a nested world of possibilities. Yet it is only at the Strategist Stage of development that Torbert begins to describe how his transforming power is exercised: " ... a person exercising transforming power invites mutuality - a mutual exercise of power guided by living awareness of what is currently at stake for the particular systems participating in the transformation." (Torbert, 1991, p56)

He goes on to say that such power cannot be insolently or unilaterally wielded, instead it requires a continual, humble effort to be aware of the moment in all its fullness, transcending the interests, emotional preferences and theories of all those involved. At moments of potential transformation, Torbert sees transforming power as actively seeking challenge and contradiction because the person seeking to exercise such power is relating to systems that do not initially share an understanding about what is at stake. Its intent is to "empower all who come within its radius of influence, including those who oppose its influence" (p58). Because it seeks challenges and tests feedback for validity, and defers to negative feedback rather than discounting it, it empowers "opponents" as well. The more others are empowered and the closer they come to exercising transforming power themselves, the more nearly mutual occasions of influence become, asserts Torbert.

Despite the spirit of its intent to seek mutuality, I see the language Torbert uses to describe transforming power as being located in the agentic tradition, and as implicitly seeing power as an entity to be used. There is little room in his concept of transforming power for relational concepts which support the work of communion. Although I see Torbert as working towards the fostering of traditions of communion through use of agentic strategies, the spelling out of such a tradition is missing, or at best implicit. It was this which was missing for me in my work with William and the core group.

A third implication was that I could see many ways in which power could serve both the agentic and the communion traditions. Whereas I had previously located myself experientially outside notions of power, now I was able to locate myself within in ways which were congruent with my intentions. I was particularly taken with 'boundary management' as an exercising of power as I sought to occupy that position frequently in the interests of supporting autonomy and interdependence. Similarly, I saw that dimension of power relating to the provision of new or alternative frames and perspectives as underpinning much of my work.

As a result of these considerations I felt freer to consider alternative ways of working within the department. I did not need to feel so tightly bound in with the doctors, there were many areas in which I could continue to practice and I had achieved considerable autonomy in how I could pursue this. Furthermore, there were developments with the ICU which I could pursue without William, although I would prefer he worked with me. I felt I understood in a more tangible and grounded way what Foucault (1984) meant:

"If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression." (p61)

So, given this, why was it that I still continued to feel 'caught' and apprehensive about disengaging from trying to bring the doctors with me and getting on with what I knew was possible. It is the finding a way through this dilemma to which I now turn.

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/d_quinlan.html

'Dissolving the men dilemma'.

Having developed a more extended and deepened analysis of my experience in terms of both gender and power, I felt more able to consider alternatives to the current situation in which I felt 'pulled' back into increasingly rigid patterns of relationship, invited to join the doctors in 'more of the same'. Nonetheless, I still felt perplexed about a reluctance and a tension I experienced in relation to clarifying the boundaries around the work of the psychologists and moving onwards with the ICU development in the face of the two consultant's ambivalence and hostility. I came to understand how this reluctance and tension was informed by my own ambivalence about relationships with men which expressed itself in a 'life script' I had been carrying since childhood.

Dialogues about relationship dilemmas.

I will present here two dialogues about relationship dilemmas which moved me towards resolving my tensions by helping me gain a different perspective on my relationships with men. The first is an 'internal' dialogue within myself, between a 'self from the past' and a 'self from the present'.

- An 'internal' dialogue.

One evening, when writing in my reflective diary about my dilemmas, the only conclusion I could reach was: "I need to exercise agency here." In contemplating how, the question arose for me: "What would happen if I took charge of Psychological Treatments?"

I then immediately wrote my answers spontaneously, putting thoughts down uncensored as they came to awareness. I have listed them as follows, with another voice in brackets giving a spontaneous counterpoint reflection to each answer as it arose.

- "I might get overwhelmed with referrals (So, you can't say no or negotiate?)
- I might get isolated and left out of the decision making (So, important decisions are made now with you fully involved?)
- I might succeed and get stuck with it and get possessed by it (So, you can't take control, negotiate, set limits, disengage when you need to?)
- I might fail (This is not a strong possibility and therefore not one you are particularly worried about!)
- I might get into conflict with powerful people who are also vulnerable (You have no right to do this, they might fall apart and that will be terrible for them and represent a loss of face. It will be your responsibility to put them together, and in so doing get closer/more involved than you would want/feel comfortable with)

This rings bells with remembered feelings from childhood within my family.

