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OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSTS**



**THE SOUTH ASIAN JOURNAL OF
TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS**

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EDITORIAL SECTION

Editor's Note

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a practice in psychology used to understand one's self in terms of intra-psychic content and how that impacts interpersonal relationships. Practitioners integrate and apply its scientific models and tools in various fields of Psychotherapy, Counselling, Education and Organisations, to enhance personal growth through self-reflection and awareness, thereby improving personal and professional connections and performance.

In India, the nodal body for Transactional Analysts to train, certify and practice is SAATA – South Asian Association of Transactional Analysis. This journal SAJTA – South Asian Journal of Transactional Analysis, is a bi-annual compilation of scientific literature shared by Asian and international Transactional Analysis authors, of their own ideas / theories or developing existing models or application in their fields of operation.

This is the 17th publication of the SAJTA and I am pleased to share that we have augmented the team with 6 more editors who have volunteered to be part of the team from the next issue. I look forward to their fresh perspectives and vigour in enriching SAJTA. They are:

- **Abhijeet Punde** is a banker and visiting faculty (finance) in Jannalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies (JBIMS), Mumbai. His versatility includes a certification in Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and providing life skills training to young adults from weaker socio-economic backgrounds. Currently pursuing his MA in Psychology alongside Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy, Abhijeet is an avid reader. His family includes his father, wife and two daughters.

- **Deepti Singhal** was always interested in people - what they thought, what made them think that way and how they were so similar and yet so different. She now practices as a psychotherapist

and has been a Transactional Analysis trainee for several years, exploring and understanding herself and people. When she isn't with family, friends or herself, reading, word games, puzzles and travel, excite Deepti. Friends know her for her penchant of humming songs and long hugs.

- **Nikita Bandale** is a psychotherapist in private practice and a Transactional Analysis psychotherapy trainee. She has a master's degree in counselling psychology and has worked with infants and toddlers in the child development space previously. Her areas of interest in psychotherapy are storytelling, grief and motivation. When not working, you will find Nikita hanging out with her cats, reading a book or knitting.

- **Ritika Gupta** is a practicing psychotherapist, who has previously worked as an Assistant Professor and taught child learning and development. The intersection of mind, body and lifestyle - their interdependence and potency, interest her greatly. Having recently moved to the US, Ritika and her husband enjoy venturing outdoors and learning Carnatic music together. She also loves growing plants and experimenting with flavours.

- **Shobana Jayaraman** practices as a psychotherapist, under supervision. Transactional Analysis inspired her when she saw her mother beginning to change after learning it. When a personal tragedy pushed her to look deeper within, she later enrolled in Transactional Analysis training as well. Married and a mother to two boys and a fur baby, Shobana is passionate about parenting, learning, composting, gratitude-practice, plants and giving-back-to-our-planet.

- **Vaaruni Sundar** has been a practicing psychotherapist for four years and is training to be a group analyst. She is interested in working through social issues and power dynamics in the therapeutic space and finds that groups by their very nature, bring this to the forefront. Vaaruni

loves spending time with family and friends, travelling with her husband and lemon tea. As an Ashtanga Yoga practitioner, she enjoys discovering the capacities of her mind and body.

While we strive to put together a world-class journal and work hard alongside the authors, I am left thinking about two points, which I believe, are interconnected: a) the fast-paced times that we live in and b) engagement with the written material. As we create time to nurture our bodies with food, movement or rest, do we amply nurture our minds? Do we slow down enough to think new thoughts, ideate and be creative? What might it be like, if each of us made it a point to create something intellectual, as a practice? I would think that it is a habit that needs cultivating. Much as the authors of this and past issues have dedicated their efforts right up until culmination. When I ensure I read regularly and think about what I've read or discuss it with my peers, I find I am indeed stimulated. This could be a news article, forward or a work of fiction too. How then, might we stimulate our minds, nurture and feed it - by this journal or other sources of inspiration, to get us to think afresh, apply ourselves anew and become original authors too? I ask this of myself, as much as I ask it of you.

Here are three creators, who have slowed down to sharpen their minds and contribute their unique ideas to this issue:

1) *Joy Roshan* offers his perspective of power, borrowing from previous definitions and creating his own. Building on this, he shares his quadrant model of power positions, linking them to life positions, which he elaborates through a case study. Further, he goes on to explain how one may reclaim power with the use of specific strategies across the power position quadrant. Joy portrays diverse examples to elucidate how one might raise awareness to recognise internal limitations and use the model to align with reality.

2) *Keerthana Panneer* delves into an impassioned exposition of casteism in the Indian sub-context, spanning across centuries to its insidious prevalence today. Focusing on nuances of the mindset and pathology of perpetrators, she adroitly uses several Transactional Analysis frameworks to highlight the casteist psyche. With thought-provoking and hard-hitting accounts, she traverses from individual to systemic oppression and marginalization, leaving the reader to reflect on our personal attitude and action/inaction towards the subject.

3) *Mitra Heidari's* article explains attachment styles and their close parallel to life positions. She shares various approaches within and outside Transactional Analysis literature, which eventually crystallise into her own model of attachment security. Through a personal example, Mitra explains how boosting her own attachment security promoted an innately OK life position. She dwells in some detail on a fascinating concept called the '0' position in conclusion, beckoning the reader to engage with this element through her model.

I invite you to make time to engage with this issue, as much to honour the writer, as to evoke your own appetite to write.

We look forward to hearing your views, ideas, questions or feedback. You could write to any author and / or us, at journal@saata.org.

Nisha Rao

Managing Editor

SAJTA

Theme for Jan 2023 Issue

“Open Issue”

(No specific theme)

Deadline for submissions: **October 15th 2022**

Email : journal@saata.org

Please follow the [Guidelines for Writing for SAJTA](#) before you submit.

Editorial Board

Volume 8, Number 1, July 2022

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ARTICLES

Power Positions and Power Moves

A model to understand power through the lens of Transactional

Analysis

Joy Roshan

Abstract

This article gives a new definition to **Power**. Various authors in Transactional Analysis have defined power in different ways. This article considers these definitions and synthesises a new definition that brings out the intrapsychic and interpersonal aspects of power. The article also explores the relationship between Power and Script, and hence brings in the idea of **power positions**. It explains the different ways, called **power moves**, by which one can reclaim power - within and in areas of their life.

Already Existing Definitions and Explanations

One of the first Transactional Analysis authors to define of power was Claude Steiner. Steiner (1974) defined it as “the capacity to cause people to do things” (p. 212). I believe that he adopted this definition at first because he was attempting to see power in the interpersonal context, or how it manifests in relationships. He extended this definition to bring out the aspect of Power Play, which in-turn was defined as “techniques used to get people to do something they don’t want to do” (p. 215).

Steiner later removed the context of relationships from his definition of power and defined it as “the capacity to produce change” (1987, p. 102) and declared that manipulating and controlling others is an extremely limited form of power.

The other treatment of power that would be meaningful to consider here, was given by Adrienne Lee (2008) in her TAJ article 'The Power is in our Process'. She mentions that the fantasy of power that we have is very much like a baby's fantasy to have the perfect union with its mother. In adults, it manifests as the desire for a fantasy to be fulfilled, in the context of the Self-Other dyad.

A New Definition of Power

The following definition of power is derived from the previous definitions given by Steiner (1974, 1987) and Lee (2008). Before defining this, let us clarify what exactly is being referred in this article as power. The power mentioned here, is a *sense* that the individual feels within them. It can also be called as a *feeling* of being powerful or being powerless. This is in contrast with Steiner's choice to see it as a *capacity* a person has. Rather, power is dealt with here, as a here-and-now phenomenon, found in the intrapsychic process, as Lee described. In short, this article answers the question: "What has to happen for a person to feel powerful?"

For the sake of the below explanation, I will be using the word "I." It is meant to represent any individual. The reader can put themselves as this "I" and test if the below explanation is relatable for themselves.

I exist. And as part of my existence and to support it, I want some things. These things can be material - like a house, a car, a partner. It can be an idea - like an academic degree, a social status, a certain kind of recognition. It can be an internal state - like freedom, peace, autonomy. To get what I want, I need to exercise a choice that results in my getting what I want. If I sense that I can exercise this choice, I feel powerful. And if I sense that I cannot exercise this choice, I feel powerless (*Figure 1*).

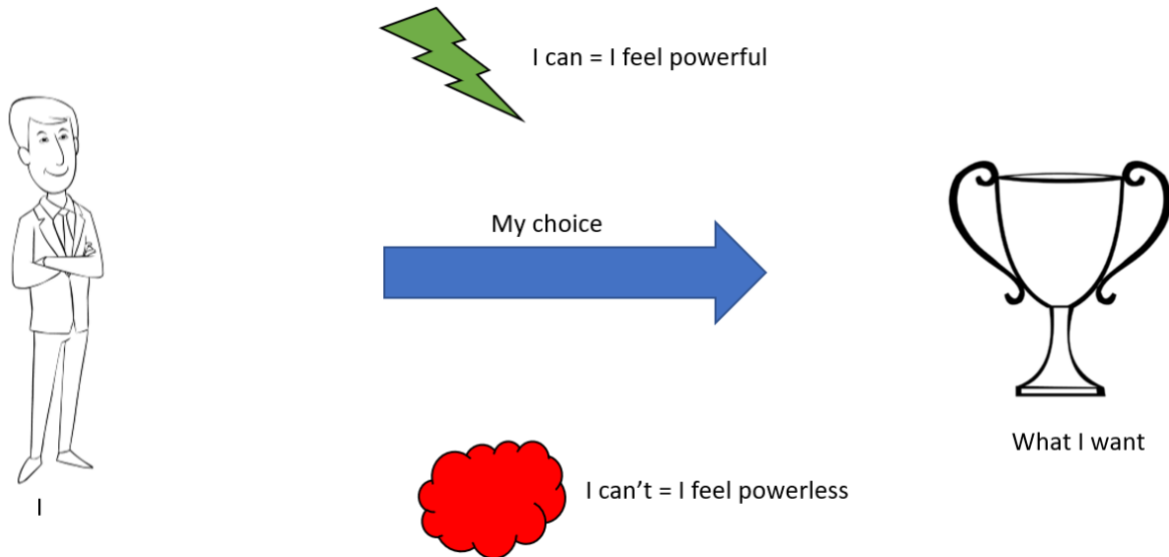


Figure 1: Power in Exercising Choice

From the above, power can be defined as “**a sense of ability for one to make a choice, to get what they want**”. Having defined so for an individual, this definition holds good even for groups such as an organization, community or nation.

