

## PREFACE

I want to express my gratitude to Dr. D. R. Sharpe, who created this lectureship on social ethics that bears his name, and to Dean Joseph Kitagawa of the Divinity School of The University of Chicago, for inviting me to participate in the inauguration of this Lectureship. Their unfailing kindness, and the warm reception extended to me by the administration, faculty, and students of the Divinity School, created a very moving and memorable occasion.

For myself the lecture was a labor of love—a love for “D. R.” and a friendship that extends well over a quarter of a century, and a love for the University and the Divinity School with which I had the great privilege to be associated for thirty years. For me the occasion was truly a return home.

I also want to thank my friend and student, Mr. Hank Keeton, both for his friendship and for his untiring work in typing and editing the manuscript.

## INTRODUCTION

This lecture is severely restricted in scope. It is concerned almost wholly with delineations and presuppositions of two conceptions of power. Probably neither form of power actually exists in its purity. To this degree the discussion is more concerned with ideal types than with concrete instances of either form of power.

These two conceptions involve a rather simple distinction. But the implications of the distinction are not simple. This short lecture does not adequately suggest the possible intellectual and practical fertility latent within the distinction. More especially, the social applications of the second conception of power are not explored even in a preliminary manner. This further development lies ahead and will require the assistance of other students in the field.

## TWO CONCEPTIONS OF POWER

The problem of power is as ancient as the age of man.<sup>1</sup> The presence of power is manifest wherever two or more people are gathered together and have any kind of relationship. Its deeper and sometimes darker qualities emerge as soon as the omnipresent factor of inequality makes itself felt.

The presence and operation of power are not limited of course to the life of human-kind. If the findings of those who study animal behavior are to be accepted, power is an indispensable element in the preservation of the group life of a species in the animal world. In the animal world power manifests itself in the creation of order. This order which is essential for the maintenance of animal life seems to be derived from the pervasive fact of the inequality of power. Perhaps to a greater degree than we care to admit, the principle of the relation between order and inequality may function in the organization of life at the human level.

If power is roughly defined as the ability to make or establish a claim on life, then the range of the presence of power may be broadened to include the notion that power is co-extensive with life itself. To be alive, in any sense, is to make some claim, large or small. To be alive is to exercise power in some degree.

The principle involved may be extended still further to the level of metaphysical generality. If value is co-terminous with reality, as it is in all metaphysical systems, then the discussion of power becomes correlative with the analysis of being or actuality itself. In this most general perspective, to be actual means to exercise power.

The following discussion of power is not meant to be primarily metaphysical in generality. In keeping with the conditions of the Lectureship, the focus is on the human involvement with power. But no idea is self-sufficient in its meaning. Ideas, like people, have their lives only in a community of relations. The understanding and

justification of any important idea require an explanatory and relational context within which the idea lives, moves, and has its meaning. This explanatory context includes the immediate neighborhood of other ideas closely related to the concept under discussion. This neighborhood expands until it embraces those notions which constitute the most general description of reality of which we are capable during any particular historical epoch.

It is a presupposed and supporting thesis of this lecture that all understandings of power, and particularly the two views to be discussed, are grounded in conceptions both of the human self and, at least implicitly, of the ultimate nature of things. The possible truth of any conception of power is in part a function of the descriptive adequacy of the views of selfhood and the general nature of things that undergird that particular conception of power. If these more general understandings are inadequate, then the correlative concept of power will also be truncated or inadequate in some other way. Conversely, a basic shift in the conception of power should have consequences for a change in our understanding both of the nature

of the self and of the basic nature of things. As Williams James was fond of saying, "There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't *make* a difference elsewhere—no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in a difference in concrete fact and in the conduct consequent upon that fact."<sup>2</sup>

After all these centuries of the practise of power and of theorizing about its nature and function, what is to be said about it that hasn't been said before many times over? I contend that our lives and thought have been dominated by one conception of power. To anticipate the later discussion a bit, this long-standing tradition has on the whole defined power as the ability to produce an effect. This ability to produce an effect has often been understood to be a capacity to bring something into being, to actualize, or to maintain what has been actualized against the threat of non-being. In these terms, at the human level power has been defined as the capacity to actualize the potentialities for good and evil of an individual or a group. But the heart of this traditional view is the conception of power as the strength to exert a shaping and determining influence on the other, whatever or whoever the other might be.

It would be simply wrong-headed to deny that the tradition has identified one aspect of power. But this viewpoint is not only truncated. It is demonic in its destructiveness. Too often it is the basic criterion by which the status or worth of an individual or group is established and measured. The practise of this kind of power is the primary condition whereby the ineradicable inequalities of life are transformed into life-denying injustices.

The problem of power is finally not just a matter of the actualization of possibilities. The issue lies deeper. It is rather a question of the level of individual and social fulfillment that is to be achieved. It is a matter of the heights or depths that are to be scaled or plumbed. It is the problem of the kinds of possibilities that may emerge, and the kinds of contexts conducive to the actualization of those possibilities. The key to the emergence and actualization of possibilities, ranging from the most meager to the richest, is the presence of certain kinds of relationships.

To put the point another way, it could be said that our lives and thought have been dominated by one conception of the nature and role of relationships, and thus of one conception of power. This viewpoint is inadequate for the emergence of individuals and societies of the stature required in today's world. The deepest level of the problem of power is ultimately the problem of size or stature.

Therefore, the over-all thesis of this lecture is that the nature and role of relationships determine

both the level of human fulfillment that is possible and the conception of power that is to be practised.<sup>3</sup>

Many people find it difficult and distasteful to accept the role of power in the living of life. Their sensibilities are offended. They accept the fact of power grudgingly in the manner of making a concession to a necessary evil. I suggest that their distaste is directed toward the traditional conception and practise of power, and to the conceptions of the self and the world that undergird this kind of power. I do not intend to castigate the role of power. On the contrary. But I am concerned to set forth at least an initial version of a more humanizing conception of power.

The rise of modern science and technology makes this effort at reconception mandatory. In addition to improving the lot of modern people, science and technology have contributed to the rise and development of problems we have never had to face before in human history. These problems are of such magnitude and complexity that the quality of the future of our planetary existence now confronts us as something more than just a theoretical or imaginative issue first detailed for us by the writers of science fiction.

The emergence of modern science and its operational offspring, technology, together with the evolution of that mode of thought called "historical understanding," have heightened modern man's sense of control and have led him to believe that he is responsible for the shape of history. This situation could constitute a rather grim illustration of Niebuhrian irony in that our very creativity may have resulted in the appearance of destructive historical forces too intractable for our capacities to manage or transform.

The development of science has opened Pandora's Box. Once opened it cannot be closed. The interests of scientists and the theoretical and technological consequences of scientific research have been such that, on the whole, science has become a major contributor to and servant of the traditional conception of power. The continued existence of science as a more constructive force in human life presupposes that a sufficient number of the members of our various earthly societies and religions take on a size never before required with such urgency. The traditional conception of power is inadequate to help us in our possible evolution toward this goal.

The problem of power is the problem of the quality of our lives. Those qualities that make for the most complex and intense enrichment of life may not possess the greatest survival value. But they are not engendered by our dominant conception and practise of power.

The alternative conception of power is indigenous to process/relational modes of thought and action. This viewpoint has been elaborated most fully by Charles Hartshorne in his conception of God. In this discussion, as well as in other matters, I stand gratefully on the minds and shoulders of my very illustrious teachers and colleagues.

A sort of non-biblical text and point of departure for this lecture is to be found in one of the definitions in Webster's *Dictionary*, which characterizes power as an ability either to produce or to undergo an effect. This is intriguing for two reasons. First, except possibly for certain scientific purposes, power as commonly understood, is seldom defined as the capacity to suffer or undergo an effect. Second, the conception of power is characterized in terms of either/or and not both/and.

### I. UNILATERAL POWER

The first conception defines power as unilateral in character. Unilateral power is the ability to produce intended or desired effects in our relationships to nature or to other people. More specifically, unilateral power is the capacity to influence, guide, adjust, manipulate, shape, control, or transform the human or natural environment in order to advance one's own purposes.

This kind of power is essentially one-directional in its working. Briefly stated, unilateral power is the capacity to influence another, in contrast to being influenced. The influence may be direct or indirect, coercive or persuasive in nature. It operates so as to make the other a function of one's ends, even when one's aims include what is thought to be the good of the other. If the traditional distinction between the masculine and the feminine is accepted for the moment, the masculine being defined as active and the feminine as passive, then unilateral power is quite thoroughly masculine in character.

