MULTILEVELNESS OF INSTINCTIVE AND EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONS

by

K. Dabrowski

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

1970
My objective here is to provide an accurate record of these publications, explaining their history and giving appropriate credit for the contributions of Dr. Piechowski.

(Dr. Piechowski has reviewed these comments and confirmed their accuracy).

This was the first manuscript before differentiation into two volumes and without any other authorship noted.
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Volume 2

TYPES AND LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

K. Dabrowski and Michael M. Piechowski

With the assistance of
Marlene King
and
Dexter R. Amend

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

1972
MULTILEVELNESS OF INSTINCTIVE AND EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONS

volume 2

TYPES AND LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Edmonton, Alberta

With the assistance of

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and
Dexter R. Amend

Edmonton
1972
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The early part of this research carried out in 1969-70 owes a great deal to the energy and initiative of Dr. Alvarez-Calderón who came to Edmonton on a leave of absence from the Universidad da Fememina in Lima, Peru.

Marlene King has organized throughout the demanding and enormous task of the collection of data, the contacts and appointments with the subjects, and their testing. She has written the Selection of Subjects and Administration of Tests and the evaluations of intelligence on the basis of autobiographies, while Leendert P. Mos has contributed the Wechsler interpretation of intelligence.

Dexter R. Amend collaborated with the senior author on the description and final form of the neurological examination. He also contributed to the analysis of each one of our examples.

Sister Paulette Payette has made an important contribution by collecting, selecting, and in part translating the material on Saint-Exupéry. Pat Collins has also carried a share of the translations.

We wish to thank Dr. T. Nelson, Chairman of the Department of Psychology, for his faith in the value of this project and his continuing support which removed many a roadblock. We also appreciate the valuable advice given us by Dr. T. Weckowicz in the early stages of the work.

At various phases of this work we have benefited from the participation of Dr. Lorne Yeudall, Leendert P. Mos, and Larry Spreng.

Janice Gordon, who had been with us till the end of 1971, was indefatigable keeping track of the subjects, data, and mountains of typing. Mrs. Vivian King has carried on this task and typed and retyped successive versions of this volume.

This research had been supported in the years 1969-72 by three successive grants from the Canada Council: 55-03099, 55-56099, 55-56156. We wish to express our appreciation for the Council's latitude of vision in supporting this unorthodox project.

Finally, we want to sincerely thank all those persons who under the anonymous name of "Subjects" have contributed their time, effort, and enthusiasm to offer us the substance of this research.
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Volume 1

Theory and Description of Levels of Behavior

K. Dabrowski, M.D., Ph.D.

Department of Psychology
The University of Alberta

1974
MULTILEVELNESS OF EMOTIONAL AND INSTINCTIVE FUNCTIONS

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While Dąbrowski was in Poland, “it fell to Piechowski” to “edit and update” the book for publication. The two discussed several issues in a half hour phone call. As I understand this from Dr. Piechowski, Dabrowski did not want to change the titles or to add self-actualization to the text. During updating, Dr. Piechowski made changes, explained below, leading to what Dr. Piechowski described to me as a “personal split” with Dąbrowski.

**Dr. Piechowski changed the titles.**

**THEORY OF LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
**Volume 1**
**MULTILEVELNESS AND POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION**

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**Titles:**

Dr. Piechowski explained: “The publisher, Dabor, wanted a different title than Multilevelness. In those years cognitive development dominated the field. I thought, naively, that emphasizing emotional development in the title will attract attention. This was the reason for the change of titles, to bring Dabrowski’s work into current developmental psychology.”

**Authorship:**

Dr. Dabrowski refused to make Piechowski co-author of volume 1. I do not know why authorship was different on the two volumes. Dr. Piechowski was heavily invested in the final preparation of both volumes.
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K. Dabrowski and Michael M. Piechowski

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Dr. Piechowski added his name as chapter author

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Figure 1—A Theoretical Pattern of the Constellations of Dynamisms at Each Level of Emotional Development 38
Dr. Piechowski indicated to me “the preface that Dabrowski wrote for Multilevelness was hard to understand. It was mostly philosophical and did not introduce the reader to this particular book.” Dr. Piechowski therefore substituted a previously published preface.