The above definition incorporates the aspects of power explained by Steiner and Lee. At first, Steiner explained power as the ability to cause people to do things, and later explained it as the capacity to produce change. We can argue that change is the journey from the state of ‘I/We don’t have what I/we want’ to the state of ‘I/We have what I/we want’. Similarly, Lee’s definition can be rephrased as what the individual wants from the other and whether that want is realizable.

This definition provides a simple way to understand power as a phenomenon. What is explored in the remaining of the article is the understanding of different ways to use or not use power and differentiate which way is helpful and which is limiting.

Four Power Positions

A quadrant model is proposed to understand the usage of power in scripty and non-scripty contexts. This quadrant can be called Power Positions. Let us first understand the axes.

The vertical axis is Power vs Powerlessness. Both terms are explained below:

- Power: ‘I think and feel that I CAN make the choice to get what I want’
- Powerlessness: ‘I think and feel that I CANNOT make the choice to get what I want’

The horizontal axis is Real vs Scripty

- Real: ‘when my choice to get what I want, and my perception of ability to make that choice is IN ALIGNMENT WITH REALITY’
- Scripty: ‘when my choice to get what I want, or my perception of ability to make that choice are NOT IN ALIGNMENT WITH REALITY and hence is governed by limiting aspect of my script’

Putting this together, we have the below quadrant (*Figure 2*)

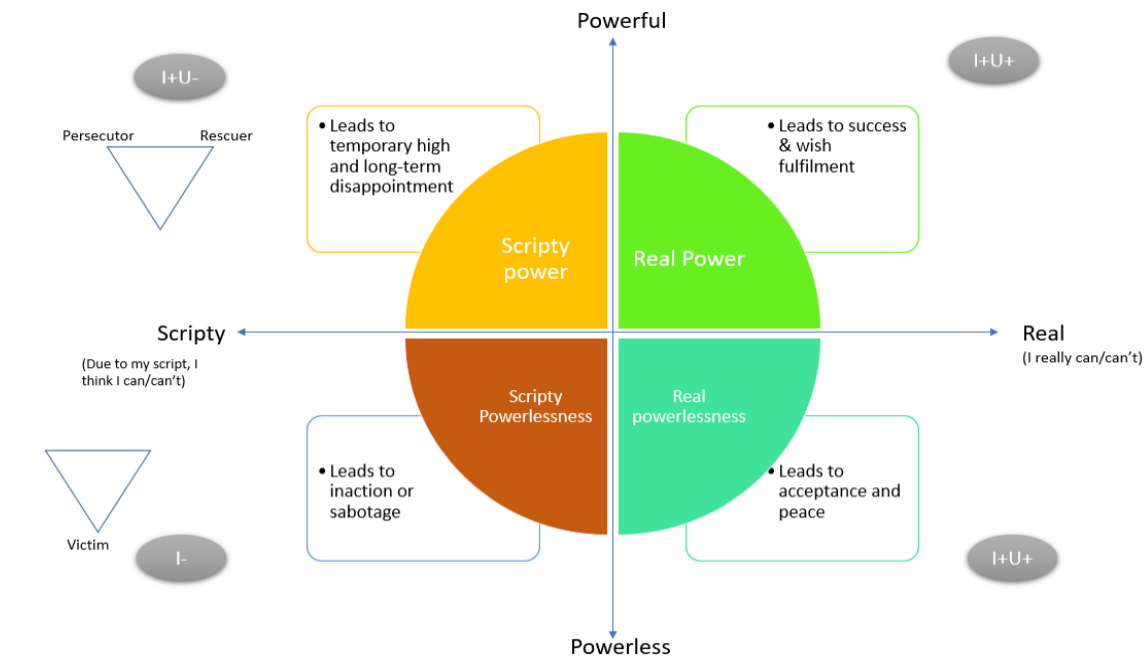


Figure 2: 4 Power Positions

Each quadrant is explained below

- Real Power (RP+): If I am in this quadrant, my choices are aligned with reality; it takes self, others and the situation into consideration. I also do a realistic assessment of my ability and I conclude that, in fact, I can make the choice. This evaluation hence tends to be a correct assessment. This means that this evaluation has taken all realistic constraints and capabilities into account. Hence there is a high probability that I will succeed in my choice and get what I want. This **leads to wish fulfilment**. To operate in this quadrant, one must be in the life position of **I am Ok, You are Ok (I+U+)**.
- Real Powerlessness (RP-): If I am in this quadrant, either I realize that the available choices are not aligned with reality or I conclude correctly that I do not possess the ability to make that choice. This leads to acceptance of what we cannot have and hence results in peace. Also, we then see how we want to change what we want. To be in this quadrant also requires **I am Ok, you are Ok (I+U+)** life position. When we realize real powerlessness, we need to be able to say that “I am Ok even if I do not possess the ability to obtain what I want. Not having that doesn’t make me a lesser person. Others are Ok, even if they are contributing to make the choice impossible”.
- Scripty Power (SP+): While operating in scripty power, I feel capable to make certain choices but these choices may involve discounting. For example, a con-artist may think “I can pretend to these people that I am genuine. When they trust me and give me what I want, I will disappear”. This choice involves discounting of others’ rights. It also discounts legal consequences of such actions. Still the person justifies “I can do it and get away with it” and their script supports them in such a choice - “The only way to survive is to get the

better of others”. Other examples involve bullying, dominating, persecuting or arm twisting. It can also manifest as a rescuing role: “I can save you from your wretchedness”.

In all these examples, the person is operating in **I am OK, You are not OK (I+U-)** position. This of course leads to a temporary gratification. The person gets the sense of being powerful because they may achieve their short-term goal. But it also leads to long term disappointment as the person is either being a Persecutor or a Rescuer in the game. After the Switch happens, they find themselves being the Victim. Scripty power can be equated to One-Up powerplays as described by Steiner (1974, p. 216)

- **Scripty Powerlessness (SP-)**: Sometimes the person makes an incorrect assessment of their ability to choose. They conclude that there is no choice, or that there exists a choice, but they are not able to make that choice. It is possible that they actually have all the abilities to make the choice but they conclude that they cannot, as that is what their script dictates. Scripty powerlessness usually happens from a life position of **I am not Ok (I-)**. The person may be operating in a I-U+ or I-U-. Scripty powerlessness can be equated to One-Down powerplays as described by Steiner (1974, p. 218).

Case Study: Avni’s Power Positions

Avni lives with her husband, two children and her in-laws. Avni feels burdened with her responsibilities at home and feels that she is all alone in managing her household. However Avni also feels powerful in her position as she is the one who is in charge. If there is an activity that she has a joint responsibility with her husband, she is the one who reminds to complete it and prompts her husband to do his part. Husband takes a casual approach towards her prompts about fulfilling his responsibility. He even mocks her about her rigor and expressing her need for his cooperation.

Avni is quite hesitant to let go of this control she has, because of two reasons: She feels powerful in being able to play the game **Look how hard I am trying**. This is an example of **Scripty power** that she is experiencing where she is either a Rescuer, taking charge of all things at home, despite whether it is her direct responsibility or not, or a Persecutor who gets angry at others in house for not sharing in the work. She also experiences **Scripty powerlessness** when her husband does not join hands with her in her responsibility or she is mocked at her earnest attempts to communicate her distress.

Reclaiming Power

The quadrants described are the power positions that we take up based on certain contexts. The purpose of the exercise of mapping oneself into the power quadrant is to make movements towards the power position that one wants. These are the moves that maintain the objective of reclaiming power. We can call them **power moves**. Autonomy, as per Transactional Analysis, is ‘the movement from Script to a life that is aligned with reality and free from internal limiting programming’. Hence the power moves mostly involve moving from the left hand side of the quadrant (Scripty side) to the right hand side (Real or Authentic side). The following power moves are identified and explained below:

- Move 1: From Scripty Powerlessness to Real Power: Empowerment

This is usually the move that one seeks to make the most in their journey of growth. Due to scripty beliefs and evaluation, I would have concluded that I cannot get what I want. When the elements of scripts are worked on and resolved, the person freshly assesses reality and finds that they can have what they earlier thought was impossible. This move

can be rightly called **Empowerment** as it involves getting in touch with the latent power that was once eclipsed due to the script.

From Avni's example, she is in the scripty powerlessness when she was being mocked by her husband and in-laws for raising an objection on not being helped. Avni resolved this by working on her script belief "I don't deserve" and injunction "Don't be important." She started setting boundaries about the work that she can take up and refused to take up certain kinds of work, unless all parties got involved in fulfilling their responsibility, thus was able to empower herself in this situation.

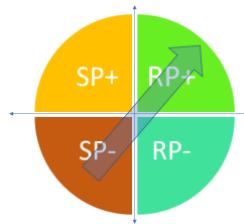


Figure 3: Move 1 From Scripty Powerlessness to Real Power: Empowerment

- Move 2: From Scripty Power to Real Powerlessness: Disillusionment

Being in scripty power may mean that we derive the sense of power by evaluating reality through the lens of script. Due to this assessment, we have distorted reality. Once again taking Avni's example, she realized that she was being in scripty power when she was taking more than her share of responsibilities and getting conditional strokes for the same. As long as she maintained her script, she experienced this power or this temporary high derived from strokes. She identified the limiting aspects of that because the flip side of this was taking on too much of the workload and not having time to dedicate to her own growth and enjoyment. She decided to give up this phony power and acknowledge powerlessness by saying: "I am not capable of satisfying everyone's needs, if I want my

needs also to be met. I may not get those conditional strokes anymore, but they are not helping me to grow and to enjoy my life. I give up wanting to do everything for everybody”. As you may have noticed in Avni’s case, Move 2 is a prerequisite to Move 1 because first one may need to make peace with the sacrifice they need to make (the way Avni sacrificed her strokes), before they move to Real power

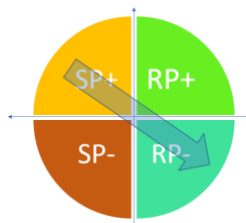


Figure 4: Move 2 From Scripty Power to Real Powerlessness: Disillusionment

- Move 3: From Scripty Power to Real Power: Alignment

Brij was a manager who was dominant over his team members and lead them with an iron grip. He thought he had a high performing team. He was shocked when people started leaving his team, stating work related stress as the reason. The power move that Brij required here is **Alignment**, which involves aligning to reality. Brij assessed his situation and noticed some real data which he had discounted earlier. He conducted one-on-one meetings with his team members to get feedback of their work and satisfaction levels. He realized that the team is getting stressed by his management style. He hence took corrective measures to control damage by rationalizing and balancing the workload, so that the team could work with optimal productivity without undue stress. Hence he made his goal less ambitious and aggressive, but more achievable. The Real Power that he has moved to, is now sustainable and can lead to a team with long term stability in performance.