This is a one-sided, abstract, and non-relational conception of power. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this form of power is non-mutual in its relationality. With respect to the one who is influenced, the relationship is internal. That is, he is altered by the relationship. With respect to the one who is exercising this kind of power, the relationship is external. That is, theoretically he is unaffected by the relationship. In actual fact, the exertion of influence on something or someone else may involve some degree of reciprocity. Certainly the exercise of power has some valuation effect for good or ill on the one exerting the power. But the main thrust of this kind of power is to produce a desired effect on the other in accor-

dance with one's own purposes. Ideally, its aim is to create the largest effect on the other while being minimally influenced by the other. It is apparent that the closest illustration of this kind of power is to be found in the traditional Catholic conception of God, as Hartshorne has documented in systematic detail. In this view God is all-powerful, and man, in relation to God, is quite powerless.

It should be emphasized that many instances of influencing and being influenced do not take us beyond a unilateral practise of power. If you push me, after I have shoved you, you influence me in the sense that I must take you into account in trying to accomplish my aim, whatever my aim is. You have resisted my unilateral claim with a unilateral claim of your own. You have made your presence and strength felt. I may be forced to use other means to gain my end. I may even be compelled to redefine my purpose with respect to that particular situation. But in any event, I am basically concerned to shape my world as best I can in order to realize my aims. In this endeavor you exist for me as a positive or negative or ambiguous means.

This is a unilateral relation, in short, because the focus is on the individual and his personal goals and not on the relationship conceived as mutually internal and creative. (Analogous considerations would obtain if the units were groups rather than individuals.) This characterization applies with double force if the self is understood in non-communal terms (in a manner to be explained shortly).

### SELF-IDENTITY AND SIZE

In terms of unilateral or linear power, we set forth our claims on life as individuals and groups against other individuals or groups with their opposing and competing claims. We make these claims and create our influence in order to actualize the values of life, including our status and sense of worth. The greater our capacity to influence others, the larger the claim on life we feel we are entitled to establish. Our more predominant power is our justification, our warrant, for our superior status and sense of importance.

Inequality is a categorical feature of our experience. We differ in energy, ambition, intelligence, emotional intensity, relational sensitivity, imagination, creativity, addiction to evil and other forms of destructiveness, and the capacity to love. We are strikingly unequal in power, in our capacity to influence others for good or ill, by fair means or foul. In this view our size or stature is measured by the strength of our unilateral power. Our sense of self-value is correlative to our place on the scale of inequality. That is, our size is determined by our ability to actualize our purposes in

the context of others with their competing aims. Our strength is measured by the amount of competing power we can resist, control, or overcome. It is evaluated by the amount of pressure others must exert before our claims are curtailed or before we must reach some compromise. The degree of our strength or the level of our size is relative to the degree of pressure we can handle or control.

The idea, that the relative strength of our unilateral power is too often the basis of our sense of self-identity and self-worth, is illustrated in the institution of athletics. The aim of sports is neither physical fitness, nor exercise, nor the rounding out of a balanced life, although these values may be its by-products. Sports is not primarily a matter of physical competition. Sports is an affair of spirit competing against spirit, expressed through the agencies of our bodies. The aim is to find or create our identity and place in the power structure formed in the arena of competitive games. The aim is to win, to achieve excellence. But, contrary to the idealists who find competition distasteful, we do not win by doing our best. We achieve the excellence of our best by striving to win. The conception of power as unilateral recognizes that our identity is largely a relational matter. We know who we are in the context of relationships, even the relationships of competition. The self-image and self-knowledge that are derived from competitive relationships involve the relative strengths found at various levels of competition.

In answer to the inevitable question as to how well he shoots, the non-professional golfer may reply that he normally shoots in the high 70's or low 80's. If he were more honest in his reply, he would stipulate that he performs at that level of excellence when he is competing against players whose competence more or less matches his own. The club professional at the local golf course normally may shoot in the low 70's when playing against members of his club. If this same professional were to compete against professional tournament players in a golf match held at his home course he might score in the high 70's or low 80's.<sup>4</sup> There is no such thing as a completely friendly game of golf unless the structure or the hierarchy of power has already been established and accepted by all the players.

I remember playing golf several years ago with the son of a professional golfer. We played several holes in desultory fashion. He announced suddenly that he "was going to play some golf." He promptly proceeded to do so in rather excellent fashion. He was built in proportion to his tall height and he possessed a very enviable golf swing. I failed to match his level of play. In the middle of one fairway he stopped walking and asked me if I

knew why I wasn't playing well. In response to my negative reply he offered the explanation that I had been trying to imitate his swing, that I had been playing his style rather than my own, and that I had lost my identity as a golfer. His analysis was accepted as accurate, and I became aware once again of the difficulty of retaining one's sense of self-identity and self-worth in the face of the inequality of power, and of the possible crippling effect that too often accompanies the loss of one's own base.

I also remember being at a racetrack and watching a drama involving a very highly-bred horse. His pedigree was of the highest credentials. This horse apparently had not been winning his share of rich purses. Since it is rather expensive to keep a horse who is not paying his way, he was entered in a claiming race, which means that he could be claimed or bought. The interesting point is that all the other horses in the race, who were less highly-pedigreed, had run the distance of the race in times markedly faster than that of the horse who was the star of this little episode in the animal kingdom. But they had established their times for the race while running against a different class of competition than they were facing this particular day. Suffice it to say that our hero won the race by the widest of margins. The inveterate gamblers could be seen nodding their heads wisely, and could be heard muttering something to the effect that class will tell.

I do not regard these illustrations as esoteric or applicable only to the field of sports. A much more complex illustration of the intricacies of power is found in a recent psychological study of the conditions of human courtship. The most decisive and interesting condition, as reported, consisted in the principle that if the woman did not affirm the man's self-image then no courtship ensued or was possible. The man did not have to affirm the woman's self-image in order to have courtship occur. The dimensions and implications of this finding are too numerous to discuss here. The study came to the conclusion that the presence of this condition indicated the basic dominance of the man in courtship. I find this conclusion thoroughly ambiguous. The man is possibly dominant, but only if dominance is conceived of in terms of what I call unilateral power. A quite different conclusion is possible if a different conception of power is adopted.

#### ANOTHER'S GAIN AS OUR LOSS

When power is defined in a unilateral or linear fashion as a capacity to influence another, it follows factually as well as logically that the gain in power by the other is experienced as a loss of one's own power and therefore of one's status and

sense of worth. At the human level, at least, and possibly with respect to nature itself, the other is often experienced as a threat or a potential threat to our ability to realize our purposes. The idea of being influenced seems to connote a loss or lack of power relating to our sense of insecurity. To be influenced by someone or something other is therefore experienced as a weakness, just as dependence on another is a reflection of our inadequacy or lack of self-sufficiency. Within this understanding of things, passivity is no virtue. On the contrary, it is a preeminent symbol of a lack of power.

In this competition of power, our relative strength or size can be ascertained by the degree to which the freedom of the other is curtailed. The reduction of freedom is an attenuation of power. Consequently, in our struggle for greater power it is essential that the other be as restricted in his power as much as possible, or that the freedom of the other be contained within the limits of our control—whether the other be another person or group or the forces of nature. We hesitate or refuse to commit ourselves to those people or realities we cannot control.

#### INEQUALITY AND THE EXPANSIVE CHARACTER OF FREEDOM

As long as one's size and sense of worth are measured by the strength of one's capacity to influence others, as long as power is associated with the sense of initiative and aggressiveness, and passivity is indicative of weakness or a corresponding lack of power, then the natural and inevitable inequalities among individuals and groups become the means whereby the estrangements in life become wider and deeper. The rich become richer, and the poor become poorer. The strong become stronger and the weak become weaker and more dependent. From a deeply religious point of view, and in the long run, this manner of handling the inequalities of life results in an increasing impoverishment for both the strong and the weak. Whether on a Marxist or any other basis of analysis, the divisions between us become more destructive of the family of man.

This link between unilateral power and sense of worth in the eyes of others as well as in our own eyes, is one of the important factors involved in the problem that has puzzled and preoccupied ethicists for centuries, namely, that we seldom relinquish our power voluntarily. We loosen our grip and make our concessions only when we are forced to do so by some competing group that has acquired sufficient power to bring us to the negotiating table, as the history of the labor-management conflict and the modern women's movement illustrate. Without interference from

this competing group our power tends to become inertial and self-perpetuating. As Saul Alinsky used to insist: people in power will listen only when you have enough political "clout" to make them listen. We tend to trample on or remain indifferent to those people whom we feel we can safely ignore.

This conception of power takes on a darker color if the fact of inequality is united with the restive quality of human freedom. More than any other contemporary thinker it was Reinhold Niebuhr who taught us that the human spirit, which is the unity of the self in its freedom, possesses a transcendent outreach. The self in its freedom can transcend in fact or in imagination any given or proposed limitation on what is regarded as possible with respect to its security or fulfillment. On the basis of insights which he attributed to Kierkegaard, Niebuhr grounded both creativity and sin in the self's basic anxiety or insecurity. In this view, no amount of security with respect to the goods of this life can overcome the self's anxiety, and no level of achievement can exhaust its creative passion. Consequently, the human spirit in its unbounded restlessness moves toward the indefinite or the infinite in its effort to subdue its anxiety or to exemplify its freedom.