The preface used here appeared in support of Dr. Piechowski’s (1975) article. By adding it here, without any indication that it had been previously published in support of another project, Dr. Piechowski created the impression that the preface was an endorsement of the 1977 books (with changes to the first paragraph and the last section of the original preface).

For comparison, I’ve included the 1975 preface at the end of this material.

ward ghettos. On the way, the weak, the invalid, the sick were killed ruthlessly. And then, many times, I, myself, and my close family and friends have been in the immediate danger of death. The juxtaposition of inhuman forces and inhuman humans with those who were sensitive, capable of sacrifice, courageous gave a vivid panorama of a scale of values from the lowest to the highest.

I learned about death very early in my life. Death appeared to me not just as something threatening and incomprehensible but also as something that one must experience emotionally and cognitively at close range. When I was six, my little three-year-old sister died of meningitis. When I was young, I again witnessed death during the First World War, and as a mature man, during the Second World War. These events brought a great number of experiences which demanded an answer, but the answer had to be complex and multidimensional in view of the forms of overexcitability mentioned earlier because it was due to them, to my enhanced imagination, activity of thought, and emotional involvement that the content of my observations and experiences was greatly amplified. From the events of those times came an unappeased need to deepen the attitude toward the death of others and toward my own, toward injustice and social cataclysms, toward the discrimination between truth and falsehood in human attitudes and behavior.

In the face of these questions, I often felt broken and afflicted by their number and overwhelming complexity. I felt that these questions demanded answers that would be universal and that would penetrate deeply. This need to penetrate deeply became more associated with an intuitive understanding of the multilevel nature of phenomena. Superficiality, vulgarity, absence of inner conflict, quick forgetting of grave experiences became something repugnant to me. I searched for people and attitudes of a different kind, those that were authentically ideal, saturated with immutable values, those who represented “what ought to be” against “what is.” And it often turned out that among such persons, the “what ought to be” was already there and, at times, in its noblest manifestations.

Experiencing the contradictions of values in everyday observations had its counterpart in extensive study and examination of conceptions and theories offered by Jackson, Janet, Freud, and others. In the development of my attitude toward these ideas, the discriminating criterion was the presence or absence of multilevel conceptions or, at least, some approximation to that. The presence of multilevel approaches in their theories made me receptive to Jackson, Sherrington, Jung, and Rorschach while the absence of multilevel components made incomprehensible to me psychoanalytic theories, Pavlov’s theory, behaviorism, and even some of Adler’s ideas such as the assumption that there is no inheritance of psychological traits and that there is only feeling of inferiority toward others but none toward oneself.

I could not agree with the idea of early childhood frustrations as an explanation for the origin and development of psychoneuroses when everyday observation and my clinical practice were demonstrating the link between psychoneurotic and creative processes. I could not accept the one-sided and unilevel transposition of experimental results with animals carried out by Pavlovians or behaviorists onto the complex, subtle, and multilevel human mechanisms. I could not accept certain theories (Janet, Adler, and others) which associated human development with external conditions only and did not take into account the developmental potential of the inner psychic milieu.

In these searches, I tried to base myself on broad comprehensive experiments and studies. On the basis of these studies and conceptions, in which I perceived outlines of a hierarchy of values, I felt the need to create such a hierarchy of values which would be described with precision, empirically developed, and objectively testable.

One more remark. The recognition of the importance of multilevelness required that one looked for its elements and manifestations in all areas of human process and experimentation, that is, in neurophysiology, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and education. The complexity of the phenomena of human life as well as their multilevelness could not be understood without the investigation of links, aggregations, and interactions of factors operating in the external environment as well as, and foremost, of those operating in the inner psychic milieu.

Psychological and educational experiments enabled me to see the multilevelness of phenomena also in the area of education. A sensitive, capable, introverted child is often given negative evaluation because of being shy and lacking self-confidence. How often does one see psychoneurotics being pushed out to the
margin while society yields to the influence of psychopaths—individuals who act without inhibition, without scruples, without emotional responsiveness, that is, individuals who are deficient in the constituting elements of the inner psychic milieu.