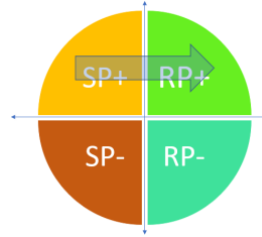


Figure 5: Move 3 From Scripty Power to Real Power: Alignment

- Move 4: From Scripty Powerlessness to Real Powerlessness: Acceptance

Madhu was depressed that he didn't get into the university of his choice, because the prior education he underwent did not satisfy the prerequisite required by the university admission. Madhu hit his script with this discovery. He blamed himself for the choice he made and that he messed up his education: "I messed this up the same way I mess everything in my life." Through therapy, after decontamination, he found that he had also made lots of clever choices in life and that he could not have foreseen this turn of events years before. Instead of distorting the cause of his problem as himself, he saw that this was unavoidable with the data he had access to. He decided to accept the fact that there is nothing he could do given the situation and made peace with the fact that he is not going to go to his dream university. This power move can be named as **Acceptance**, as it involves acceptance of reality rather than blaming self or other or situation for the inability to meet one's wants. Thus, starting from a scripty powerlessness, one embraces real powerlessness.

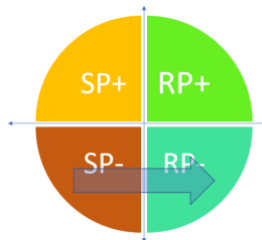


Figure 6: Move 4 From Scripty Powerlessness to Real Powerlessness: Acceptance

- Move 5: From Real Powerlessness to Real Power: Moving-on

Continuing Madhu’s example, once he was at peace about not getting into his dream university, his energies were free to dedicate to options that were available for him. By accepting what he could not have, he could now focus on what he could have and found a different option to pursue his higher education. This move can be appropriately called **Moving on.**

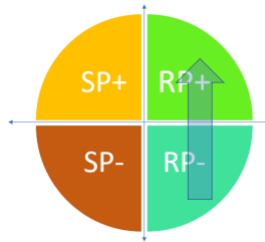


Figure 7: Move 5 From Real Powerlessness to Real Power: Moving-on

Following diagram summarizes all the five power moves in one place:

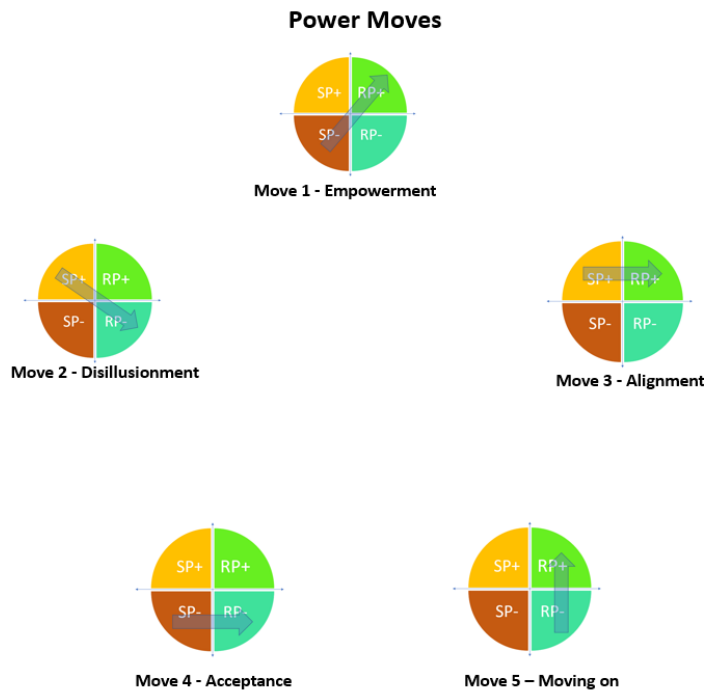


Figure 8: All 5 Power Moves

Conclusion

An objective of this article is to highlight that all forms of power are not useful power. By connecting *sense of power* with *alignment to reality*, we arrived at four power positions. To reclaim power, we identified five moves that can be described on the quadrant of power positions. These moves can be useful to generate options to come out of positions of stuckness and to free one's energy (Roshan, 2021, p. 27) to reclaim power.

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About the Author

Joy Roshan - PTSTA (Psychotherapy), M.Sc. Clinical Psychology

Joy works as psychotherapist and trainer of Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy. He is also certified in Hypnotherapy, Gestalt, and is a Master practitioner of NLP. He works with his clients in an environment of trust and safety, to facilitate them to resolve their issues in relationships; emotional distress affecting efficient functioning in life; mood disturbances such as Depression, Anxiety, Personality Disorders, OCD, Phobia, Sleep disturbance, Dream analysis; relief from psychosomatic (mind affecting the body) difficulties, trauma cure, and Past Life Regression. He is also passionate about understanding the link between spirituality and psychotherapy and how one can benefit the other.

Email: You may contact Joy at joyroshan@gmail.com.

Transactional Analysis of the Casteist Psyche

Keerthana Panneer

Abstract

The article explores casteism in India through a Transactional Analysis lens, intending to highlight its impact on mental health and look at caste not as a minority issue but as a pathology amidst the upper caste. The casteist psyche is analysed through the concepts of ego states, contamination, ulterior transactions, contracts, games, and its role in the Indian psyche as the Cultural Parent and systemic injunctions. The intergenerational trauma caused by structural violence is briefly touched upon. The larger purpose of the article is two-fold: i) to reiterate that mental health of any community or nation is part of the larger socio-political ecosystem and ii) to highlight that as practitioners, educators, policy makers, and facilitators of change, we can't afford to be caste-blind or neutral in our stance.

What is the Caste System?

The caste system is a 2000-year-old socio-racial-economic structure that divides the entire Indian population into five categories by birth. It is linked to the varna (skin colour) system within the Hindu beliefs and has been mentioned in many ancient Hindu scriptures. However, most caste norms that became social law of the land can be found in *Manusmriti* (Casteist Verses from Manusmriti, 2017). Apart from social discrimination, it determined the livelihood (Some Excerpts from Manusmriti, 2017) of nearly every person in the Indian subcontinent. It decided who had access to resources (including education, housing, water, place of worship, right to information, justice, and social protection), forced free labour on millions including children (slavery), and

meted out cruel and structural punishment to those who challenged the inherently discriminatory structure. Each category is further divided into 3000 castes and over 25000 subcastes (What Is India’s Caste System, 2019). And those who’ve benefited from their position on the caste ladder for millennials now hold the majority of positions in the judiciary, academia, policy-making, banking, politics, private and public sector including reformatory systems. Globally, a parallel to the impact of casteism would be the structural violence and psycho-social repercussions of racism and white supremacy.

It is the author’s belief that we are either casteist or actively anti-caste. There is no place for a neutral stance. This diagram shows the author’s perception of the continuum of the casteist psyche; many of the traits overlap, and we may fall in more than one category.

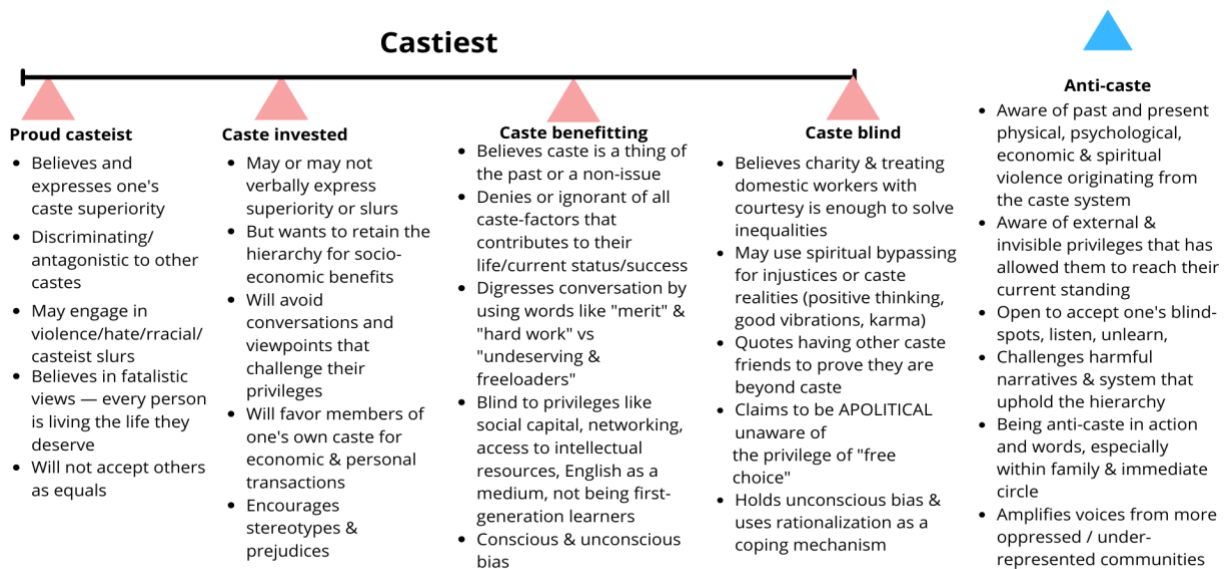


Figure 1: The Casteist Continuum

Why is a Dialogue on Caste Critical in the Mental Health Sector?

a) The very notion of caste—that people are born into categories created by man, which pre-determines their skills, abilities, right to exist, feel, express, and have access to safety, dignity,

basic resources, ambitions, freedom—is against the fundamental tenets of TA: *Everyone is born okay; everyone is capable to think; everyone is capable of change.* (Berne, 1957).

b) Caste-based violence continues to threaten individuals and communities in urban and rural areas. Caste-based discrimination and systemic oppression put marginalized people at higher risk of mental ailments, physical/chronic illnesses, and prolonged exposure to trauma. (Singh and Singh, 2020).

c) Much like the psychology behind the invisibility of white privilege in racial discourse (Mills, 2020), as professionals working in the field of mental health, it's important to be aware of how our own invisible but real privileges, social capital, and historic disposition that shield us from experiences faced by others, which when unacknowledged, could make us less effective as therapists, educators, and leaders.

d) The fact that caste is a vertical structure, where many of us are in the middle rungs—making us both the oppressed and the oppressors—calls for us to study our own role in upholding the structure.

e) Research reveals that the trauma caused by systemic oppression tends to be passed down through generations (Drexel University, 2019) and intergenerational trauma is “not only psychological but familial, social, cultural, neurobiological and possibly even genetic as well.” (DeAngelis, 2019).