This expansive quality of freedom is manifested in every aspect of a person's life. This means that any impulse of a person may become insatiable. This is especially the case with respect to his desire for power. In this way our demands or claims tend to become inordinate. This inordinacy reflects the elements of self-interest which infects every activity of a person. The self's claim to rectitude is pretentious, since the self is often the servant and not the master of its impulses. The children of darkness know all this full well since they recognize no law that transcends their self-interest. The children of light, who do not take sufficient cognizance of the expansive character of the self's freedom whereby an individual's or a group's self-interest may take the form of inordinate or unreasonable claims, believe that our impulses are manageable and amenable to rational control.

The expansive character of freedom means that we tend to over-state the legitimacy of our claims and they become presumptuous. We are prone to overplay our strengths and to refuse to recognize the limitations of our virtues. The result is they become destructive. While freedom can manifest itself in the form of creative reconstruction, it can also inflate our natural inequalities and thereby provide conditions that lead to greater injustices. This quality of freedom may be one reason for the adversary proceedings in our law courts. For Niebuhr it led to his defence of the system of

checks and balances in our form of democracy. As he put it, our capacity for justice makes democracy possible; our capacity for injustice makes democracy necessary.

### THE NON-COMMUNAL SELF

It is apparent that this conception of power is grounded on a non-communal or non-relational understanding of the self. In this view, the self lives in a society, but the society does not live in the self as part of the self's inner being. The self has relationships with others, but the others are not constitutive of the self. The self is not created out of its relationships. It has its being within itself. It derives its being from itself (and God).

Consistent with this view of the self, society is conceived as a context within which the self operates. The self has relationships with other members of the society because society is the necessary medium for the fulfillment of the self. There is a movement of the self toward others, but these others exist as a means for the realization of the goals of the self. The goals of the self necessarily include some others, whatever or whoever the others may be. Thus these others exist either as helpers, or obstacles, or possible threats to the full use of the self's power to actualize its purposes.

Furthermore, in this outlook the freedom of the self is in no sense an emergent from the relationships the self has with its society. Freedom is a power inherent within the self in its own individual being. In the same sense, the possibilities of the self are latent within the self in its own life. Society provides the occasions whereby these possibilities are actualized.

In this conception of power the aim is to move toward the maximum of self-sufficiency. The self is to become as self-dependent as possible with respect to its motivation, strength, and resourcefulness. Dependency on others, as well as passivity, are symptoms of weakness or insufficiency. Dependency may become a threat to the integrity of the self. The self is to live as much as possible out of the resources and forcefulness of its independence. It should relate to others out of its strength and not out of its dependency. Communities may exist as cooperative societies made up of essentially independent and self-reliant members who share common concerns. In this view, communities essentially derive from the activities of independent individuals. The less fortunate members of a society, the handicapped and disadvantaged, are the beneficiaries of the charitable and compassionate feelings of the more fortunate, although they are to be praised and prized most honestly when they approximate as nearly as they can the self-dependency of the life of unilateral power.

This viewpoint has its religious dimension, of course, because the independence of the self may be qualified ultimately by the sense of its dependence on God the creator and sustainer. This conception of power is at home with Descartes' definition of a substance as that which requires nothing but itself (and God) in order to exist. The strength of the creative and influential power of the self is derived from itself and from God and not from other members of the society.

I suggest that a unilateral conception of power is a reasonably faithful interpretation of the official creed of the Republican Party in this country. I also believe that it is basically congruent with the traditional metaphysics of substantive modes of thought. This viewpoint is integral to that tradition of Christian theology which has been heavily influenced by this traditional metaphysical outlook. I believe that this conception of power in Christian theology has brought confusion to our understanding of the meaning of Christian character and personality, the nature of salvation, the practise of prayer, and the reality of God.

To push this point a bit further, I think there is at least one strand of the New Testament interpretation of Jesus which illustrates this conception of power. In several passages it is emphasized that Jesus derived his power and size from God, and from God alone. This is the same power that the Gospel of John reports Jesus as prayerfully asking God to grant to his disciples. It is not recorded that Jesus ever acknowledged his indebtedness to his fellows for his stature or power. As recorded, the relationship was essentially one-sided. The people were the recipients of the influence of his love, his healing graces, and his teachings. In return they gave him his crucifixion. As Scripture has it, "I came to minister, not to be ministered unto."

### POWER AS ABSTRACT

Partly because of the non-relational view of the self that is presupposed, unilateral power tends to be somewhat abstract in its operation. Unilateral power is an expression of specialized concerns. That is, we deal only with the aspects of the human and natural environment which are relevant to our purposes. Our interest in others is highly selective. We are not concerned to deal with the full concrete being of the other—whether the other be a person or nature in its livingness or God.

This abstract character of unilateral power is not merely theoretical in its import. The fact is that those aspects of people or nature or God which we neglect tend to revenge themselves on us. The energy of ignored or repressed dimensions of the other cannot remain bottled up indefinitely. Sooner or later it will express itself overtly. If it be



true that God is not mocked, it is also the case that the concrete life of other people cannot be disregarded with impunity. In due season the harvest is reaped, for good or ill. Surely our contemporary revolutions involving blacks, Indians, women, and the under-developed nations furnish us with more than sufficient evidence on this point.

If individuals are emergents from their relationships, as I believe they are, then the practise of unilateral power blocks the full flow of energy that could be productive of the emergence of greater-sized individuals from these relationships. Unilateral power also blocks the quality of the gift that others would give to us out of their freedom.

Lord Acton's principle, that power corrupts, involves what I am calling unilateral power. The practise of power, like the possession of great wealth, tends to corrupt its exponents because it helps to create conditions of estrangement. Unless qualified by compensating qualities, the exercise of power tends to alienate the possessor of power. It attenuates the sense of fellow-feeling. It weakens the communal ties that bind us to each other. It deadens our sensitivity to the fact that we are deeply dependent on each other and that we are creative of each other.

The Biblical advice to the rich, that they should give their wealth to the poor, will not solve our economic problems. But it could remove one source of alienation. However, the moral of the principle that power corrupts is not that we should divest ourselves of all power or completely eschew the exercise of power. The total absence of all power is non-existence, and the refusal to exercise the power we possess leads to destruction. The moral is rather that another kind of power is required. In this connection it is instructive to note the resentment toward the United States expressed by those European nations who were helped by the Marshall Plan following World War II.

#### THE RELIGIOUS INADEQUACY OF UNILATERAL POWER

The point concerning the abstractive character of unilateral power can be expanded. The continued practise of this kind of power breeds an insensitivity to the presence of the other—again, whether the other be a person or nature or God. The sense of the presence of the other involves a feeling of the concrete actuality of the other, of being truly present to another, of being less concerned to shape and control the other, of letting the other be himself in his concrete freedom.

Perhaps this is one reason why most of the great religious figures possessed qualities that we have traditionally associated with the feminine. They were open to the presence of the other. They

were open to being shaped and influenced by the other. Certainly much of what it means to be religious is opposed to the traditional conception of the purely masculine.

The practice of linear or unilateral power is antithetical to many of the deeper dimensions of the religious life. The habit of trying to shape and control our human and natural world in accordance with our own purposes makes it difficult to give ourselves in faithful trust to that which we cannot control and which could transform even our sensitivities. Having been nurtured to be insensitive to the presence of the other, in this instance a concretely actual God, God becomes something abstract and remote. So we sometimes have recourse, in Christian circles, to the "living Jesus" in order to overcome our sense of the abstractness, the remoteness, and the emptiness of what in truth is a living, concrete presence. The purely masculine stance in life tends to substitute ethics for religion. Even this approach may become an ethics of ideals which, after all, are themselves abstractions. They are extensions of ourselves. In this fashion we can shape ourselves in accordance with our own ethical projections, and thereby maintain both our independence and the feeling of self-determination that accompanies our sense of controlling power.

It follows, somewhat inevitably, that a life lived in terms of unilateral power reduces the sense of the mystery of life, the mystery of the other in its freedom, including and especially the divine other. Since the mystery of life cannot be reduced, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this life-style tends to neglect or be oblivious to the dimension of unfathomable mystery that is present in all our experience. The practitioners of unilateral power may appreciate this depth of existence when their efforts to shape life reach their inescapable limits, with all the frustration, anger, or despair that may accompany such disillusion. The freedom of God and the freedom of the human self are not ultimately subject to human control. The strangeness of life and the hiddenness of its meaning cannot be responded to appropriately by a life-style of unilateral power.

#### LOVE AND POWER

Within the Christian theological tradition love is usually contrasted with power. When this is done, it should be noted that it is the unilateral conception of power that is regarded as the antithesis of love. When Jesus is described as being powerless, and as having renounced power as the world understands power, it is unilateral power that is at issue. In terms of this kind of power, Jesus and other religious leaders (or other "Christological" figures) are at the bottom of the hierarchy of power.