The world of external and internal phenomena began to form itself in my experience as a world of values arranged in a hierarchy of levels. Values appeared to represent different levels. The span between the levels of a given phenomenon became by far more significant than the content of the term defining the phenomenon. Each level covered a distinctly different range of a given phenomenon. Thus, empathy appeared as something different from primitive sympathy, primitive immobilizing fear as something totally different from, and unrelated to, existential fear, brutal and wild laughter as something different and unrelated to a subtle smile manifesting depth of inner experience in respect to others and to oneself. It was striking that these disparate manifestations of behavior never coexisted in the same individual. Existential fears, obsessions, and depressions turned out to be unrelated to egocentric fears, obsessions, and depressions. The first were the result of excessive sensitivity, disappointments, sadness, and suffering; the second were most often the result of lack of success in life, thwarted ambition, material losses, in short, of primitive egocentrism shaped by external stimuli.

In numerous mental disorders and especially in psychoneuroses, I found again and again great creative and developmental richness. Such patients, not reconciled to their concrete reality but, rather, opposed to it, were undergoing psychoneurotic processes generated by the multidimensionality of their experiencing. They manifested trends and efforts in search of a reality of a higher level. And, often, they were able to find it unaided.

The label “dégéneré supérieur,” applied to such individuals, became for me the very representation of an artificial solution to the truth that many mental disorders do not manifest degeneration but, on the contrary, a high level of overall mental development. On the basis of detailed biographical studies, I saw that the geniuses and saints of mankind manifested psychoneurotic processes, even borderline of psychosis, combined with the highest level of experience, as well as of understanding and attaining the highest levels of reality.

In relation to social structures, these experiences led me to distinguish three groups composed of (a) primitive and brutal elements, acting toward their own advantage and often determining the course of events, (b) so-called normal individuals subordinated to the primitive ones, and (c) nervous individuals and psychoneurotics characterized by enhanced psychic excitability, mainly emotional, imaginative, and intellectual, who are pushed to the margin and yet who create the highest and the most lasting values. These three groups formed themselves in my mind in a “natural” manner, with the first having the greatest advantage, showing the greatest aggressiveness but no scruples, the second at a developmental disadvantage, and the third—developmentally the richest—being forced out. The third group is the most vulnerable in terms of individual and social development.

These three types of groups can be observed with some variation almost anywhere in social structures: in the family, school, administration, industry, higher education, international relations. Here, again, appeared the problem of multilevelness of social groups and of multilevelness of social values. The distinction of levels, their organization and development, became for me the key to the answers I sought.

The definition of five levels of development of emotional and instinctive functions, their detailed description and elaboration of methods of their diagnosis brought the concept of multilevelness to the realm of objective operations, similar to those employed in the study of human intelligence. This, in turn, allowed me gradually to elaborate philosophical ideas in regard to the problem of values. The distinction of levels of values is more meaningful and more crucial than the distinction of kinds of values. This introduces into axiology in place of relativism of values their hierarchization.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, perhaps, it was a certain amount of cognitive as well as experiential potential that enabled me to reach to a multidimensional and multilevel reality and to establish some of its dimensions. The consequences of such an approach are rather obvious for philosophy of education and for creating educational models, for diagnosis and therapy of mental disorders, especially of psychoneuroses, for comprehensive mul-
tilevel and multidimensional psychology, and for philosophy
which, in my approach, represents an objective protest against
the hegemony of positivism.
Volume I of this book was first written in 1969 in Edmonton. It
was translated into English by Dr. Michael M. Piechowski, who
continued to work with me on subsequent revisions and addi-
tions. Together, we revised the manuscript in 1974, and Dr.
Piechowski wrote the first chapters in which he enriched the
original structure of the theory with a number of conceptions,
subsequently published in his 1975 monograph. In particular, he
brought the five forms of psychic overexcitability more to the
fore, developed the structural aspect of the theory, and gave
theoretical precision to the concept of the developmental poten-
tial. The present manuscript was again revised by him.
The first five chapters introduce basic terms of the theory.
Chapter 4 gives detailed descriptions of each level of develop-
ment and its characteristic dynamisms. Chapter 6 covers theoreti-
cal issues which a reader less inclined toward abstraction may
omit or leave for later. Chapter 7 contains an analysis of levels of
sexual behavior, fear, laughter, and reality function in terms of
how dynamisms influence their expression. The last two sections
of Chapter 7 deal with inter-level diagnosis and with the direc-
tions of change, or developmental gradients. Chapters 8-16 pro-
vide descriptions of fifty-one emotional, instinctive, cognitive,
and other functions at each of the five levels of development. The
last two chapters do the same for selected areas of psychopatholo-
gy and several disciplines.