Author's Notes:

a) The focus of this article is to throw light on the source of casteism and systemic injunctions (Berne, 1972) — the casteist psyche. Thus, the caste-invested psyche is studied *as* one invisible entity, and the caste-afflicted is looked at *as* a single entity with shared lived experiences.

b) Much like how the language of gender-based violence shifts the focus by terming rape, sexual assaults, and domestic violence as women's issues, negating the responsibility of the doer — predominantly men (Brunskell-Evans, 2015), caste is often seen as a minority issue. The language deliberately leaves out the perpetrators of a hate crime regularly. For example, “Dalit man attacked for sporting Moustache” (Express News Service, 2021) and “Accused raped 9YO because she was Dalit” (Mohan, 2021). This erasure of caste responsibility, parallel to denial of racism (Figuroa, 2020), is the key reason to focus on the pathology of the casteist psyche here rather than analyse the caste-affected. Although I've mentioned individuals from oppressed communities, the focus is on the perpetrator's pathology and how it has real-life impacts. Using recent (media-covered) incidents, is also to bust the myth that modernity and education have negated caste in cities.

c) Some of the real-life examples include facts on caste abuse, violence and suicide. Trigger warnings have been indicated accordingly.

d) The focus of this paper is not to debate the origin, intention or dogma behind the theory of castes. It is to look at the practical and real-life impact it has had on millions of lives in the last 2000-plus years.

Transactional Analysis of the Casteist Psyche

I. Ego States and Contamination

Interpreting the statements of a casteist psyche through ego states (Berne, 1967), reveals how casteist beliefs are passed down from one generation to another through Parent Contamination, much like racist or xenophobic sentiments.

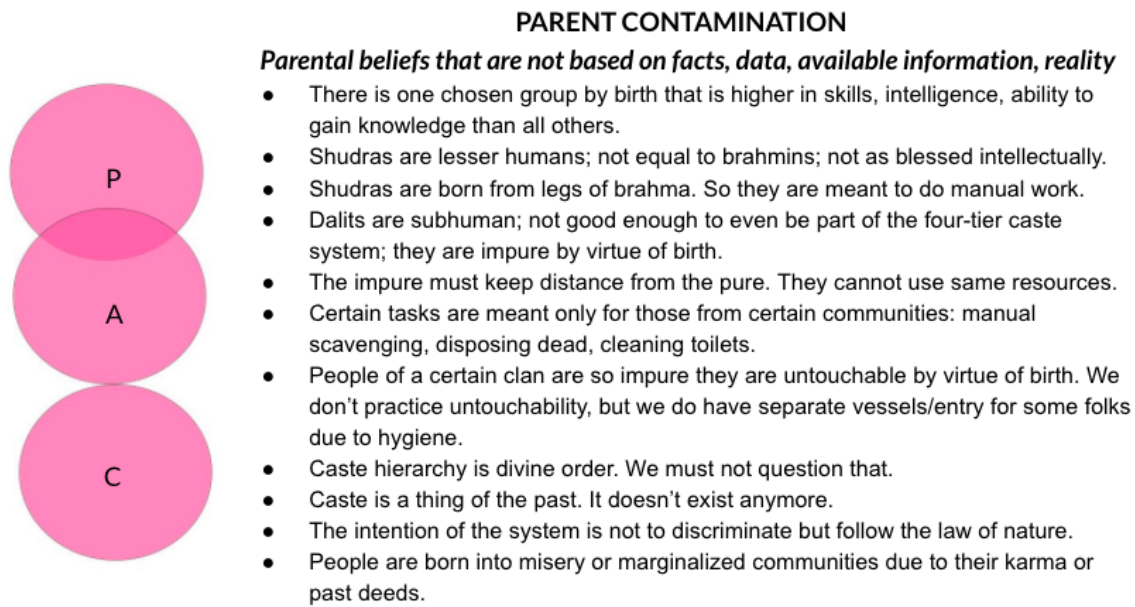


Figure 2: Parent Contamination in the Casteist Psyche

A double contamination is also evident as the child responds to casteist beliefs of the Parent, which is supported by lived experiences and millennial-old privileges.

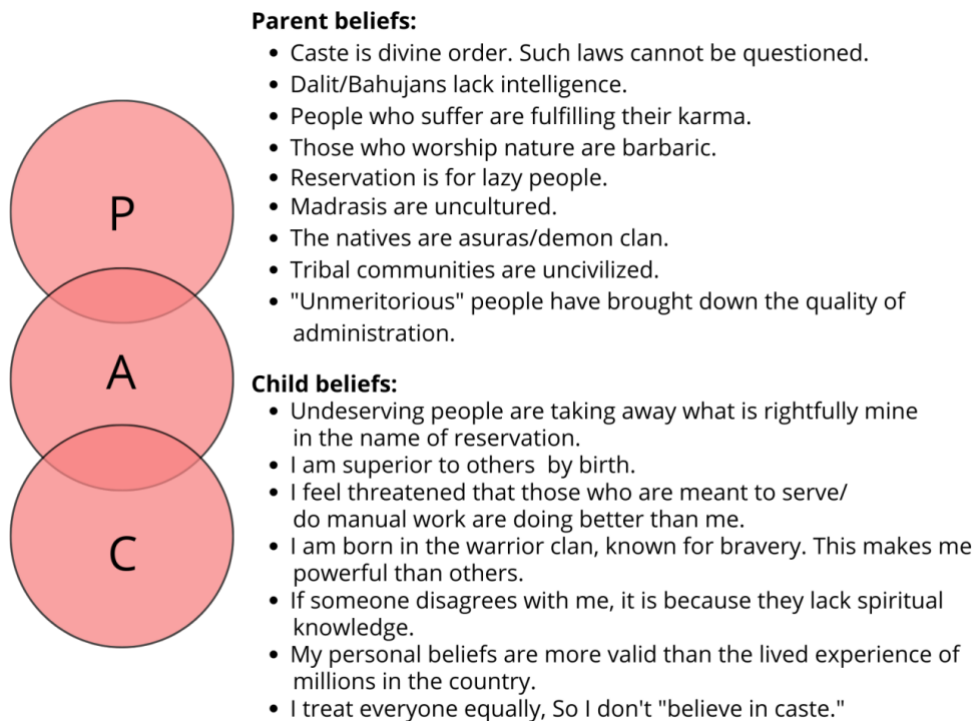


Figure 3: Double Contamination in the Casteist Psyche

A Brahman may compel a Shudra, whether bought or unbought, to do servile work for he is created by the creator to be the slave of a Brahmana. ~ Manu VIII 413 (Velivada, 2017)

II. Ulterior Transaction and Marshmallow Strokes

Ulterior transactions, which pretend to be Adult-Adult transactions, hide underlying Parent-Child transactions (Berne, 1967). Most covert bullying, unhealthy humour, and micro-aggression in day-to-day activities indulged by the casteist person engage in ulterior transactions. They also use marshmallow strokes, when their own OKness is threatened.

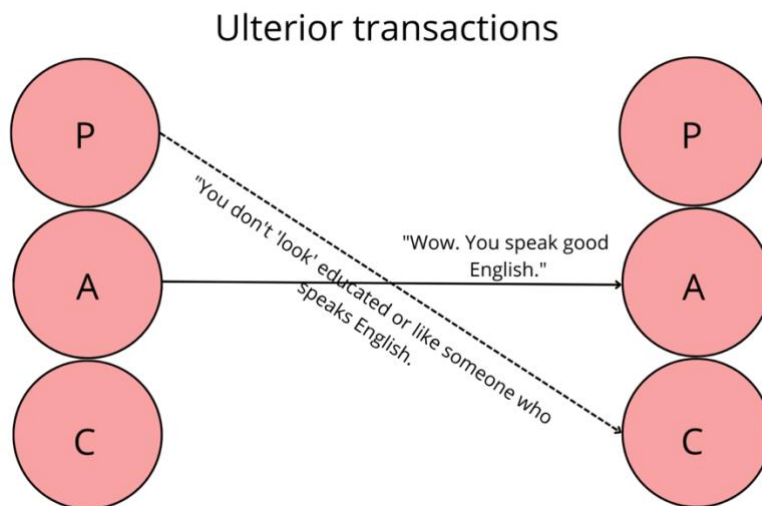


Figure 4: Ulterior Transactions

Examples of marshmallow strokes of a casteist and statements used in ulterior transactions:

- *You are pretty for a Dalit.*
- *You don't look like an Adivasi.*
- *Don't aim for things beyond your capacity. Be realistic.*
- *She is a fantastic actor, but she is not lead role material.*
- *You don't seem like a Madrasi.*
- *Are you sure you can do this?*
- *Wow. Your English is actually good.*

Figure 5: Marshmallow Strokes and Ulterior Transactions of Casteists

III. Games Casteists Play

A game is “a series of duplex transactions which leads to a ‘switch’ and a well-defined, predictable ‘payoff’ that justifies a not-OK, or discounted (less-than) position.” (Berne, 1964). It is characterized by the switch, when the individual switches between one role in the drama triangle to the other. A good example in this context is someone benefiting from the social privileges of caste but is unaware of it, they may begin with playing a victim or rescuer and switch to being the perpetrator. A few examples are below:

Game	Statements often made/real-life examples.
If it weren't for you...	If it weren't for you undeserving candidates, we naturally talented would be... Assumption: that all non UCs enter without merit or underserving of a spot they worked hard to get to.
Yes, but...	Yes, it is unfair system, but don't you think it is time to move on from the past? Assumption: Caste has no role or impact today.
See what you made me do	(Often played by cops) If you had simply dropped the charge, you wouldn't face these threats. Now, see what you made me do.
Ain't it awful	Ain't it awful that India's development is stalled and quality is dipping with people from those communities taking up jobs?
I'm only trying to help you	You need to be practical about money and realistic about your abilities. How about a job in x dept. instead? Look, I'm only trying to help you.