The issue between love and unilateral power is not finally the issue between persuasion and coercion. The contrast consists in the direction of one's concern, with power focused on the self-interest of an individual or group, and love concerned with what is thought to be for the good of the other. In some interpretations of love, especially Christian love, it would appear that love is as unilateral and non-relational in its way as unilateral power is in its way. The traditional interpretation of divine love as being a concern for the other with no concern for itself (which, ideally, we are to emulate), is the ultimate instance of this understanding of love.

It may be that love has been interpreted in this fashion as a compensatory device to counteract the one-sidedness of unilateral power. Love then becomes one side of the coin that carries the face of power on the other side. This involves the principle that the way to offset one extreme is to introduce a contrary extreme. It would appear that this kind of love, like this kind of power, needs an alternative conception.

#### KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

This is the basic conception of power that has been controlling in western historical experience. It has been dominant in political and economic philosophies as well as in ethical and theological systems. Its preeminence in military thought and action is obvious. Its efficacious role in the ordering of social life is no less apparent. It is rigorously operative in certain embodiments of leadership as well as in the relations between the sexes. The American experience in the levelling of a continent, and the partial reshaping of the face of nature, constitutes one large national illustration of this kind of force.

Bacon's aphorism, that knowledge is power, refers in the first instance to unilateral power. It symbolizes a modern transformation in the function of knowledge. In the pre-modern world knowledge had practical applications, to be sure. Artisans, farmers, alchemists, doctors, seafarers, astronomers, and a few physical philosophers had knowledge of various natural structures and processes. Their practical grasp of the ways of things enabled people to carry out the necessary affairs of everyday life in a tolerable fashion. But on the whole the most important function of knowledge was to serve as a handmaid to understanding and contemplation. But in the modern western world knowledge to a large degree has been conscripted in the service of unilateral power and control, especially as this knowledge and control are shaped by the concerns of theoretical and applied science.

Scientific knowledge is specialized knowledge. This kind of competence and understanding and

inquiry is essential. But unless it is related to other forms of knowledge and inquiry, and to other dimensions of life in some integral fashion, specialized knowledge becomes a prime servant of unilateral power with its ambiguous and destructive consequences. Our universities have become major training grounds for the practise of this kind of power.

Karl Marx's contention, that the aim of philosophy should not be the quiescent understanding and acceptance of life as it is, but rather the transformation of nature and society, strengthened Bacon's view of the instrumental relationship between knowledge and power.

One of the interesting implications of Marx's interpretation of the role of philosophic study is that the classical conception of philosophy is essentially traditionally feminine in outlook. By contrast, the Marxist conception of philosophy is essentially masculine in emphasis. The classical understanding of the nature of things as they are in their being, to which we must passively conform, has been replaced by a modern dynamic interpretation of things in their creative becoming, with which we should cooperate, to which we can contribute, and over which many of us attempt to exercise greater control.

The enhancement of unilateral power through the development of scientific knowledge, together with the rise of historical modes of understanding our past, have led to a transformation of our role in history. We now conceive ourselves to be at least partly responsible for the course of history. This unprecedented human situation now confronts us with a pivotal question. In the exercise of our unilateral power, by what star, if any, are we to be guided? As we try to direct the evolution of human society and its pluralistic values and styles of living, by what are we to be shaped and transformed? Or are we to think of ourselves as the directors and agents of our own transformation? Do we, the shapers of human history, need to be shaped by something other than our own desires, dreams, or ideals? With the emergence of our modern self-consciousness, are we to be guided by the achieved states of our self-awareness?

Our universal and more complex quandary was pre-figured when the first medical missionary inoculated a member of a so-called primitive society against a disease that had ravaged his village or tribe. This benevolent act on the part of the scientifically trained missionary had been undertaken only after an intense ideological or religious struggle with the leaders of the tribe. The missionary attributed their resistance and hesitation to ignorance, to their lack of scientific understanding, and to fear of change (and to the fact that this



"stronger medicine" probably constituted a threat to the power and prestige of the local medicine man). It wasn't the case, however, that the tribal leaders wanted to see their people killed by the disease. But they believed that the disease was a visitation from one or more of their gods, and that this disease was one aspect of the total order of nature. They realized that the effort to eradicate the disease was not an isolated act. Their type of organismic and non-specialized understanding led them to sense that the whole order of nature and of their world would be changed. Like William James, in the quotation cited earlier, they felt that all acts and ideas had contextual presuppositions and indeterminable consequences.

They sensed that every so-called advance involved some loss—and had its price. They were fearful of displeasing their gods. Their gods brought diseases and death, but also life. This mixture of good and evil, of life and death, was involved in the order of life whose secret harmony resided within the mystery of the gods they worshipped. Their hesitation about accepting the obvious helpfulness of modern medicine and the good intention of the missionary derived from their doubts that the god of the needle was wiser, more truly beneficent, and better able to organize the order of their world than their traditional gods.

Contemporary issues of ecology (both natural and human), eugenics or "human engineering," medical ethics, governmental structures, urban and regional renewal, and international economics, are heightened manifestations of the consequences of the marriage between science and unilateral power. What is at stake is the quality of life in the face of tremendous quantitative dimensions. The issue is not simply survival, but the survival and enhancement of those qualities that effect people of larger size. The realization of this goal calls for a wisdom beyond anything required of us in our history. Is this wisdom to issue from our self-conscious attempts to shape and direct our destiny? Or shall this wisdom emerge out of creative relationships which we cannot control and which, in turn, should give shape to our directive energies?

## II. RELATIONAL POWER

The second and alternative conception of power is relational in character. This is the ability both to produce and to undergo an effect. It is the capacity both to influence others and to be influenced by others. Relational power involves both a giving and a receiving.

The true alternative to the traditional role of the masculine as the active agent who influences is not the traditional conception of the feminine as

the passive recipient of the influence. This is so even if it is acknowledged that the undergoing of an effect influences the producer of the effect. The audience does help to create the actor. But the true alternative to a masculine version of power is not a feminine version of power. This would merely be substituting "she" for "he." With respect to developing a more adequate conception of power, the solution does not consist of choosing between the alternatives of producing an effect or of undergoing an effect. This solution would involve the life-style of either/or, which is a strategy of choosing between equally one-sided truncations.

I do not propose or intend to ground the conception of relational power on the possible distinction and relations between masculine and feminine roles. With respect to the problem of power in relation to human sexual differentiation, I am not concerned to defend either traditional or modern versions of the roles of men and women, or to deny or affirm their distinctive natures, regardless of whether these differences are understood to be inherent or culturally derived. A relational conception of power is hopefully applicable however the differences and similarities between the sexes are defined. In fact, the problem of sexual differentiation is finally irrelevant to the principle of power conceived in relational imagery, even though sexual differentiation has a bearing on the specific dynamics of relational power involving the two sexes. I mention this context at some length in order to emphasize the point that the dominant conception of power is describable in terms of qualities that have been traditionally associated with the masculine.

### POWER AS BEING INFLUENCED

Without opting for a traditionally feminine version of power, it needs to be stressed that the conception of relational power, in contrast to power conceived as unilateral, has as one of its premises the notion that the capacity to absorb an influence is as truly a mark of power as is the strength involved in exerting an influence. We all know that it takes physical and psychic strength to endure an effect. The immovable object may be said to be as powerful in its way as the irresistible force is in its way.<sup>5</sup> Yet in spite of this we have persisted in attributing power only to the producer of an effect.<sup>6</sup> But the principle involved goes beyond this simple observation.

The idea, that the capacity to receive from another or to be influenced by another is truly indicative of power, is not derived from an arbitrary linguistic decision to extend the term "power" to include the receiving of an influence. The idea rests on more elemental considerations that revolve around the notion of size. The concept of size is

taken as fundamental and decisive because it is the most basic criterion by which to make decisions and judgments concerning value. To reiterate an earlier point, the problem of power is finally a problem of value. The justification for any conception of power consists ultimately of principles (or decisions or presuppositions) concerning value.

The term "power" is a value term. It is indicative of worth or significance. Under any conception of power, to refer to a person or group as powerless is to reduce that individual or group on the scale of value. Under unilateral power the worth (or size) of an individual is measured by the range of that individual's ability to influence others. The correlative *thesis* of this section of the lecture is that the practise of relational power both requires and exemplifies greater size than that called for by the practise of unilateral power. Since the capacity to receive an influence is a necessary component in the actuality of relational power, the principle of size is applicable to the experience of undergoing an effect. It is the factor of value or size that enables us to attribute power to the experience of receiving an influence derived from others.

Our readiness to take account of the feelings and values of another is a way of including the other within our world of meaning and concern. At its best, receiving is not unresponsive passivity; it is an active openness. Our reception of another indicates that we are or may become large enough to make room for another within ourselves. Our openness to be influenced by another, without losing our identity or sense of self-dependence, is not only an acknowledgement and affirmation of the other as an end rather than a means to an end. It is also a measure of our own strength and size, even and especially when this influence of the other helps to effect a creative transformation of ourselves and our world. The strength of our security may well mean that we do not fear the other, that the other is not an overpowering threat to our own sense of worth.