Warszawa, May, 1977

Kazimierz Dabrowski
This subtitle added by Dr. Piechowski was a major issue for Dr. Dąbrowski because, as I show in other material, Dr. Dąbrowski viewed self-actualization, as presented by Maslow, as lacking multilevelness.
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7. MULTILEVEL DISINTEGRATION—ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT: SUBJECT NO. 6 105
Dr. Dąbrowski did not agree with equating Maslow’s approach to self-actualization and his views of the higher levels. In spite of that, Dr. Piechowski advanced the comparison, adding material to the books, for example: “We shall try to demonstrate that Maslow’s concept of SA fits the structure of Level IV and that, consequently, the traits of SA logically follow from that structure” (pp. 158-159).

“Self-actualization, as a psychological norm suggested by Maslow, now finds support in the framework of the theory of positive disintegration as an attribute of the Level IV structure” (pp. 218-219).

This position was again advanced in Piechowski (1978).

Preface

In *Multilevelness and Positive Disintegration*, volume 1 of this work, the case was made for levels of development as a general framework within which one can approach, in a systematic fashion, the central questions of human experience. Levels of development, characteristic dynamisms, and the process of structural transformation were described in detail together with the main concepts of the theory. Finally, forty-six expressions of behavior, also called functions, plus several psychiatric syndromes and seven disciplines, were described at each of the five levels of development.

In this volume, using methods ranging from autobiography to a neurological examination, the terms of the theory are related to material obtained from subjects. We have attempted an exhaustive analysis of this material. Our purpose was to develop the means by which the terms of the theory can be recognized, systematically and reliably, in data from a variety of sources and by several methods. Rather than rate a given subject on his or her overall level of emotional development, we have tried to construct developmental profiles from atomistic units. Using this approach, the data are much richer and the obtained profiles more sturdy.

The beginning of this research, started in 1969-70, owes a great deal to the energy and initiative of Dr. Alvarez Calderón who came to the University of Alberta on leave of absence from the Universidad da Femenina in Lima, Peru.

Marlene King was in charge of the enormous and extremely demanding task of collection of data, contacts and appointments with subjects,
and their testing. Without her tireless energy and enthusiasm this volume could not have been produced. Dexter R. Amend collaborated with the senior author on the description and final form of the neurological examination and contributed to the analysis of each developmental profile. His broad background, understanding, and overall calming influence at many a rough moment were appreciated throughout. Sr. Paulette Payette made an important contribution by collecting, selecting, and in part also translating, the material on Saint-Exupéry. Her dedication and perseverance were invaluable. Pat Collins also contributed a share of the translations. At various phases of the project we have benefited from the participation, advice, and interest of Lorne Yeudall, Larry Spreng, and Leendert P. Mos.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to Dr. T. M. Nelson, Chairman of the Department of Psychology at the University of Alberta, for his faith in the value of this project and his continuing support which removed many obstacles. In the early stages of the work, Dr. T. Weckowicz helped us with valuable advice for which we hereby thank him.

This research had been supported in the years 1969-72 by three successive grants from Canada Council: nos. 55-03099, 55-56099, and 55-56156. We wish to express our appreciation for the Council's latitude of vision and largesse in supporting this project.

Finally we want to give our sincere thanks to all those persons who under the anonymous name of "Subjects" have so willingly and generously contributed their time and effort, and given us the permission to use their material.

---

1

Introduction

THE BEGINNINGS

The theory of positive disintegration was not formulated all at once. Its beginnings go back to a study of "Psychological Bases of Self-Mutilation" (Dabrowski, 1937) in which various types of physical and mental self-torture were examined. The analysis revealed that these phenomena, rather than being negative and destructive, can be interpreted to have a positive role in personality development. The tendency toward physical self-mutilation was related to psychomotor overexcitability and was considered an obstacle in personality development, while the tendency toward mental self-torture was related to emotional overexcitability and introversion, and was considered to carry positive potential toward personality development. The nucleus of the theory is already contained in the final conclusion of that early monograph:
Kazimierz Dąbrowski

MULTILEVELNESS
OF EMOTIONAL AND INSTINCTIVE
FUNCTIONS

TOWARZYSTWO NAUKOWE
KATOLICKIEGO UNIWERSYTETU LUBECKIEGO
MULTILEVELNESS
OF EMOTIONAL AND INSTINCTIVE
FUNCTIONS
MULTILEVELNESS
OF EMOTIONAL AND INSTINCTIVE
FUNCTIONS