- Couldn't get close to father, a distant man. And if I did, mother might feel rejected and fall apart and I might lose her and be abandoned.
- Couldn't challenge father. He might fall apart. As a child I saw him as a wounded, vulnerable man. Remember looking with overwhelming sadness and sense of loss at his photos of youth and war time, which I could not explain. If I did challenge my father I would win and that would bind me even closer to mother who might possess me.
- Couldn't challenge mother. She would reject me. She used rejection as punishment, and said to me several times when I reached adulthood how sensitive I was to her rejection and that it was the most effective punishment she had with me.

- I felt I couldn't succeed. I would feel guilty as it would highlight sister's lack of success due to her disability (very limited partial sight). I felt I ought to be helping her by including her in my social life but I was having difficulty enough on my own without her as 'socially unacceptable burden'. This is still painful as I feel guilty about having seen her that way and about not doing better in helping her. Even though at that time I did not understand fully the implications of a girl coming from an institution at age 13 to live at home and go to a normal school. All I knew was that I felt embarrassed by her physical and social awkwardness, her thick glasses.
- Paradoxically if I succeeded I would have to take care of her and my mother for ever. My mother would bind even closer to me around success."

This was a healing and revelatory internal dialogue. This 'story' was one I knew well, but had never 'looked it in the face' by verbalising it in this way in writing, a process which gave the knowledge a much more detailed presence and a shape than previously, and one which resonated with my current situation. I could now see that in a current relationship context, where I saw similar issues of conflict, potential separation, vulnerability and dependence, a 'script' I had been carrying from childhood had been activated and was operating in such a way as to constrain me from extricating myself. The effects of this script under these conditions had been to influence me towards minimising differences between individuals (myself included), avoiding confrontation, and 'working hard' to solve both implicit and explicit conflict. It was not that such actions were necessarily 'bad', but when continued past a certain point they carried a personal emotional cost and could paradoxically contribute to the maintenance of existing patterns of relationship, preventing any change to another level or order. In the past I had called this my 'happy families' script, but without knowing in such detail about its origins.

I recognised too that this script had been challenged in my personal life by more recent adult experiences within my family of origin. In that arena of my life, 'things had moved on' and new patterns of relationship had emerged in which there was less dependence and asymmetry, more acceptance of difference, and clearer recognition of boundaries, rights and responsibilities. I knew therefore that 'things could move on' in the work arena, now that I was aware of how this script was operating for me. I was capable of challenging the current arrangement as I saw it. This awareness was deepened by a second, 'external', dialogue several days later.

- An 'external' dialogue.

I brought the above reflections into a dialogue with Jan in the context of asking her to read some of the stories I had written about my professional experiences earlier in NZ (I have not included them in this thesis). This conversation between us added further richness to my understanding of my relationships with men. I reconstructed the conversation from memory immediately afterwards and checked with Jan that she felt it was an adequate representation of the discussion as she recalled it. I have included it here as part of my sense-making of the 'men' dilemma.

Jan. "You know, in all these stories there is another man in the centre of them. You have always had men in your work life with whom you develop a close relationship."

Me. "Yes, although I had not always seen it as 'close'. With some of the men it felt difficult to get close and it seemed we were in more of a struggle together. Though I suppose that is a form of closeness. "

Jan went through each of these men in turn and asked how I felt about them when working with them.

Jan. "In fact, you have been closer to men than you have to women."

Me. "That's interesting, because earlier in my life it was the reverse case."

Jan. "And there is a pattern with all these relationships. They are all men who are powerful and yet often muddled about who they are and how they operate."

Me. "I have been drawn to them all in some way. I think I have been very interested in their power, although with quite a few I have ended up feeling protective and nurturing of them. Take F for example. He inspired strong reactions in people, both ways and at times I certainly got very frustrated and occasionally angry with him, especially when he would consult people about an issue and then half way through discussions I would realise that he had made a decision days ago, and had probably even acted on it by now. The 'consultation' was a way of softening people up for what was to come. But I seldom confronted him head on about it because at some level I just accepted that was how F was. I remember some amazingly tense scenarios, with awful conflict between him and certain staff members, and he would behave as if it wasn't happening, then do something later behind the scenes which solved the immediate conflict but never changed the nature of the relationship. The same thing would erupt again six months later. I was forever reframing him for people who wanted to confront him head-on. My approach with him was always to listen and then tell him how I saw things. Maybe that was oblique or even dishonest, but I had the feeling that we both knew what was happening and he appreciated not losing face that way."