The world of the individual who can be influenced by another without losing his or her identity or freedom is larger than the world of the individual who fears being influenced.<sup>7</sup> The former can include ranges and depths of complexity and contrast to a degree that is not possible for the latter. The stature of the individual who can let another exist in his or her own creative freedom is larger than the size of the individual who insists that others must conform to his own purposes and understandings.

The notion, that being influenced may indicate a lack of sufficient self-dependence and that it may tend toward a neurotic dependence on others with its attendant lack of freedom, contains a

justifiable point of caution and limitation. This is the possible weakness of the strength of openness. But this contention has its counterfoil in the notion that the unqualified urge to influence or to dominate others may indicate a fundamental insecurity and lack of size. This is the possible weakness in the inner dynamics of the strength of controlling or unilateral power.

Under the unilateral conception of power the desire to influence another may well include a love for the other, where this involves a concern for what is thought to be for the good of the other. Or, to invert the point, a love for the other may indeed involve the desire to control the other in a direction that is felt to be for the other's good. But, under this conception of power, the good that directs the exercise of influence on the other has the limitations of a preconceived good. It often exemplifies the conscious or unconscious desire to transform the other in one's own image. It is of the nature of efficient cause to reproduce its own kind.

Under the relational conception of power, what is truly for the good of any one or all of the relational partners is not a preconceived good. The true good is not a function of controlling or dominating influence. The true good is an emergent from deeply mutual relationships.

If power always means the exercising of influence and control, and if receiving always means weakness and a lack of power, then a creative and strong love that comprises a mutual giving and receiving is not possible.

#### THE CONSTITUTIVE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The foundation of relational power lies in the constitutive role of relationships in the creation of individuals and societies. The individual is a communal individual. He is a creature of contexts. He lives in society and the society quite literally lives in him. He is largely a function of the relationships out of which he is born. He begins his pulsating, momentary existence as an individual from a set of complex impulses derived from the ongoing energy of past events as they objectify themselves into the present. This qualitative energy is carried by the relations or vectoral prehensions which largely constitute his life. His life is for the most part, but not completely, a gift from those others who make up the societal context in which he lives. Without these others he would not be. Or as the former manager of the New York Yankees, the late Casey Stengel, said after his team had won still another baseball championship, "I could hardly have done it without the players."

This communal or relational conception of the self stands in marked contrast to the non-relational or substantive view of the self. In this

latter interpretation, which, like the unilateral conception of power, has dominated the history of western thought, the self has relations with others but its inner constitution is not composed of these relations. The influences of these others are not parts of the very soul of the non-relational self. These others, through their objectifications of themselves, are not literally present within the self that is being influenced. In the non-relational conception the self has its inner being within itself. Its essential life and the power of its being are derived from itself (and God). It lives in a context to be sure, but this context is not part of the very warp and woof of its being. To put the contrast in another and perhaps more controversial fashion, in the non-relational view the self has experiences, but the self is to be distinguished from its experiences. In the relational view the self doesn't have experiences. The self is its experiences.

The unilateral conception of power has endured in spite of the point, as noted earlier, that we all recognize it requires strength to absorb an effect. Analogously, the non-relational conception of the self has endured in spite of the fact that thinkers in untold numbers have recognized what most of us are aware of, namely, that everyone and everything we encounter becomes part of the fabric of our lives. "Relation" in the internal sense is a way of speaking of the presence of others in our own being. It is the peculiar destiny of process/relational modes of thought to have transformed this commonplace but deep-seated observation into a metaphysical first principle.<sup>8</sup>

In the relational viewpoint the individual begins life as an effect produced by the many others in the world of his immediate past. But he is not simply a function of these relations. He is an emergent from his relationships; and in the process of his emergence he also creates himself. His life as a living individual consists of synthesizing into some degree of subjective unity the various relational causes or influences which have initiated his process of becoming something definite. His concrete life is constituted by a process of deciding what he will make out of what he has received. This is his emergent selfhood. What he makes out of what he has received is who he is. This is also his emergent freedom because he is his decision. His subjective life is his process of deciding who he is.

When selfhood has been achieved, the qualitative energy of the individual is released from the individual's self-preoccupation. Having been an emergent response to a complex set of causes, the individual now joins with others as a member of a complex set of causes to create the future, where the future may include another momentary occasion of the individual's ongoing historical life. In order to become an influence in

the lives of others, the momentary individual must "die" as an experiencing subject and become an object to be experienced and received by other momentary subjects in their ongoing lives. Anything that can influence another reality can in turn be influenced at a later stage of itself by this other reality. This is the precise meaning of mutuality.<sup>9</sup>

In some such manner we feed upon each other. We are both cause and effect. We constitute each other in part. We are both self-creative and creative of each other, for good or ill, or for good and ill. We are dependent and yet autonomous. We are at once communal and solitary individuals. But the solitariness of individuality is lived out only in the midst of constitutive relationships.

In the relational, contrasted with the non-communal conception of the self, possibilities do not inhere within the individual as latent entities waiting to be realized. In contrast to the traditional view, which held that the acorn contained all the possibilities that were to flower later into the adult oak tree, the relational viewpoint maintains that possibilities are emergents from relationships. A wife is not the occasion whereby a man actualizes husbandly possibilities that reside or subsist wholly within the confines of his enclosed selfhood. The husbandly and wifely possibilities of the respective partners are peculiar to and are created out of that particular marital relationship in which each helps to create the other. The more deeply mutual and creative the relationship, the wider the range of emergent possibilities for those participating in the relationship. The wealth of possibilities is not simply "there" as a present and completed fact, subsisting as a latent condition that is in some sense independent of the world of actual events. Possibilities are created or emerge as possibilities along with the advances that occur within the natural and historical environments.

Analogous considerations apply to the notion of freedom. The individual's self-creativity is an expression of the strength of his freedom. Or, more accurately, his freedom is a pervasive quality of his self-creativity. His freedom, like his self-creativity, is an emergent from his relationships. To this degree his freedom is not a quality that is derived solely from himself as though he were an independent, self-contained, self-derived, and self-sustained individual. The degree and range of his freedom is not wholly a function of his own resources. On the one hand his freedom is derived from the unfathomable mystery of the emergence of his self-creativity. On the other hand his freedom is in part an enabling gift from his society that is conveyed to him through his constitutive relationships. He is helped or hindered in achiev-

ing greater freedom by the enhancing or crippling relations in which he lives. The deeper his involvement in creative and transformative relations, the greater the possibility for the enlargement and empowering of his freedom.

Freedom has several dimensions, and all of them are emergents from the functioning of the constitutive relations in which an individual has his being. Certainly one of the strongest components is that of transcendence, which is the capacity of an individual in fact or in imagination to transcend both society and himself. The intimate connection between transcendence and the expansive character of freedom was noted previously (page 16f, above). Even though an individual's capacity to transcend his society is partly a gift from that very society, he often fails to acknowledge this indebtedness and acts as if he had somehow outgrown his dependence on that society. The tension between society and the freedom of an individual is abiding and irresolvable, to be sure. But in his pride an individual may come to feel that his freedom is wholly self-derived and a function of his own resources. He can imagine that he is essentially independent of all constitutive relationships. In this mood he tends to use his transcendent freedom to enhance his sense of self-importance and to strengthen his egoistic impulses. Almost inevitably he moves in the direction of a more consummate practise of unilateral power. In this fashion he becomes more fully estranged from his fellows, and adds to the destructive consequences of our natural inequalities.

In terms of the relational or communal conception of the self, our constitutive relationships enable us to be free.<sup>10</sup> In this sense we are related in order to be free, that is to actualize our highest possibilities relative to ourselves as unique individuals. But freedom does not stand alone as the one absolute or primordial value. Just as fundamentally, we are free in order to be more fully related. We are most free in all the dimensions of our freedom when we enter more deeply into those relationships which are creative of ourselves as people of larger size. The inclusive term is stature. Freedom and relationality are its essential components.

#### POWER AS THE CAPACITY TO SUSTAIN A RELATIONSHIP

From this perspective, power is neither the capacity to produce nor to undergo an effect. *Power is the capacity to sustain a mutually internal relationship.*<sup>11</sup> This is a relationship of mutually influencing and being influenced, of mutually giving and receiving, of mutually making claims and permitting and enabling others to make their

claims. This is a relation of mutuality which embraces all the dimensions and kinds of inequality that the human spirit is heir to. The principle of equality most profoundly means that we are all equally dependent on the constitutive relationships that create us, however relatively unequal we are in our various strengths, including our ability to exemplify the fullness and concreteness of this kind of power.