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The 1974 and 1972 manuscripts republished by Dabrowski’s wife as his dying request (he died in 1980).
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INTRODUCTION

The work of Prof. Kazimierz Dąbrowski entitled Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions is a fruit of long-standing and revealing research carried out by the Professor on the multilevel character of the emotional functions and on the role of emotions in human development. The research was conducted within the framework of a three-year scholarship granted by Canada Council in Ottawa, at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, at the Department of Psychology, at the Chair of Professor Kazimierz Dąbrowski.

The research was made possible owing to kind support from Prof. Dr. T.M. Nelson, Head of the Department of Psychology at Edmonton University, Alberta, as well as help offered by post graduate students from the chair of professor K. Dąbrowski. In the works of the group of Prof. Kazimierz Dąbrowski took part the following scholars: Dexter R. Amend, Sister Luz Maria Alvares-Calderon, William Hague, Marlene D. King, Michael M. Pietrowski, Maurice Taurence Turned, Leondor Mos, Lorne Vuduoli, and Pat Collins.

Taking a multilevel approach to the issues of emotions and their significant role in the acts of cognition, the work Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions introduces us into the sphere of science, as well as orders the discipline which has been little studied so far, and which is highly crucial for the knowledge about man. Accordingly, the work lay a direction for methodological reflection and scientific procedure in the humanities. All this amounts to the fact that the work is ranked exceptionally high within the system of contemporary knowledge. It is a topical work, especially now at the time when aberrant, or even pathological behaviors abound, characterized by “moral callousness,” atrophy of higher emotions, synony and empathy, by aggressive and terrorist attitudes.

The book makes up a special compendium of the humanistic knowledge on the development of emotions in relation with other dynamisms and functions of personality. Therefore it corresponds to a social and individual demand for a systematic study of the theory of the development of emotions. It should be stressed that the hitherto research has promoted rather the cognitive and intellectual theories of the development of the individual, and neglected the sphere of emotions in the forming of a mature personality.

The fact that prof. Kazimierz Dąbrowski took up emotions and studied their role in the processes of personality development is a pioneering achievement. Many contemporary authorities of contemporary science such as: Abraham Maslow, J. Aronson, H. Quellet, G.R. Dr. Grace, G. Borofsky, K. Jankowski, J. Pieter, P. Joshi, T. Nelson, M. Grzywacz-Kaczyńska, O.H. Mower, and T. Weckowicz, who spoke about Professor’s work, acknowledge its pioneering role. Numerous comments from patients who turned to the Professor for help as well as passages from His Theory of the Development of emotions pinpoint that there is a social demand for Kazimierz Dąbrowski’s books in general, and in particular for this publication dealing with the development of emotions: Multilevelness of Emotional and Personality Functions.

K. Dąbrowski conducted his scientific and clinical activity in Poland, France, Canada, the United States, Portugal, Switzerland and in many other countries. Some of his works are well-known at home and abroad, but as a whole they were known neither to the Polish nor foreign reader. The present work, which comes to the reader’s hands, is his least known book.
I met Professor Kazimierz Dąbrowski for the first time during my studies at the Catholic University in Lublin in 1958. His lecturers on the conception of mental health, disease, pathology of the person's development aroused vivid interest among students. Animated discussions about his classes impressed greatly not only students, but involved their participants in the current problems concerning some aspects of social life turned pathological.

The book whose content is the development of affections and emotions grasps crucial aspects and dimensions of the development of personality, things which have so far been presented by the textbooks of developmental psychology only from one point of view, which have been treated with significant simplifications. This publication may give momentum and bring forward suggestions for a new research on the role and function of emotions in the development of a mature personality. Multilevelness, types of development and the traits of development have been analyzed here.

In chapter VI the reader will find a description of the observed emotional behaviors in such dimensions as reality function, diagnosis of the differentiated interlevel behaviors as well as various degrees of the differentiation and hierarchization of emotional values which are not indifferent for the individual. The author describes the states of reflection, inhibitions, syntony and empathy. He states, among other things, that the latter dynamism is the most powerful with prominent authors.