Figure 6: Games Casteists Play

IV. Forced Contract

A contract is a binding agreement where all parties are informed and aware of the clauses, conditions, and roles, the terms of which are then willingly agreed upon. A point to highlight here is how the caste system, designed by a select few, took the right to apply itself to the entire population, looping in people from diverse backgrounds and cultures without their consent to be part of the hierarchy. For example, except Brahmins, temple entry was banned and is still restricted to others although nearly all of them were built (physically) and funded (monetarily) by non-

brahmins. Shudras (lowest in the varna system) and Dalits (outside the varna system) were not allowed to access water or other resources from public sources.

No Shudra should have property of his own, He should have nothing of his own. The existence of a wealthy Shudra is bad for the Brahmins. A Brahman may take possession of the goods of a Shudra. ~ Manu VIII-417 & X129 (Velivada, 2017).

V. Understanding Caste via Injunctions and Cultural Parenting

Injunctions are “repeated and traumatic early parental messages that lead to chronic dysfunction in vital areas of life.” (Goulding and Goulding, 1972). They are often communicated nonverbally and transacted from Parent to Child. (Stewart and Joines, 1996).

“The Cultural Parent contains the conscious and unconscious boundaries of acceptable behavior, whether or not what is acceptable is harmful or helpful to the individual. (Drego, 1983). While we acknowledge that even children who grow up within the same household don’t pick up the same parental messages, the Cultural Parent’s messages become especially potent over generations of oppression, use of overt violence and covert discrimination, and deliberate restrictions on resources that can facilitate change (literacy, education, freedom to pursue skills, livelihood and express oneself) along with legislations that are based on casteist principles. (e.g. The Criminal Tribes Act identified certain communities as “born criminals” and encouraged marginalized individuals to be jailed for no reason or to protect the real culprits).

VI. The Caste System as the Cultural Parent

“An unhealthy Cultural Parent is one which wants to (1) repeat old history over and over again without change; (2) keep things the way they are, because this is safe and familiar; (3) assume

responsibility for others that these others can well assume for themselves; (4) provide punishments for new and untried behaviour even where such behaviour is lifegiving and healthy (5) keep power over others and enjoy controlling them for the sake of controlling; (6) destroy anything, however good, that threatens the maintenance of control.” (Drego, 1983).

The below reaction, by someone in a position of privilege, to an Adivasi woman being recently elected as the President of India, reveals the resistance to change characteristic of the Cultural Parent:

“Few Chairs are not meant for All...Do we allow a sweeper to perform Durga Puja...we have humiliated not only the Chair of Raisina Hills but also a few great souls...” (Don’t Support Adivasi President, 2022)

Pearl Drego’s model has been used to break down the personality of casteism as the Cultural Parent.

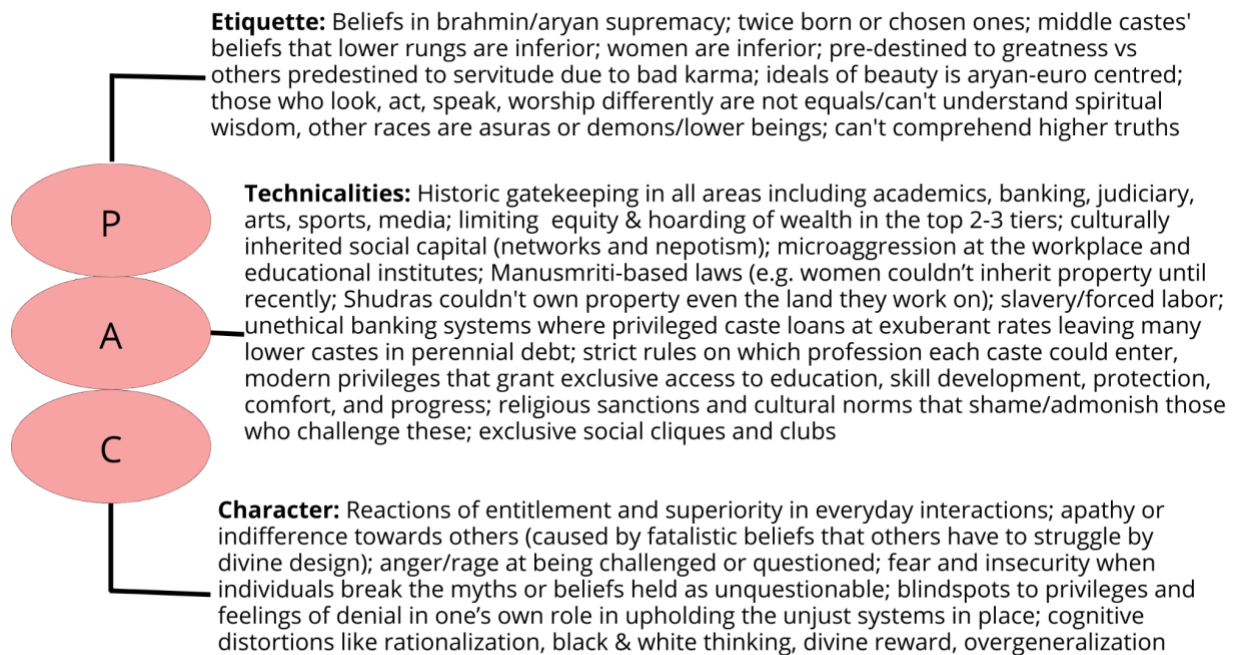


Figure 7: Personality of the Cultural Parent in the Caste System

Injunctions Given by the Casteist Cultural Parent

1. Don't belong:

Historically, the Cultural Parent's messages carry the injunction of "Don't belong." Apart from verbal communication, upper castes passed this as a (nonverbal) injunction, by refusing access to neighbourhoods, roads, schools, water sources, public toilets, cremation grounds, and continue to gate keep entry into academics (Datta, 2021), positions of power, scientific panels, and occupations requiring exclusive "intellectual skills." Urban spaces and corporations are no different, except profit motives and PR tactics (Diversity & Inclusivity norms) make them more subtle (Mihindukulasuriya, 2022).

"A Shudra is unfit to receive education. The upper varnas should not impart education or give advice to a Shudra.Violators will go to hell." ~ Manu IV-78 to 81 (Velivada, 2017)

Recent Example: [Trigger warning: caste oppression and suicide]

A more recent and heart-breaking example of the systemic injunction of "Don't Belong" is evident when a university administration, after a complaint from a religious-party-affiliated majority student wing, decided to a) cut off the monthly stipend for Ph.D. scholar Rohit Chakravarti Vemula b) suspended him from the university, c) denied access to his dorm and d) refused to hear his side of the story. The systemic injunctions largely influenced his personal life since birth, leading him to suicide. The lack of ownership and protests that followed "reveals the rot in India's educational system. It showed the world that modern India worked on caste principles; an anachronism of sorts." (Henry, 2019)

Excerpts from his final words (Farooq, 2016) offer insight into how he may have perceived the caste messages he has been receiving since his birth.

"...My birth is my fatal accident. I can never recover from my childhood loneliness. The unappreciated child from my past..."

The value of a man was reduced to his immediate identity and nearest possibility. To a vote. To a number. To a thing. Never was a man treated as a mind. As a glorious thing made up of star dust. In every field, in studies, in streets, in politics, and in dying and living.

I loved Science, Stars, Nature, but then I loved people without knowing that people have long since divorced from nature. Our feelings are second handed. Our love is constructed. Our beliefs colored. Our originality valid through artificial art. It has become truly difficult to love without getting hurt.

I am not hurt at this moment. I am not sad. I am just empty. Unconcerned about myself. That's pathetic. And that's why I am doing this.

Do not shed tears for me. Know that I am happy dead than being alive.

"From shadows to the stars."

Figure 8: Excerpts from Rohith Vemula's Final Letter

As in most cases of systemic oppression, it is never only one injunction. A potent combination is dealt out, often leading to fatal ends (Biswas, 2016), as was the case of Rohit, a 26YO doctorate, poet, philosopher who took in the loud injunction of Don't Belong to the point where he chose "be with the stars" instead of the caste-ridden earth. (Farooq, 2016).

2. Don't think/Don't make it/Don't grow up

The casteist psyche has used religion to justify their status and privileges; however, their aggression and discrimination towards lower caste often hint at a "I'm not OK; you're not OK" life position. The OKness of others threatens their sense of self (as the chosen ones) that they resort to labelling people who look, speak, act, or worship differently from the fair-skinned supremacists as asuras/demon-like/uncivilized. Students and journalists who challenge, are put in prison and called anti-Indians or ungrateful citizens; thus, actively sending out systemic injunctions of "Don't think/Don't make it/Don't be well/sane/important," which here also means "Don't be my equal." When individuals do take in these injunctions and "don't make it," the casteist psyche justifies it

by playing the game “See, I told you, you can’t make it. You are not cut out for it.” A strong “Don’t belong” is also evident here.