Jan. "As I see it, these men have not always been sure what to make of you." (she illustrates with examples about comments they have made or how they have behaved towards me.)

Me. "I wonder if that is because with each of them I get to a certain point where I feel I can't get any closer without losing my authenticity. In many of those examples I end up feeling: 'This man obviously would like a closer relationship, but I am not prepared to do so because I would feel I have to compromise who I am. He does not see the world as I do, we have different values.' I do not let them see any further who I am. I don't want to lead them into thinking we are the same or that I am willing to go along with how they want to practice. On the other hand I don't want to highlight the differences to the point where we can't work together. Sometimes it is a case of me deciding 'I have to work with this person and if we do not get along at a certain level and find things in common, then my job will be very hard to do.' But it is not as mercenary as it sounds because I find it easy to discover things to appreciate or like and admire, and often I am also curious about them as people if they are charismatic or powerful. Hmm, I wonder if I use their power in a vicarious way, not owning power for myself but 'hide behind their throne' as it were."

Jan. "What I see you doing is exploring their power, then finding it is invisible. You then realise you can be more powerful than them."

Me. "That sounds a bit grand but it feels true in some cases. Then I back off, not wanting to hurt them."

Jan. "Or destroy them."

Me. "God, just like my relationship with my father. I have very early memories of seeing my father as vulnerable and needing nurturing. I had some deeply felt sense of sorrow and loneliness about him, although I couldn't articulate it in that way in those days. But I had recurring dreams about him in that way as a child. I do not know whether I gained that view from some of my mother's stories about him, he certainly never talked about himself in any revealing way (I detour to talk about what I learned through her of his past). Although, as I saw it then, my mother was more inclined to be angry and critical towards him than compassionate. I have a very vivid memory of the only time he smacked me as punishment for something I had done. I remember deciding how I was going to react to this, and decided I had better cry because if I did not then he would look humiliated. I desperately did not want him to look foolish, which in fact I thought he was being because I was very contrite about what I had done and didn't think I needed punishing to point out my error. I also

remember thinking: 'He is showing some attention towards me as a father, and I like that, so I will cooperate by responding as I am meant to.'

Yes, I believed I had the power to 'destroy' him. Hmm, I wonder if my relationships with men continually mirror this first relationship. All very Oedipal, or is it more mythological, a case of 'wounded by father absence." (laughing)

Jan. "Well, if it's Oedipal, then its very important not to kill off father because you are then left with mother to care for and can never get on with your life."

Me. "Absolutely, and in all these jobs if I 'destroyed' these men, in other words was more successful than they, I would have been left with the organisation to look after. And in all these cases I did not want to remain with it on a long term basis, in a 'marriage'. So maybe this is all reducible to an 'unresolved Oedipus complex' after all."

Jan. "Or perhaps that was who you were as a person even then, and that is why you picked up on your father's pain."

Me. "That is something that connects all these men. They were wounded in some way, but I recognise now they all had qualities of the feminine which I was drawn to and that was part of their charisma."

Jan. "Yes, but they would not acknowledge this about themselves and hence the feminine was never given a chance to heal the wounds."

Me. "You know, that was something different about entering this job. I did not want to repeat the pattern of short involvement and move on. I wanted to stay around for a while, feel like this is where I belong and see things through to later stages of development. And isn't it interesting, this time around I did take the risk and 'killed off' the charismatic and powerful wounded man. And do you know, in the middle of our confrontation he offered to stand down and for me to take over? I remember part of me being curious at the time at how I responded. I felt completely neutral. I said: "If I thought you really believed that it would be the best course for the department, then I would consider it seriously. But if you are asking me would I like to, then no." "

Jan. "But he survived."

Me. "Yes. I did not feel any responsibility for his pain, although I felt for him that he was in pain, he was deeply distressed, tearful and self deprecating . Although later he was not willing to discuss things in any depth and he slipped into 'you are the one with the problem'. We had several stand up rows and yelled at each other, then retreated. And our relationship has changed. I felt we would repeat the same pattern if I pursued and so I backed off. I decided it was probably I who had unrealistic expectations about how we could work together. Look what happens when you push things past their usual boundaries.

But what's also interesting is that now I am in a position in my life, and I feel the research has brought me to this point, where I am having to face up to the nature of power for myself and how I use it. Very interesting!"

Implications for 'moving on'.