 Chapters VII-IX make up very interesting psychological analyses of emotions. The reader will find in them the description and psychical analysis of overexcitability (nervousness) and its diverse forms; a further part presents an analysis of the basic emotional states. Chapter IX discusses the emotional-cognitive functions in the aspect of the reality function, success, ideal, justice, and religious attitudes. The cognitive functions have been described in chapter X. The problem of emotional complexes and states from the borderline of pathology and norm, as well as other emotional states are the subject matter of chapters XII-XV. In chapters XIV and XV the author conducts thorough analyses of such emotions, today barely discussed in professional textbooks, as altruism, sincerity, humility, and responsibility.

The next chapter XVII displays the levels of development in the aspect of various scientific disciplines such as: psychiatry, philosophy, religion, ethics, and political sciences. We should in vain seek the problems discussed in this chapter in other works treating of emotions. Therefore this chapter is exceptionally valuable in the book.

The issuing of the book may help us to draw psychological, pedagogic and therapeutic conclusions within the sphere of forming emotions and feelings, and not only their inhibition or containment. The readers of the book may consist of a vast group of the youth, students of psychology, education, and medicine.

The book may serve professionals, psychologists, educators, priests, and the clergy as an aid in the forming of emotions. It may serve anybody who wishes to develop their own personality toward the highest individual and social ideal.

The *Multilevelness of Emotional and Personality Functions* is an exceptional item at the publishing market. We should wish the patient and careful reader of the book that he have some profound reflections and rich experiences, which in turn will lead to the forming of emotions and a harmonious personality. All those interested in the development of emotions should be wished courage to reach the fifth level of development, where dominates a full awareness of responsibility for the higher moral values; even if we are to lay down our lives to realize those values.

Translated by Jan Klos

CZESŁAW CEKIERA SDS
MULTILEVELNESS
OF EMOTIONAL AND INSTINCTIVE
FUNCTIONS

Part 1
THEORY AND DESCRIPTION OF LEVELS OF BEHAVIOR

Kazimierz Dąbrowski, M.D., Ph.D.
MULTILEVELNESS
OF INSTINCTIVE AND EMOTIONAL
FUNCTIONS

Part 2
TYPES AND LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

Kazimierz Dąbrowski, M.D., Ph.D.
With the Assistance of Michael M. Piechowski
Marlene King and Dexter R. Amend

This is how the book initially appeared from the publisher. The authorship here is inaccurate, Dr. Piechowski should be listed as a co-author.
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Kazimierz Dąbrowski, M.D., Ph.D. and Michael M. Piechowski, Ph.D.
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[errata]
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The early part of this research carried out in 1969/70 owes a great deal to the energy and initiative of Dr. Alvarez-Calderón who came to Edmonton on a leave of absence from the Universidad da Femenina in Lima, Peru.

Marlene King organized the demanding and enormous task of the collection of data, the contacts and appointments with the subjects, and their testing. She has written the Selection of Subjects and Administration of Tests and the evaluations of intelligence on the basis of autobiographies, while Leendert P. Mos has contributed the Wechsler interpretation of intelligence.

Dexter R. Amend collaborated with the senior author on the description and final form of the neurological examination. He also contributed to the analysis of each one of our examples.

Sister Paulette Payette has made an important contribution by collecting, selecting, and in part translating the material on Saint-Exupéry. Pat Collins has also carried a share of the translations.

We wish to thank Dr. T. Nelson, Chairman of the Department of Psychology, for his faith in the value of this project and his continuing support which removed many a roadblock. We also appreciate the valuable advice given us by Dr. T. Weckowicz in the early stages of the work.

At various phases of this work we have benefited from the participation of Dr. Lorne Yeudall, Leendert P. Mos, and Larry Spreng.

Janice Gordon was with us until the end of 1971, was indefatigable keeping track of the subjects, data, and mountains of typing. Mrs. Vivian King has carried on this task and typed and retyped successive versions of this part.

This research was supported in the years 1969–72 by three successive grants from the Canada Council: 55-03099, 55-56099, 55-56156. We wish to express our appreciation for the Council’s latitude of vision in supporting this unorthodox project.