Historically, only one community claimed proprietorship over “intellectual” skills by confusing religious knowledge with intelligence and systemically tried to prevent others from pursuing education/skills involving the brain—a common organ present in all humans. This emphasis on being the “chosen ones” or those meant to do the most “sacred” of occupation also led to undervaluing the wisdom, skills, and labour of communities that did essential work like agriculture, arts and crafts, as well as, designed and built entire civilizations.

Currently, those who do challenge the hierarchy with awareness are punished, segregated, or mocked at to “keep them in place.” (E.g. children of lower castes were made to sit outside the classrooms even after laws were passed to give equal education.) The casteist psyche is invested in the “others” not accessing their Adult resources, in order to not challenge the status quo with facts or rationale. Another reaction is to use gaslighting techniques of misinterpreting or mistranslating the scriptures due to lack of knowledge (“characteristic of lower castes”). This denial negates people’s lived experiences for centuries as well as the fact that multiple national and international scholars have arrived at the same translation of the said verses in the specific scriptures.

“God said the duty of a Shudra is to serve the upper varnas faithfully with devotion and without grumbling.” ~ Manu 1-91 (Velivada, 2017)

Recent Example: [Trigger warning: bullying, caste abuse, suicide]

Payal Tadvi, a medical student from a tribal community, was subject to verbal bullying and caste abuse by her upper caste classmates that reinforced her systemic injunctions. (The bullying that led this doctor to take her own life, 2019).

“People like you can only be clerks” (same notion prescribed by Manu 2000 years ago) is one of the statements used to let her know “her place in society.” When she complained to the Head of the Department, their silence and inaction only reiterated the Cultural Parent’s messages of “Don’t Think; Don’t Grow Up; Don’t Make It; Don’t Be You.” She, too, gave in to a script that had a tragic end of losing her young life to suicide. (BBC, 2019).

3. Don’t Exist/Don’t Be

The author believes that the most heart-breaking fact remains that the message that we as a society allow being passed on in our neutral stance or caste indifference, is a massive “Don’t exist.” Refusing to acknowledge facts, claiming it as a minority issue rather than upper caste pathology, police brutality that makes it hard for victims to defend themselves, digressing topics to self-serving arguments (e.g. equal access to education and affirmative action/reservation), blatant forgetfulness as we get used to headlines on caste-based violence, and choosing to “think positive and be apolitical” even at times of injustice make us all responsible for this fatal injunction. Historically and till date, the extreme punishment for not sticking to caste boundaries has been violence and death.

“...if a Shudra over heard the Veda or ventured to utter a word of the Veda, the king shall cut his tongue in twain and pour hot molten lead in his ear.”

“If he mentions the names and castes of the (twice born) with contumely, an iron nail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red hot into his mouth.” ~ Manu VIII. 271 (Velivada, 2017)

Recent Example: [Trigger warning: caste violence, sexual violence, rape, murder, police brutality]

A 19YO Dalit woman (Biswas, 2020) was gangraped by upper caste men; she survived the brutal assaults and fought for her life for 8 days before she died (Hathras gang rape, 2020).

Government officials refused to return her remains to her family, and the cops fearlessly cremated her without the consent of the family, despite a LIVE telecast on media (Pandey, 2020). The Cultural Parent's message given to her, millions of women like her, her younger siblings, family, and kids in her community: You Don't Matter. Don't Exist. Don't Be.

A similar incident happened when a 9YO child (Ali and Chauhan, 2021) was raped by a Brahmin priest; the police remained inactive despite the accused having admitted his crime until widespread protests called for action. The state's inaction and indifference are also a loud systemic injunction of "Don't be," while encouraging upper caste and middle castes to continue their abuse and violence without a chance for introspection or self-awareness.

And as Roberts (1983) states, systemic "injunctions cause people to grow up with distorted messages about themselves, their OKness and their equality. This creates the problem of supremacy, i.e. the notion that some people, for some reason, are superior and that some people, for some reason, are inferior".

Caste and Intergenerational Trauma

Numerous studies have begun to highlight the link between caste supremacy and trauma (Chandrashekar, 2018). Casteism has actively restricted individuals from pursuing autonomy, spontaneity, and intimacy:

"even as caste victims' trauma has not been a focus of academic discourse in India, the lived subjective traumatic experiences and memories are beginning to emerge in these poetic and autobiographical narratives which often echo several symptoms of trauma such as anxiety, sadness, guilt, anger, grief, fatigue, pain, despair, shame, chaos, loss of trust and so on. The atrocities perpetrated by higher castes were rarely met with resistance or intolerance by lower

castes as they were conditioned to believe in the hegemony of upper castes as deeply rooted in a sacred ideology.” (Ahammed, 2019).

Apart from the socio-political and economic setback that marginalized communities face, the personal scripts influenced by systemic injunctions as well as generational trauma put entire populations at high risk of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and a host of psychosomatic ailments including chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, autoimmune and stress-induced conditions (DeAngelis, 2019). There is also growing evidence that stress and trauma can have permanent changes on the brain, including an enlarged amygdala and reduced hippocampus (Bremner, 2006).

Conclusion

In its attempt to initiate dialogue, this article would like to offer these questions for self-reflection, before concluding.

- Do we believe people from certain castes look a certain way?
- Are we surprised to learn the caste of someone we meet? This is unconscious bias at play.
- Are we patronizing when speaking to individuals who work for us assuming they need more time/explanation to understand what we mean?
- Do we look at the caste-impacted as victims rather than seeing our own role in our neutrality or siding with the system?
- Do we believe caste is a Dalit issue or a lower-caste issue, much like how we label rape/sexual violence as a women's issue rather than predominantly a male-induced issue?
- Do we dismiss people's personal stories involving their cultural identity as not critical to developmental needs?
- Do we tend to avoid, mellow down, or redirect socio-political conversations that challenge our idea of right vs. wrong?
- Do we consciously or unconsciously engage in "spiritual bypass" or "positivity" to discount people's socio-political experiences and caste-induced challenges?
- As many of us understand the need to be in the present (moment), do we ignorantly use this practice to dismiss historic or personal accounts of oppression, trauma, and injustices as unnecessary negativity or thing of the past?
- Do we believe our success and current standing is purely through personal hard work and historic privileges have nothing to do with it? (e.g. not being first generation learners, ancestors not forced into bonded labor)
- Do we hide behind being apolitical and neutral because we have the luxury to remain unaffected and the privilege of benefitting from the system that happens to be on our side historically?

Figure 9: Questions for Self-reflection

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

~ Desmond Tutu

These questions, the author hopes, would urge us to look at where we stand in our position of power and agency. By comprehending caste through the Transactional Analysis lens, it is also an assimilation process for the author to integrate her lived experiences of discrimination and hard won agency, as well as to bridge social justice and psychological intervention. The author believes that the Transactional Analysis community — one that is firmly rooted in the beliefs that “Everyone is OK” and “Joy is everyone’s birth-right” — can come together to accelerate systemic changes and facilitate healing communities as a whole.

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About the Author

Keerthana Panneer is currently pursuing Trauma Studies at the Trauma Research Foundation (Co-founded by Dr Bessel van der Kolk), after having completed her Masters in Psychology and Diploma in Transactional Analysis (Psychotherapy). She is also a writer and editor with over ten years of experience in the content industry.

As a survivor of PTSD and abuse, she aspires to encourage dialogues that can promote equality, agency, and self-love. Navigating symptoms of PTSD, exploring meditation, undergoing personal therapy, and working with marginalized communities have enabled her to appreciate the close ties between the body and mind as well as the undeniable link between socio-political factors and mental health. Keerthana can be contacted at tina.panneer@gmail.com.

Boosting Attachment Security and Promoting OKness

Mitra Heidari

Abstract

Given the commonalities between Attachment Styles and Life Positions, the current study implies that boosting the sense of attachment security could effectively promote OKness in life positions. The 'Proximity to the Self-Ok Corral' model is developed to summarise the study theme. In addition, a personal experience is presented to demonstrate the discussion's application. The study is concluded by demonstrating a significant link between attachment security and life positions through the author's process of self-healing. Moreover, it suggests the process of evolving beyond the I+U+ position by residing at the midpoint of the "0" position, a state beyond duality in the life position matrix. Further research is recommended to understand the notion from the viewpoint of 'Physis in Action'.

Keywords: Attachment Theory; Attachment Styles; Attachment security; OKness; Life positions; Existential position.

Introduction

According to Harry Stack Sullivan, individuals develop their personalities within a social context. He stated that "personality can never be isolated from the complex of interpersonal relations in which the person lives and has his being" (Sullivan, 1953, p. 5). Eric Berne's concept of "life position" or "existential position" (1962/1976), as well as Ainsworth and Bowlby's "attachment theory" (1991), deal with the developmental process in personality formation and have overlapping definitions. There was a constant

stream of evidence pointing to the role of attachment in personality development (Bowlby, 1988). The current study identifies common characteristics between existential positions and attachment styles. I+U+, I-U+, I+U-, and I-U- existential positions have commonalities with secure, anxious, avoidant, and fearful attachment styles. Furthermore, Main and her colleagues labeled infants with no specific attachment style as “disorganized.” These infants were observed to have a disorderly version of one of the three typical attachment styles (Main & Weston 1981; Main & Solomon in press). Similarly, Berne (1972) discussed individuals who behaved disorderly in accordance with one of the existential positions and labeled them as “unstable.” Therefore, a disorganized attachment style is compatible with an unstable existential position.

Attachment Theory

The notion of attachment was founded on John Bowlby's studies (1969). Through her Strange Situation Laboratory, Mary Ainsworth validated attachment measurements and developed attachment styles (Ainsworth et al., 1971/1978). Bowlby defined attachment as a “lasting psychological connectedness between human beings” (1969, p.194). It may be considered interchangeable with concepts such as “affectional bond” and “emotional ties” Between the child and his caregiver (Ainsworth, 1985/1989; Bowlby, 1988). Sroufe says, “the entire developmental process builds upon the foundation that was laid out in infancy” (2000, p.71). The mother and the infant's behavior patterns are similar to the extent that it seems both are experiencing the same thing (Collis & Schaffer, 1975; Schaffer et al., 1977). According to Bowlby (1969), humans are born with a behavioral system that is specifically designed to create these attachment bonds. This program of strategic goals is based on the central nervous system and evolved to help young children to stay close to their caregivers in order to ensure their safety and survival.