It is important to stress the point that in relational power the influencing and the being influenced occur within and are functions of the mutuality of internal relatedness. This kind of mutuality is to be contrasted with the mutuality of external relatedness that is involved in various instances of unilateral power, such as the mutual good of compromise and accommodation, or the mutuality of external cooperation and divisions of labor, or the mutuality of bargaining and a *quid pro quo*. In the context of relational power, giving and receiving, influencing and being influenced, producing an effect and undergoing an effect, are not only mutually dependent and interwoven. At times they seem to be almost indistinguishable and their roles appear to be interchangeable. Often the greatest influence that one can exercise on another consists in being influenced by the other, in enabling the other to make the largest impact on one's self.

The principles of relational power mean that influencing and being influenced are so relationally intertwined that the effort to isolate them as independent factors would constitute an illustration of either one or both of Whitehead's famous two fallacies: that of simple location or that of misplaced concreteness.

If someone is to talk, someone else must listen. If one is to hear, someone else must speak. The actor in part creates the audience. The audience in its turn partly creates the actor. The drama is an emergent from the interaction between the actor and the audience. In this kind of mutuality of power it is as blessed to receive as it is to give. In our kind of culture, where power is identified so strongly with the exercise of influence upon another, it is often more difficult to receive in such a manner as to enhance and further the relationship. One of the most difficult of all social graces to achieve is the ability to receive in such a way that the giver feels honored in the giving and in having the gift received, or in such a way that in giving the giver feels that he has received.<sup>12</sup>

The art of receiving creatively the influence or gift of another is difficult to master because our sense of worth and power is identified so deeply with the direct act of creating, or giving, or exercising an influence on others. We have been nurtured to believe that dependence is indicative of a

lack of worth. But in relational power the focus is not on any particular member of the relationship or on one side of the relationship. The focus is on the relationship to which all contribute and from which all members are fed. The worth of the one who gives is partly dependent on the worth of the one who receives or the worth of the giving is dependent on the worth that must attach to the receiving. Revelation, to be effective, must be received and made operative in the lives of those who are to be disciples. In fact the cries and prayers of those who need and want to be redeemed in part call forth and create the messiah. The messiah's capacity to influence his people is in part derived from his being shaped by their need, although his response to their need may take a form which is other than what they want and think they need. The messiah who comes is usually not the one they had hoped for or expected.

In conceiving of relational power as the capacity to sustain a mutually internal relationship, the stress is on the primacy of relationships. These relations include, of course, those entities which are related. In the practise of this kind of power one must trust the relationship. The good is an emergent from the relationship. Except in a negative sense this process of creative emergence lies beyond our ability to direct or to command. The attempt to guide or control this process results only in obstructing the emergence or in restricting the worth of the relationship to the level of value which already exists. Those who are fearful of committing themselves to something they cannot control enhance the strength of the forces involved in the practise of unilateral power.

Those who conceptualize within the imagery of non-relational or substantive modes of thought, and/or who find it difficult to transcend the traditional conception of power as unilateral, may also be uneasy with the conception of relational power. They may think that the practise of relational power is too nondirective or untrustworthy. They may feel that this kind of power is, for example, ethically sound only if one's concerns in the relationship are directed toward the other and what is for the other's good. But this possible response misses the whole point concerning the primacy and creativity of the relationship and the process of emergent good.

#### BEING PRESENT TO ANOTHER

The primacy of relationships and the emergence of possibilities within relationships can be seen in looking at the phenomenon of being present to another, or being a presence to and for another. Being present to another, when this is understood non-relationally as though we were dealing with independent individuals, can mean either

that one discloses himself to another in a deeply personal way, or that one is so fully receptive to the other that the other feels that he is known and understood. When interpreted relationally the phenomenon takes on a different coloration.

The initiating disclosure of one's self to another enables and frees the other to receive the revealing of one's self. This reception in turn enables the revealer to be freer in his disclosure of himself. The active openness of the receptive mood of one who listens calls forth the disclosure of him who would speak. The speaking and the listening are creative of each other in the relationship. Also, through his listening the listener discloses himself to the one who speaks. In being heard, the one who speaks knows the one who hears. The two disclosures may not be equal in depth and range in that specific instance. Yet there is a mutuality of self-revelation. The knowing and the being known are mutually creative. Presence means that each knows and is known in that relationship. Presence means that both knowing and being known are functions of the creativity of both the speaking and the listening. I would understand this to be the relational version of Buber's I-Thou.<sup>13</sup>

There is an interesting contrast that sometimes develops in relations between at least some men and some women, although the point under discussion does not depend on the stereotyping of either men or women. The matter can be stated in a greatly oversimplified manner and without benefit of psychological or social contexts: women often seem to think that a man is not genuinely concerned about a woman unless he specifically asks her about her feelings, as she asks him about his feelings. Unless he inquires she does not often volunteer information about her feelings. In the absence of his inquiry the volunteering of this information is tantamount to asking him to be concerned about the state of her being. She should not have to call his attention to her inner life. He should be sensitive to her non-verbal communication, as she is sensitive to his. Sensing something of the mood of her spirit he should express concern by asking her about her feelings and hopes.

A man, by contrast, thinks that a woman should evidence a concern for him and their relationship by initiating the process of her self-disclosure. She should communicate her feelings to him voluntarily, as he does to her, without first being asked about them. He should not need to keep reassuring her of his interest in her feelings and doings. She should assume that he does care, even though he doesn't always or even usually demonstrate his concern by the asking of questions.

Each perspective has its limited validity and value. But neither is normative or adequate. Each perspective, in itself, is focused on the self and not

on the relationship. In brief, each point of view is to a large extent unilateral in its directional intent. There is a relationship, but it is a function of separate and diverse perspectives. It is not yet a relationship of mutual internality in which each asks and volunteers, in which the asking and the volunteering and the perceptiveness to non-verbal expressions are mutually creative within both partners. In short, it is not yet an association in which the relationship is the base and center.

### RELATIONAL POWER AS CONCRETE

Relational power, in contrast to the abstractness of unilateral power, is concerned with the concrete life of the other, whether the other be an individual or a group. One of the important consequences of the major intellectual discoveries in the modern world, from Copernicus to Einstein, is our increased understanding of the detailed empirical processes which shape our thinking, behavior, and being. We are more aware of conditioning contexts, histories, psychological dynamics and relationships, which largely determine what we most concretely are.

The exercise of power must operate with an awareness of these elements. To do otherwise is to relate to each other inadequately in terms of abstract classes, or stereotypes, or groups looked at in a cross-sectional manner without reference to their peculiar histories. In this fashion we fail to deal with the inexhaustible and variegated richness, the confusing complexity, and the omnipresent and intertwined ambiguities present in the concreteness of individual and group life. Transparent clarity, cleanness, and the absence of ambiguity are found only in the abstractions of thought. Power, to be creative and not destructive, must be inextricably related to the ambiguous, contradictory, and baffling character of concrete existence. It must live with regenerative awe and wonder in the midst of the strange turnings that transform victory into defeat and defeat into victory; the humbling ironies, and the intractable conditions within both people and nature that shatter the best laid plans and destroy the bridges of our hopes. It must be rooted in the relative chaos and mess in which we live out our days. In this respect, the concept of relational power is nothing more nor less than a recognition of what has in fact happened in our modern world. It is also a recognition of what is needed in order to respond creatively to what has happened.

As a capacity to sustain complex and mutually internal relationships that encompass more of the concrete lives of individuals and groups, the practise of relational power must confront the whole plenum of psychological and spiritual conditions

that characterize the human spirit. This plenum includes the better and the worse, the good and the bad, and their confounding mixture. It ranges from the balanced reasonableness of the mature to the excesses and deficiencies of the immature, and from the dependable goodness of sensitive souls to the demonic irrationalities of the deprived, the frustrated, and the depraved. Doubts, anxieties, inertias, resistances, and multidimensional forms of pride live in all of us.

In and beyond all these and countless other problematic states of the human spirit, along with their opposites, there are the many kinds and degrees of inequality that are present in all relationships. The fact of inequality is not just one consideration among many equally significant facts. It is a bed-rock condition. The failure to recognize its decisive status has confounded many social and political theories and programs. It has been a major basis for the traditional conception of order. It is now one of the strong motivating forces which impels us toward the reconstruction of modern societies. It is an ambiguous factor in all lives. It is at once a basis for compassion and a reason to despair. It is at once a precondition of leadership and a major element in the drift toward social mediocrity. It is the presupposition of messiahship. The inequalities that are crippling and dehumanizing may be reducible in scope and influence, but the general condition of inequality seems not only ineradicable but necessary. It is a necessary component in the division of labor and in the variety of creative capacities. In this respect it is part of the meaning of human finitude.

In the practise of unilateral power many of these natural and cultivated inequalities inevitably result in obstructive and impoverishing structures of injustice. It is the hope that in the practise of relational power we may learn how to interrelate these inequalities so they may become mutually enhancing.