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The immediate implications of these dialogues was that I felt an easing of the tension I had been carrying about the relationship impasse 'upstairs' in the Core Group. I felt a 'knot' had been 'untied'. I now understood my contribution to the bind I had been participating in, whereby the more I (and others) wished to move towards a more collaborative working relationship with other groups and departments outside our own, the more unstable things seemed to become within our department. And, correspondingly, the more I attended to that instability by 'working hard' to bring the different participants 'on-board' with the possibilities for change, the more remote those possibilities seemed to become. And the more remote the possibilities, the more I alternated between, on the one hand, 'working hard' and on the other giving up in despair in the face of seeming 'resistance'. This pattern of 'instability' was in fact becoming increasingly more stable over time the more we all continued to participate in it.

With my new understanding about my own contributions to this impasse, through the recognition of the role my life script had been playing and through re-positioning myself within the concept of power, the following reflections occurred to me. Firstly, I recognised that I no longer needed the affirmation, permission or support of the two consultants to 'move on' in developing the ICU. Nor did I need it in taking authority to develop psychological treatments to the next stage which was to collaborate with other groups across the Trust who were working with similar problems. Whilst it would be desirable to have their affirmation and support, it was not necessary. If I risked unresolvable conflict and the possibility of separation and dissolution of the core group and the department as we knew it, then so be it. Perhaps it was needed in order for change to occur and I could now countenance this risk emotionally as well as intellectually. I saw more clearly than before how I had been playing 'happy families' and that the survival of all the members was not dependent on us conforming to my notion of what constituted a 'happy family' arrangement.

With this realisation came a sense of sadness at the possibility of the things I had worked hard for not coming to fruition. But on the other hand I could appreciate more fully that each of us as individuals has to make our own journey at our own pace. My hopes of offering William an alternative perspective about collaborative forms of practice had to be tempered with the realisation that his relationships with his medical colleagues both created and were created by a different set of contexts for experiencing and understanding the world. The consultants' professional world was structured by different sets of practices and discourses and by my offering my world views in contrast I may have been contributing unhelpfully to William's sense of dissonance in finding his own personally authentic form of practice. If I took initiatives from this point on which were congruent with my own sense of values and purposes, then I had to leave it to both William and Stewart to choose whether or not they supported or followed. What was clear to me was that I needed to take the initiative myself in order to practice authentically and avoid continuing to pay the personal and professional costs incurred to date. My unspoken sense of guilt at leaving others behind seemed redundant now.

The second implication arising from my new perspectives was that I no longer felt it necessary to mask my own competence or 'power' in relation to the two consultants. In Stewart's case I could risk the possibility of criticism and rejection, and in William's case I knew that he would 'survive' without my continued attempts at coaching and supporting should our relationship change further. My more developed and multi-dimensional conceptualisation of power and my new understanding of my own sensitivity to other men's vulnerabilities allowed me to have greater choice about how I participated in the Core Group. I recognised that I was less dependent on the consultants than I had implicitly assumed to date. It was with sadness that I accepted that I was not central to the consultant's world and they were not central to mine. But, all parties would 'survive' any changes in patterns of relationship.

'Moving on' in practice.

At this point I wish to give only a very brief account of the initiatives I took as a result of my reflections above. The initiatives were small but significant and allowed me to move away from the 'stuckness' I felt and to contribute more actively to developing new directions in services.

My first initiative was to begin a survey of the need for psychological treatments across all the community and outpatient services delivered to the local district. I wanted a clearer picture of the types of problems being presented in order to assess what psychological skills, knowledge and competencies were needed to effectively work with those asking for help. My reading of the situation was that those

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clients who required longer term work presented with problems no different from those worked with in other parts of the Trust. For example, many clients revealed a history of childhood sexual abuse and were increasingly asking for assistance in dealing with the adverse consequences which had trailed them into their adult lives. Clients presenting with eating disorders were another example. Our department could not meet all the treatment needs alone, but in collaboration with other workers and groups from across the Trust, we could achieve an 'economies of scale' in sharing resources which could be mutually beneficial for all concerned. To initiate this survey I began discussions with the Community Team and began planning processes for collecting this data.