Infants' Attachment Styles

Ainsworth and her colleagues first identified the secure attachment style. It refers to the individual who is confident that his caregiver will be available, attentive, and helpful when encountering unwanted or frightening events (Ainsworth et al., 1971). Later on, in the famous experiment of "strange situation," different attachment styles were identified. Infants labeled '**avoidant**' had primary caregivers with dismissive attachment-related memories and feelings. Infants labeled '**anxious**' had primary caregivers anxiously preoccupied with attachment-related issues. And infants labeled '**secure**' had "free and autonomous" caregivers regarding attachment behavior. The fourth group of infants, labeled '**disorganized**', was discovered to be linked to the caregivers who were "unresolved" about losses and traumas in their attachment history (Main & Weston, 1981). Main and her colleagues concluded that disorganized infants demonstrated a disorderly version of one of the three typical attachment styles (Main & Weston, 1981; Main & Solomon in press cited in Bowlby, 1988).

Internal Working Models

Over time, a newborn constructs internal working models of the social environment, based on the nature of his or her individual interactions with caregivers (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). At their core are a person's self-perception (How deserving am I of affection?) and perceptions of close relationships (How trustworthy and responsive are others to my needs?). These functioning models of self and others provide the lens through which a person views the world and the compass by which he or she navigates the rocky terrain of intimate relationships. Based on their nature, working models are viewed as more or less secure (Hepper & Carnelley, 2012).

Attachment Styles in Adulthood

The positivity of a person's model of self and others is defined in terms of two dimensions in the four-category classification scheme. The degree to which a person has internalized a sense of self-worth (as opposed to feeling anxious and unsure of the self's lovability) is measured by the positivity of the self-model. As a result, in close relationships, the self-model is linked to anxiety and dependency on others' affirmation (*Figure 1*). Secure, preoccupied, and dismissing are the three patterns that are conceptually similar to the corresponding categories by Main and her colleagues (AAI; George et al., 1985; Main et al., 1985). Furthermore, secure, preoccupied, and fearful are the three patterns similar to Hazan and Shaver's (1987) secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant categories (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998).

		Thoughts of Self	
		Positive	Negative
Thoughts of Others	Positive	Secure Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	Preoccupied Preoccupied with relationships
	Negative	Dismissive Dismissing of intimacy Strongly independent	Fearful Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant

Figure 1: Four category model of adult attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991)

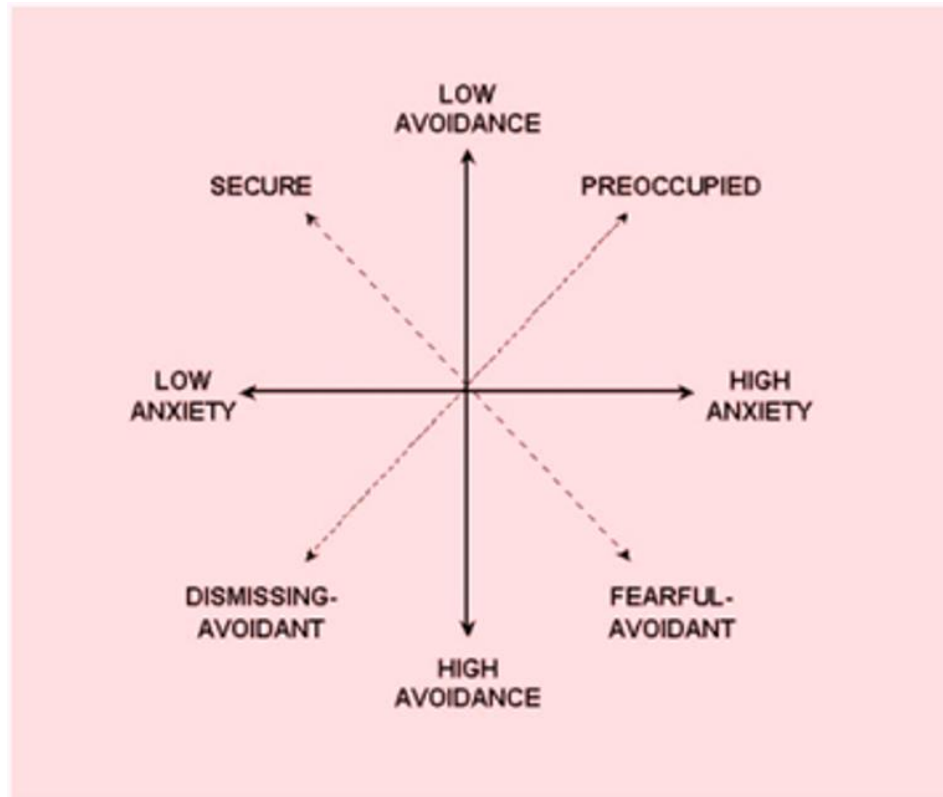


Figure 2: Four category model (Brennan et al., 1998)

In addition, Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) investigated the four working models using a different set of dimensions: degree of attachment anxiety and degree of attachment avoidance (Figure 2).

Life Positions in Transactional Analysis

In his article "Classification of Positions," Eric Berne (1962/1976) outlined four life positions: "I'm OK, You're OK" (I+U+); "I'm not-OK, You're OK" (I-U+); "I'm OK, You're not-OK" (I+U-); and "I'm not-OK, You're not-OK" (I-U-). In addition, Berne (1974) noted that some children might lack conviction, allowing them to switch, for instance, from I+U+ to I-U-; or from I+U- to I-U+. In terms of position, these are insecure and unstable personalities. Those whose positions, favorable or unfavorable, cannot be shaken are said to be secure and stable. "Every game, script, and destiny, then," Berne (1962/1976) remarked, "is based on one of these four basic positions" (p. 3).

According to White (1994), this conceptualization of life positions has largely been forgotten. People instead tend to associate life positions with the OK Corral (Ernst, 1971). White (1985a) stated there are two types of Life positions: "**character feelings**" and "**temporary/surface feelings**." Berne was discussing "a character-level idea" (1962/1976), whereas Ernst was discussing "a surface-level, minute-by-minute concept" (1971). A surface life position is transient and frequently changes throughout the day. It could be reflected in the ego states or transactions we engage in. These positions might be chosen voluntarily or due to a specific reaction to the surroundings.

Basic character positions are significantly more permanent than transitory; they reflect one's core character. In most cases, every individual has a single character life position that plays out for the rest of their life. This position is resistant to environmental influence and cannot be modified only through free will or conscious choice. They are the foundations upon which the rest of one's personality is built (White, 1994).

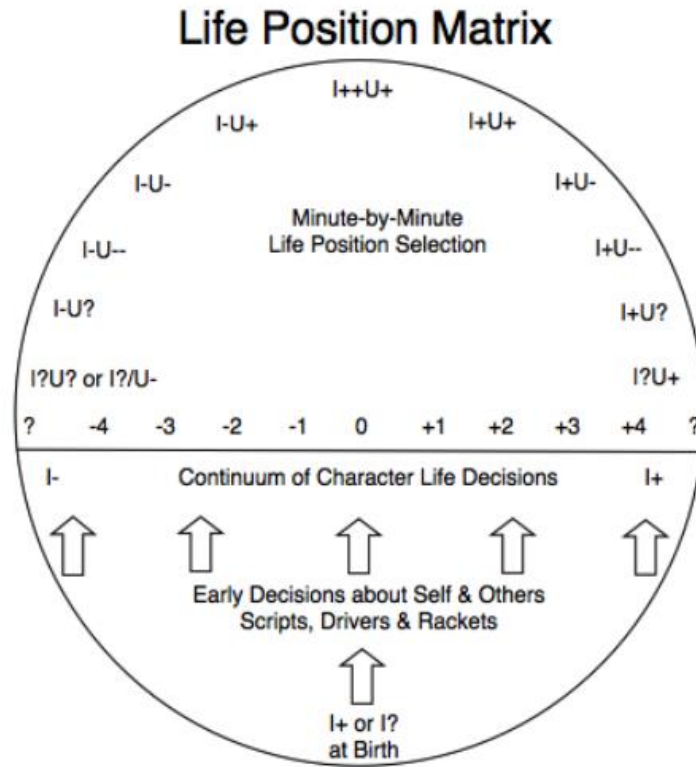


Figure 3: Life Position Matrix (Cited in Milnes, 2017)

The Matrix Elements

“The circle shows the person from the primal birth point (I+) located at the bottom. The arrows toward the continuum of Character Life Positions from "I-" on the left (?,-4,-3,-2,-1) to "I+" (+1,+2,+3,+4,?) on the right signify "Early Decisions." The midpoint “0” depicts the "balanced person," whose personality has a good understanding of positive as well as negative characteristics” (Milnes, 2017). The Life Position Matrix’s Key is presented in table 1 (Cited in Milnes, 2017).

Life Position Matrix Key	
I'm Irrelevant – You're Wonderful (I?U+)	Overawed
I'm OK, You're Irrelevant (I+U?)	Narcissist
I'm OK, You're Terrible (I+U--)	Bigot
I'm OK, You're not-OK (I+U-)	Where's my Escape hatch (GRO)
I'm OK, You're OK (I+U+)	“Everybody's beautiful”
I'm a bit Better than You are (I++U+)	Assertive Winner (GOW)
I'm not-OK, You're OK (I-U+)	Inferiority complex (GAF)
I'm not-OK, You're not-OK (I-U-)	“You're my last resort, and you probably aren't any good (GNW)
I'm not-OK, You're Worse (I-U--)	Fellow prisoner/ The “helper” who helps to feel better about him/herself
I'm not-OK, You're Irrelevant (I-U?)	Psychotic
I'm Irrelevant – You're Irrelevant (I?U? or I?U-)	Suicide

Table 1: Life Position Matrix's Key



Figure 4: Transactional Analysis in the OK Corral: Grid for What's Happening (Ernst, 1971/2008)

Transactional Analysis in the OK Corral: Grid for What's Happening (Figure 4) depicts that people can choose how they want a scenario to conclude before it ends. Ernst mentioned that healthy persons use each of the four categories at least once a day (1971/2008).