It is possible to have a reasonably well-ordered society (in both the large and small sense of that term) as long as we deal abstractly with individuals and groups. The practise of unilateral power can create this kind of society. It has done so throughout history. The price for this ordered life is the neglect or repression of many important dimensions of the human spirit. In moving from this well-ordered but repressive society to forms of societal life which enable these dimensions of the human spirit to emerge in more concrete relationships, we must be prepared to live within conditions which are more complex, confused, and unsettling. The surfacing of repressed forces creates problems which did not exist previously. Roles are transformed. Habitual patterns of behavior and response are no longer appropriate



or acceptable. Crises in the areas of personal, professional, and social identity appear. The established order in all areas of life is weakened. Traditional values, all too often grounded on structures of abstract relationships, are questioned. The total situation becomes disruptive and potentially disintegrative. It borders on chaos. The social consequences of the liberation of women and the changed consciousness of minority peoples and underdeveloped countries (among other factors) have brought us to just such a state of affairs.

This unstable condition holds great promise for the future. A wise man has said that "the great ages are the unstable ages." But not all unstable ages have been great milestones in the odyssey of the human spirit. The price for creative advance is enormous. The challenge may be beyond our strength. There is ground for hope and reason to despair.

It is clear that the continued practise of unilateral power is totally inadequate to the social task that confronts us. But the practise of relational power is an incredibly difficult art to master. This type of power requires the most disciplined kind of mutual encouragement and criticism. The creative openness of this type of relationship involves possibilities of the greatest advance and the greatest risk. It calls for the utmost of energy, patience, endurance, and strength. It can lead to the deepest joys and to the abyss of the agony of suffering. In it will be found both heaven and hell and the bittersweet amalgam of their co-presence.

#### RELATIONAL POWER AS SIZE

The ultimate aim of relational power is the creation and enhancement of those relationships in which all participating members are transformed into individuals and groups of greater stature. In this kind of relationship the individuals (or groups) are neither swallowed up in the relationship nor are they absorbed into each other. Yet the relationship, which includes its members, exists only in terms of its members.

The aim of relational power is not to control the other either directly, or indirectly by trying to guide and control the relationship. The greatest possible good cannot emerge under conditions of control. The aim is to provide those conditions of the giving and receiving of influences such that there is the enlargement of the freedom of all the members to both give and receive. This enlarged freedom is the precondition for the emergence of the greatest possible good which is neither preconceived nor controllable. The commitment within relational power is not to each other but to the relationship which is creative of both. It is a commitment to the relational "us" and not to one or the other.

The elements of the structure of this highly in-

voluted relationship can be stated very abstractly, although it must be emphasized that these elements operate relationally and dynamically. On the one hand, in exercising an influence within the relationship one makes his claims and expresses his concerns in such a style as to enable the other to make his largest contribution to the relationship. With this contribution the experiences of all the participants are intensified and broadened. In making one's claims and in exercising one's influence on the other in this fashion, the freedom of the other is recognized and respected. On the other hand, one is to receive the presence and influence of the other within the relationship in such a manner that the other is enabled to enter more freely and fully into the relationship. In being received in this fashion the one who influences may be more open to absorb the influences of others.

The structure of relational power, again defined ideally, is such that the claims of justice (from the perspective of unilateral power) are both included and transcended. From the side of the claimant, some portion of justice is obtained in the very making of the claim or in exercising an influence. But in making the claim relationally, that is by enabling the recipient to respond most freely and creatively, justice is transcended. From the side of the recipient of the claim, justice is also served in the very receiving and acknowledgement of the claim. But in receiving the claim relationally, that is by enabling the claimant to become more open to the relationship and to being influenced, justice is transcended. In this kind of relationship transcendence means that all the parties involved both give and receive more than the requirements of justice demand or permit.

This is a description of the nature of the process of relational power viewed structurally and abstractly. It is also a description of relational power as operating ideally and without reference to the baffling and confounding realities which constitute our empirical existence. When looked at concretely and dynamically, the actual instances of relational power fall far short of this ideal structure. They are incredibly far more complex, ambiguous, and involuted. They involve all the contrasting qualities that are to be found in the endless variety of concrete individuals and social groups. They include the full plenum of conditions the human spirit is heir to. These qualities and conditions, which constitute the materials and contexts with which and in which the exemplifications of relational power must fulfill their ambiguous destinies, run the gamut from triumphant breakthroughs to crippling regressions, from life-restoring laughter to life-denying despair, from the beauty of the gracious heart to the debasing cruelty of the small mind and smaller soul.

Within this larger spectrum of the general human situation there appear to be at least two elemental factors with which the practise of relational power must wrestle in its struggle to create individuals and groups of larger size. These factors are at once the materials for creative advance and the grounds of frustration and persistent smallness of size.

The first is the fact of contrast, which often appears as conflict although not necessarily in the form of overt violence. Conflict more usually exhibits itself under the many guises of competition which infects all the dimensions of our social life. But contrast most generically refers to the inexhaustible differences of otherness. Contrast is the precondition of complexity without which the creation of a larger integrity is not possible. Without adequate contrast the intensity of experience may become too narrowly focused, and may lead to the crippling sickness of moralism or to the more virulent disease of fanaticism.

The second is the factor of estrangement which is the brokenness of life's essential relationships. The umbrella of estrangement encompasses the emptiness of the uncommitted, the heartless shrug of the indifferent and the insensitivity of the unmoved, the inertial smallness of the complacent, the errancy of the unfaithful, the demonry of the prideful and the absolutely certain, and the destructiveness of the hateful. The attempt to overcome estrangement is the "open sesame" to the experience of depth, without which the adventure of greater size loses its foundation of elemental simplicity.

Undergirding these two factors of contrast and estrangement, and remorselessly immanent within all movements toward greater size, are at least four conditions which appear to be unalterable or categoreal in nature. The degree of decisiveness with which our grasp of these conditions permeates our understanding, and the manner in which we deal with them, define and shape the limits of our creative advance.

There are first, and most obviously, the inequalities of energy, vision, sensitivity, maturity, and the capacity and the love to sustain relationships. Inequality of some sort or in some degree is present in every relational situation. As noted previously, in the practise of unilateral power these natural and inevitable inequalities lead to destructive injustices. The strong become stronger, and the weak become weaker. This is a form of mutual impoverishment. In the practise of relational power they create an imbalance that can be mutually enriching. Both the strong and the weak may become not only stronger but larger in stature.

There is, secondly, the puzzling fact of ambiguity, the interpenetrating mixture of virtues and vices. Virtues carried beyond their inevitable limits

become demonic vices. An individual's weaknesses are the other side of his strengths. Like the biblical parable of the wheat and tares they grow together. They coexist within an individual. The evil cannot be cut out of a person's spirit without weakening the strength of his goodness. The evil can be lessened only by the transformation of the strength of his goodness. The passion that caused the individual to transcend the limits of his virtues, and thereby convert them into vices, is the same strength that gave rise to the virtues originally. The failure to recognize the depth of ambiguity in all matters of the spirit leads us to live moralistically, without compassion, and without adequate understanding of others or, more pitifully, of ourselves.

There is, thirdly, the creative role of evil or brokenness in opening us to greater depths of experience. In the absence of problems or failures we tend to live our lives inertially. Dewey has suggested that we think only when our systems of thought and value break down, when we encounter dimensions of life we cannot handle. We often take the value and services of others for granted. Only when they have departed, leaving a vacant space against the sky, when it is too late to express our gratitude, do we come to acknowledge our indebtedness. An infidelity in marriage can lead to a deeper level of maturity in the relationship than perhaps was possible before. In the biblical parable of the prodigal son the deeply resentful older brother is given the possibility of a growth in stature in the face of the father's joyous welcoming of the repentant younger brother. The naughtiness of young children can call out depths within the parents which were not exemplified previously. The presence of evil does not lead inevitably to a greater good. Obviously. But the actualization of greater good seems to be grounded on brokenness in some degree.

Fourthly, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, through all the ironies and strange turnings of the human spirit there persists the ineradicable dialectical condition wherein every advance makes possible greater destructiveness, and every gain brings new opportunities and larger temptations.

All of these categoreal conditions are dimensions of a web of interrelatedness that constitutes the seamless context within which all human life is lived.

Relational power is the capacity to sustain an internal relationship. The sustaining does not include management, control, or domination. Rather, it involves the persistent effort to create and maintain the relationship as internal. This effort is carried out within the context of the factors and conditions previously described, and in the face of all the dynamic forces which operate to weaken or break the internality and transform it into the predominantly external type of relationship that is

characteristic of the practise of unilateral power.

The discipline demanded by the effort to sustain internal relationships is at least difficult. Its cost is large and sometimes enormous. The price to be exacted involves the expenditure of great energy in the form of an active patience, physical stamina, emotional and psychic strength, and a resilient trust and faith. Above all, the cost is measured in the coin of suffering. The capacity to endure a great suffering for the sake of a large purpose is one of the decisive marks of maturity. In the Christian tradition the adequate symbol of the cost of sustaining an internal relation is the cross.