In parallel to this was a second development in the Core Group in relation to the ICU which by now was taking concrete shape with recruitment of staff and the refurbishing of a building. The initiative I took was small, but to me led to the most significant changes. I announced in the Core Group that, despite their reservations about our department having taken on the ICU and despite their doubts about whether they would continue to support it, I had personally committed myself to its development. From now on I would be formally assigning three out of ten sessions per week of my time to it. Furthermore, I wished to employ more psychology time within the department to support my work with complex cases while I was absent. There was silence and I remember clearly that Stewart looked stunned and William looked awkward and uncomfortable. However there was no rebuffing of my statement and only minimal discussion of the implications of this as I presented how I would be managing the change. I had broached this subject on a number of occasions so the content of my announcement was not new. It was my making the announcement assertively and assuming they would support it which was new.

Although the old processes within the Core Group, as described above, continued to re-emerge periodically, from this time onwards I no longer felt paralysed by them. I felt strongly, from my own perspective, that by making my announcement in the Core Group I had symbolically marked a boundary around my 'territory'. This signalled to myself and others that I was assuming a more explicit and active authority over how psychologists would contribute to the services in the future.

By paying attention to personally painful dilemmas and discovering the role of life scripts, I expanded my notion of Torbert's (1991) requirements of a transforming power, namely that contradictions and incongruities at all levels of an acting system must be open to inquiry. I will finish this chapter by reflecting on the significance of life scripts for inquiry.

The significance of life 'scripts'.

This had been an interesting demonstration for me of how, in terms of Cronen and Pearce's (1985) differing levels of context, life scripts could enable a different dimension of meaning to be taken from or constructed about events. Of interest to me were the circumstances in which this meaning became 'accessible' to me. Firstly, it arose in relation to a personally painful crisis or dilemma. Secondly the type of reflective process which enabled me to become aware of this meaning was a two-fold one - writing and conversation. Both are dialogical.

My spontaneous writing in reply to my question of myself 'what would happen if you took charge of psychological treatments?' revealed a dialogical relationship with an imagined audience of readers, as well as an internal audience of 'different selves'. There was an element of inquiry and challenge in this dialogue, as witnessed by the alternative voice in my counterpoint replies to the question. In the conversation with Jan there was an audience of a particular other as well as myself. The nature of the relationship with Jan at the point of inquiry is clearly embedded in the complexity of a marital relationship, but at such times when we conversed about our research, there was a strong element of a trusting peer supervision relationship. I recognise similar qualities in trusting and close relationships I have with professional peers. It occurred to me then that the discovery of life 'scripts' and how they operate requires a kind of relationship to oneself and others in which there is trust, acceptance, and at the same time a willingness to challenge and inquire. Whether the context of inquiry be a particular form of supervision or research, the ability to utilise the concept of 'life scripts' requires such a relationship.

What also became clear to me in the final production of this thesis, within the narrative inquiry framework, was that life 'scripts' are not brief statements but rather are storied in form. While it is

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perhaps possible to summarise such stories in a short phrase, this does not capture the interactional nature of them and their construction. Furthermore, they are not the only available stories. They rest alongside other stories about the past which emerge or submerge according to the particular context of remembering or re-construction. Re-thinking about 'scripts' as stories allowed me to reflect back on my relationship with William and the story-telling we engaged in about our lives and I saw then that we each had probably glimpsed the other's life 'scripts' which had in turn been a part of the sense we had made of each other and events within the relationship. However, I believe it requires a mutually agreed and explicit framing of the relationship in which permission is given to inquire more carefully and intimately into the presence of life 'scripts'. I do not see myself as having achieved this with the other actors I have written about in this research narrative, apart from Jan. However, there are other individuals with whom I have developed such relationships, who I have not included as part of the research field but with whom I have discussed aspects of the research and my learning from it in some depth. These individuals are not given an explicit voice in this narrative, so I will comment on their significance in the next and last chapter.

What is clear to me is that painful dilemmas signal the opportunity to inquire into the presence of 'life scripts' and how they may be operating as one context for taking or creating meaning about the events in question. I carried this learning forward from my research into supervisory relationships and I now feel more comfortable about using a narrative or story telling frame for inviting the other person to reflect on how life 'scripts' might be operating at points of 'stuckness'.

The events described in this chapter represent the second of what Denzin (1989) terms epiphanies, or moments of revelation in a life story, which arose for me in the context of conducting the research. The first 'epiphany' occurred around my learning about gender. The re-conceptualising of power both arose out of and in turn informed my personal learning about gender and it is at this point, at the closing of this particular loop, that I have punctuated the 'end' of this research venture. In the next and final chapter I will reflect on the research journey as a whole and will draw some lessons from it.