Discussion

Attachment in personality development was well-documented (Bowlby, 1988). We have examined that existential positions and attachment styles have common characteristics.

Schiffirin (2013) discussed that “Fredrickson’s (1998) broaden-and-build model and Bowlby’s (1969) attachment theory provide alternate explanations for positive cognitive, social, physical, and psychological outcomes, positive affect and secure attachments, respectively”.

Similarly, Steiner (2013) stated that “in the wider behavioral culture, ‘OK existential position’ is represented by the concepts of ‘positive psychology’, ‘flow’, ‘human potential’, ‘resiliency’, ‘excellence’, ‘optimism’, ‘subjective well-being’, ‘positive self-concept’, ‘spontaneous healing’, ‘nature’s helping hand’, and ‘the healing power of the mind’.” In addition, the OK existential position corresponds with Maslow's notion of self-actualization (1954), Jung's concept of self archetype (1934-1954), and Rogers’s idea of actualizing tendency (1963).

Figure 5 depicts a model developed by the author to aid comprehension of the presented discussion. It is referred to as the ‘**Proximity to the Self-Ok Corral**’ model. This model provides a collective perspective on previously available knowledge of attachment styles and life positions, as well as some other relevant approaches. Heart coherence mentioned in the model refers to “a psychophysiological state that is the underpinning of optimal function” (McCraty & Childre, 2010; McCraty et al., 2009).

You're Ok. / Attached to Others	
<p>Position: I-U+; Helpless, Needy, One Down Position</p> <p>Social operation: Ist: exaggerated proximity (Controlling type), then: Get Away From</p> <p>Social process: Devolution</p> <p>Feeling: Helplessness, Loveless, Sadness, Scare, Inferior</p> <p>Dominant Game: kick me</p> <p>Game Payoff: Embarrassment, Loneliness, Depression, Suicide, Loser (Adaptations from Ernst, 1971; Kaplan et al, 1984; Berne, 1972)</p> <p>AS: Anxious- resistant (Anxious- preoccupied) (Ainsworth et al., 1971)</p> <p>Preoccupied (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, et al., 1998; Main et al., 1985)</p> <p>Anxious-ambivalent (Hazan and Shaver, 1987)</p> <p>Dominant Force in Action: Eros & Thanatos</p>	<p>Position: I+U+; Healthy Position, Both Up Position</p> <p>Social operation: Get On With, Getting Well</p> <p>Social process: Evolution</p> <p>Feeling: Happy, Joyful</p> <p>Dominant Game: Intimate games</p> <p>Game Payoff: jubilant, Winner (Adaptations from Ernst, 1971; Kaplan et al, 1984; Berne, 1972)</p> <p>AS: Secure (Ainsworth et al., 1971; Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, et al., 1998; Main et al., 1985)</p> <p>Dominant Force in Action: Eros</p>
<p>Position: Unstable, I-/I+ U-/U+</p> <p>Social operation: Fluctuating based on circumstantial position (Berne, 1974)</p> <p>AS: Disorganised-disoriented (Main & Weston, 1981)</p> <p>Dominant Force in Action: Eros & Thanatos</p>	



Figure 5: 'Proximity to the Self-Ok Corral' model.

Given the similarities between attachment theory and existential positions, it was implied that by boosting the sense of attachment security, OKness in life position is more likely to be enhanced. As a result, I began putting this hypothesis into practice by implementing study findings on attachment security (e.g., Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Gillath & Karantzas, 2019; Arriaga et al., 2017; Mikulincer et al., 2001). After roughly six months of applying such techniques, I noticed a significant shift in my attachment style and life position in the face of similar occurrences. Furthermore, learning to be an observer with a meta-view, I coined the term '0' position for the midpoint '0' that depicts the 'balanced person', in the Life Position Matrix. This awareness provided me with highly meaningful insights.

Personal Experience

It occurred during a breakup. I felt my back was about to break. I was in so much pain. Tears flowed down my face. My heart was on fire, and I was drowning in terrible anguish. Night caused me a terrible fear of terror, nightmares, and internal scattering. I couldn't sleep for more than an hour continuously. Despite my rationale, a strong urge compelled me to return to him. The next day, I was able to self-talk as follows:

A: Why do you weep so heavily?

B: Because I'm badly broken, I'm scattered apart.

A: Who are you?

B: What a ridiculous question, it's me.

A: Who is "me"?

B: Thinking... I'm not sure. All I know is that this anguish is genuine, and it's me who is suffering tremendously.

A: Why are you so badly affected?

B: Because it's severely unpleasant.

A: Do you believe the level of agony you are in justifies the incident?

B: Thinking... Silence

A: Why do you need to go back to him when rationality tells you it's the wrong decision?

B: Thinking... Yeah, ... Why?

I simply want to hold him and prevent him from going far... I see how this is a contradictory need, wanting and not wanting him simultaneously.

Thinking... You are right... My need to bring him back is odd.

Thinking... Who am I?... What am I doing? ... Why do I need to approach him when all the provided rationale contradicts? ...

AHA EXPERIENCE... OH MY GOD. It's me when I lost my father. MY GOODNESS, I am that three-year-old girl. Before getting to this point, it had been repeating itself for years..... From one point of view, it allows me to cope with my complicated, unresolved grief; from another point of view, it supports the belief that "others want to get rid of me, I'm not good enough."

A: So... The little girl feels that if she could bring her father back, maybe a miracle would happen, and the joy before that horrific loss would be experienced.

B: Yeah, I'm making a victim of myself, rewarding my core belief that nothing is OK with me, everything is OK with others, and the world is hazardous.

A deep breath here, as if something in me has been released.

They lied to me, saying my father had gone on a trip. God knows how long I have been waiting for him. I believed in him and his love. But as a child, my trust was betrayed. The incident pushed me from trust to mistrust.

Later, my brother began to heal my trauma and took over my father's role towards me. But when I was eleven years old, I lost him too. It was also awkward and horrible. The earlier decision was confirmed....I experienced sorrow once again after the sudden loss of the loved one.

Taking a deep breath...

Yes, it's me. The little one. The one who was abandoned and left behind. The one who was betrayed in love and felt helpless. The one who is still afraid of getting too near to people. The closer I get, the more likely I may suffer from separation anxiety.... Yeah. I had no more trust in love...

In addition, I also experienced a strong sense of humiliation and remorse since I believed that I am equally responsible for my father's death.

I now know why I couldn't respond when my peer group asked about my experiences with my father during my childhood, adolescence, and beyond. I used to have opposing feelings of sorrow and embarrassment.

A deep breath...

A: How do you feel now?

B: I'm feeling better. I can deal with the sadness of loss related to the current scenario. I can get into a contract with you to follow your decision. I am withdrawing my energy from the past to be sad only about the current incident.

A: Good girl. Do you believe you can break the cycle of approaching the wrong person for the right thing and not repeating this unhealthy pattern anymore in the future?

B: Yes, I acknowledged the unhealthy cycle and am more aware of my emotions now. I'm going to work on it.

A: Excellent. I'm grateful for this awareness.

Conclusion

I realized that boosting attachment security would automatically promote life position. Therefore, I put the theory into practice to create change. The shift was highly significant after consistently implementing attachment security techniques for six months. In the process of self-healing, I sensed the significant link between attachment security and life positions. I recognized that a positive shift in both changed my phenomenological understanding at the core.

In the course of this process, I have understood that every choice based on love will result in more love, and every choice based on fear will result in more fear. The magic will occur within us once we leave behind our fear-based comfort zone and provide adequate permissions to unleash the inner healing power of the OK existential position. We can yet evolve beyond the I+U+ position to be the harmonious person outside the dualism zone in OKness, by being centered at the '0' position. It indicates that we are balanced beyond duality in the life position matrix. It is the state of nothingness. We do not need to apply any technique to stay in this position; it is the innate position- the sense of unity with the whole world. From the path we deviated into, we simply need to return to our innate. However, this deviation was a part of our developmental process and growth. Later on, when we are mature enough, it is supposed to get back to the '0' position by choice to grow as a fully actualized person.

According to Sarfaraz Syed Ahmed (In a peer discussion, September 8, 2021), the ‘0’ **position** is where we experience ‘**the choice of no choice**’. It means perceiving negative and positive in self and others, remaining as an observer, and experiencing the ‘flow’ - “in flow, we are in control of our psychic energy and everything we do adds order to consciousness. Following a flow experience, our self becomes more complex than that it had been before, due to two broad psychological processes – differentiation and integration” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p.3). ‘Choice of no choice’ reminds me of the mindset beyond binary polarities - also called serial thinking, versus quantum creative thinking - where we may detect how the whole (outcome in events) is greater than the sum of its parts. Experiencing ‘flow’ allows us to feel high-frequency emotions like unconditional love, gratitude, generosity, and the like. The study is open to more investigations to understand the concept from the ‘Physis in Action’ point of view.

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About the Author

Mitra Heidari completed her high school education as a Child Pedagogist. She received a teaching degree with Education Counseling as one of her subjects. She worked as a teacher for 11 years, mostly with teenagers. She grew interested in spirituality while searching for her True Self, and from there, she entered the field of psychology in 2014. Her MSc is in Clinical Psychology, and her Ph.D. thesis centered on Attachment Styles and Emotional Intelligence.

She is a member of researchgate.net and a peer reviewer for academia.edu journals as a researcher. She is currently in her third year of Transactional Analysis training and working as a psychotherapist under supervision. You could contact her at: mitraheidari759@gmail.com

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- Include a **conclusion** and list of **references** at the end.

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 - Does the author preserve **anonymity** by referring to her or his previous publications in the third person, for example, "Smith (2001) has argued..." instead of "In an earlier paper, I (Smith, 2001) argued..."?

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Around 4 weeks after your submission, you will be notified if your manuscript has been accepted for publishing and if additional modifications are needed. If not accepted, reasons will be shared. A Co-Editor from the *SAJTA* editorial team is assigned to work with each author over the next 3-4 weeks. They will collaborate closely - to challenge ideas or thinking, question the logic or rationale or make suggestions. The work will go through a few iterations before both Author and Reviewer agree it is ready for publishing. Some minor changes might occur as part of the final editorial process, prior to publication.

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