Within the conception of power as relational, size is fundamentally determined by the range and intensity of internal relationships one can help create and sustain. The largest size is exemplified in those relationships whose range exhibits the greatest compatible contrasts, contrasts which border on chaos (Whitehead). The achievement of the apex of size involves sustaining a process of transforming incompatible contrasts or contradictions into compatible contrasts, and of bearing those contrasts within the integrity of one's individuality.

There are other less inclusive criteria which are applicable to the determination of size. Size may be ascertained by the degree of the concreteness of the other, including the other's freedom, that one can absorb, while attempting to maintain the relationship as mutually creative and transformative. This is especially the case when the freedom of the other moves him in the direction of indifference, refusal, or estrangement. Size may be measured by the extent to which one has enabled the other to be as large as he might become, and thereby make his fullest contribution to one's own life as well as to the lives of others. Size can also be determined by the freedom with which one's love of the other transcends the "in spite of" character of the traditional conception of love and moves toward an unqualified "because of."

In our religious tradition the "suffering servant" is an important symbol with respect to our topic of power. It may be used to refer to an individual or a people. The suffering servant has sometimes been interpreted as one who receives an influence without making any claim on his own behalf, as one who passively suffers the effect of self-centered or destructive unilateral influence. In this interpretation the suffering servant is one who exemplifies the purely feminine conception of passive power in contrast to the wholly masculine version of aggressive power. This is a contrast between two unilateral actions.

But from the point of view taken in this lecture, this interpretation is inadequate. The suffering servant is rather one who can sustain a

relationship involving great contrast, in this case the incompatibility between love and hate. In absorbing the hate or indifference derived from the other, while attempting to sustain the relationship by responding with love for the other, the extreme of contrasts is exemplified. This contrast is an incompatibility, in fact an emotional contradiction. But by having the size to absorb this contradiction within the integrity of his own being, and in having the strength to sustain the relationship, the incompatibility has been transformed into a compatible contrast.

This is size indeed. This consideration highlights the principle that the life of relational power requires a greater strength and size than the life of unilateral power. The suffering servant, in returning love for hate, and in attempting to sustain the relationship as internal and creative, must be psychically larger and stronger than those who unilaterally hate. Without this greater strength and larger size the suffering servant could not sustain the relationship. He would crack psychologically or he would break the relationship and revert to the practise of unilateral power.

It follows from all this that a christological figure such as Jesus, who is to be found at the bottom of the hierarchy of unilateral power, stands at the apex of life conceived in terms of relational power. But a messiah of size cannot be created out of the weakness of a Milquetoast.

In considering the topic of size it needs to be noted, again, that inequality is present as an inescapable condition. Because of this inequality there is an unfairness to life. This quality appears to have something like a categorical status in our experience. Our only choice is to choose between two forms of unfairness. In the life of unilateral power the unfairness means that the stronger are able to control and dominate the weaker and thereby claim their disproportionate share of the world's goods and values. In the life of relational power, the unfairness means that those of larger size must undergo greater suffering and bear a greater burden in sustaining those relationships which hopefully may heal the brokenness of the seamless web of interdependence in which we all live. "Of whom much is given, much is expected."

It has been maintained that the contemporary world, which has been so decisively shaped by modern science, requires the presence of groups of people of adequate size. It is the contention of this lecture that the practise of unilateral power cannot create people of a size sufficient to cope with the problems we face. If the quality of terrestrial life is to attain a level which makes it worth the effort of living it, this achievement is possible only in terms of the practise of relational power.

But our situation is deeply problematic. The

notion, that the life of relational power calls for a stature which transcends the life of unilateral power, does not mean, however, that relational power has greater survival capability than unilateral power. The higher forms of life may be less able to survive (as higher forms) than less complex forms of energy. The more sensitive the organism, the more it may need to be protected from some of the rougher and cruder aspects of existence. In terms of permanence, the stone far outdistances man. As Whitehead has observed, "The art of persistence is to be dead."

There is another dimension to our problematic situation. It is an issue that has troubled theologians and philosophers of history for centuries. Stated in terms appropriate to this lecture: can the life of relational power be sustained with sufficient strength in the face of perhaps overwhelming unilateral power? Those who live relationally are larger in stature and psychically stronger than those who live unilaterally; nonetheless, can relational power become so efficacious historically that it may at least hold its own if it cannot overcome the destructive forces of unilateral power? The lives of those who live relationally may not be sufficiently efficacious or persuasive with respect to those who live unilaterally. In fact the opposite may and does occur. The behavior of the larger may create a fury in the souls of the smaller and weaker that can eventuate in greater impoverishment and destructiveness. This principle is exemplified in the anti-semitism which is an attitude of the weaker against the stronger.

Who shall inherit the earth? The Bible says it will be the meek. But surely this prophecy is not warranted if the meek are understood to be spineless doormats who live in terms of a unilaterally feminine conception of power. If the meek are understood to be living embodiments of relational power, if they are in fact members of a suffering servant people, then the proposition is surely interesting. It may even become true.

The earth belongs, or ought to belong, to those who make the largest claims on life. The largest claims are not made nor are they makeable in the form of unilateral power. They are made by those who attempt to embody most fully the life of relational power, for they are claims made not only for themselves but on behalf of all peoples.

The metaphysical depth and pervasiveness of the primary conditions which constitute the problematic context for the practise of relational power<sup>14</sup> point to a universe struggling toward creative advance. This problematic context confronts us whether we opt for unilateral or relational power. The god of unilateral power is

not a tribal deity. On the contrary. It is a universal god. But it is a demonic god, an idol which is not large enough to merit our faith and devotion. The issue appears to be in doubt. But the faith which can live with that doubt is a steadfast and hopeful trust in both the goodness and the power of a relational god of adequate size.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>I have chosen to use masculine nouns and pronouns for the sake of style and euphony, even though the euphony has a predominantly masculine quality.

<sup>2</sup>William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1940), pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup>It might be contended that the conception of power determines the nature and role of relationships. However, the textual way of expressing the matter is more in keeping with the overall intent of the lecture that conceptions of power are grounded in conceptions of the self and metaphysical reality. All of these conceptions are, in turn, expressions of value presuppositions.

<sup>4</sup>This particular illustration involves complex and ambiguous factors. There is no necessary contradiction involved in recognizing that sometimes we may perform better when playing against players who are better than we are, especially if we tend to perform somewhat indifferently when competing against normally inferior players. Different people respond differently to the various degrees of competitive pressure.

<sup>5</sup>There is the New England short story ("The Great Stone Face") about the influence of a mountain in the shaping of a human face. Beginning when he was a small boy and persisting throughout his life, a certain man developed the habit of spending many hours looking at a stone face which the forces of nature had etched on the side of a mountain. Gradually over the years the man's face took on the character of the great stone face.

<sup>6</sup>The scientific definition of power, as the capacity either to produce or to undergo an effect, seems to be an exception to this general practise.

<sup>7</sup>The receiving of influence from another may result in the enlargement of one's identity or the creative transformation of one's freedom.

<sup>8</sup>The methodology of historical understanding is thoroughly contextual in character. Every historical figure (or institution or movement) must be seen and understood contextually, because that individual lived his life in that particular context, and in no other. All historical life is particular in its concrete existence. It is possible to interpret this methodology and its achievements in terms of a non-relational conception of the self and society. In this conception a context functions so as to shape and limit an individual's possibilities which are relevant to that particular context. But a relational view of the self and society would seem to furnish a more adequate basis for grasping the significance of the work of historians. In a limited way an individual helps to give shape to his contextual environment, and that particular world shapes that individual. The individual lives in a context of others, but that context lives and has its being only within the individuals, and in the relations between individuals, who partly constitute the totality of that context. The context becomes part of the inner life of the individuals who live in that world.

<sup>9</sup>In other words, the mutuality is not simultaneous. The presence of mutuality in the strictest sense requires a crisscrossing interrelationship of cause and effect in the successive stages in the ongoing lives of two or more individuals. For ordinary practical purposes this strict definition of mutuality need not be insisted on.

<sup>10</sup>Because of their inertial qualities these relationships may also become the enemies of freedom.

<sup>11</sup>This view of internal relations includes of course the presence of external relations. The communal individual is also solitary. All partners, especially marriage partners, as Gibran insisted need "spaces in their togetherness."

<sup>12</sup>It is also true that it is often difficult to influence or to give to another in such a way that the other is not demeaned but is in fact enhanced by this aspect of the relationship. The difficulty is due to considerations analogous to those involved in the development of the art of gracious reception.

<sup>13</sup>The fullest exemplification of "presence" would involve having each member both speak and listen in terms of the dynamics stated in the text. This situation seldom occurs with full equality on any specific occasion.

<sup>14</sup>Ambiguity, inequality, and the several dimensions of the inextricable relationships between good and evil.