Finally, we want to sincerely thank all those persons who under the anonymous name of “Subjects” have contributed their time, effort, and enthusiasm to offer us the substance of this research.
INTRODUCTION

THE BEGINNINGS

The Theory of positive disintegration has existed for more than thirty years (Dabrowski, 1939, 1946, 1949, 1959, 1964a and b), but systematic research on questions defined by the theory was not possible until recently. There were numerous obstacles in starting research on the central question of levels of emotional development. For the senior author the change of country and language, and the lack of grant application savoir-faire was, in the beginning, a handicap in obtaining funding for research in an area which was considered subjective, limited to the individual, and therefore unresearchable. Because of the generally held view that emotions are primitive undifferentiated energizers of behavior, the attempt to distinguish levels of emotional functioning was considered unrealistic. And because of the universally held view that emotions are more primitive than cognition, and that values are relative and culturally determined, the attempt to differentiate levels of valuation as levels of emotional functioning was considered quixotic.

At that time the implications of Kohlberg’s research on the stages (or levels) of moral development (Kohlberg’s, 1963) were not understood. The present research was developed independently of Kohlberg’s, and for this reason we shall abandon further reference to it. Those familiar with Kohlberg’s work will easily see how both types of research complement each other, and how both—one directly and the other indirectly—converge on the question of levels of emotional development. In the meantime, research in biocybernetics has shown that feelings are very precise and reproductible phenomena measurable by instrumental methods (Clynes, 1970).
A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT

University of Wisconsin-Madison

MICHAEL M. PIECHOWSKI
A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO
THE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT*

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The preface written by Dr. Dabrowski in support of Dr. Piechowski’s (1975) article.


FOREWORD

I am grateful to the Editor for giving me the opportunity to express my thoughts on the origins and subsequent formation of the theory of positive disintegration from a perspective of 40 years.

It is perhaps true that new highly dynamic theories arise not only from observation and analysis but also from a highly charged experiential process leading to the birth and development of new conceptions. This is certainly true of the theory of positive disintegration.

As a rule I am reluctant to indulge in personal disclosures, but I feel I must make an exception here. To a large extent the conceptions of the theory grew out of events experienced in my adolescence and youth. Already then I had a distinct need to see values in a hierarchical order. In my psychological makeup I had heightened emotional, imaginative, and intellectual excitability. The specific developmental dynamics was based primarily on these three forms of psychic overexcitability, as they were called later, rather than on the psychomotor form which, nevertheless, was also present in my constitution. These overexcitabilities had the effect of making concrete stimuli more complex, enhancing their emotional content and amplifying every experience.

This was especially true in regard to the question of death, suffering, the meaning of human existence, and the destiny of man. Experiences related to these perpetual questions went along two lines. The first was in regard to the suffering, death, and injustice inflicted upon persons very close to me; the second was in regard to the suffering, imprisonment and death of great numbers of people. I remember a battle during the First World War. When the exchange of artillery fire ended, fighting went on with cold steel. When the battle was over, I saw several hundred young soldiers lying dead, their lives cut in a cruel and senseless manner. I witnessed masses of Jewish people being herded toward ghettos. On the way the weak, the invalid, the sick were killed ruthlessly. And then, many times, I myself and my close family and friends have been in the immediate danger of death. The juxtaposition of inhuman forces and inhuman humans with those who were sensitive, capable of sacrifice, courageous, gave a vivid panorama of a scale of values from the lowest to the highest.

I learned about death very early in my life. Death appeared to me not just as something threatening and incomprehensible, but also as something that one must experience emotionally and cognitively at a close range. When I was six my little three-year-old sister died of meningitis. When I was young I witnessed death again during the First World War, and as a
mature man during the Second World War. These events brought a great number of experiences which demanded an answer, but the answer had to be complex and multidimensional in view of the forms of overexcitability mentioned earlier, since it was due to them, to my enhanced imagination, activity of thought, and emotional involvement that the content of my observations and experiences was greatly amplified. From the events of those times came an unappeased need to deepen the attitude toward the death of others and toward my own, toward injustice and social cataclysms, toward the discrimination between truth and falsehood in human attitudes and behavior.

In face of these questions I often felt broken and afflicted by their number and overwhelming complexity. I felt that these questions demanded answers that would be universal and that would penetrate deep. This need to penetrate deep became more and more associated with an intuitive understanding of the multilevel nature of phenomena. Superficiality, vulgarity, absence of inner conflict, quick forgetting of grave experiences, became something repugnant to me. I searched for people and attitudes of a different kind, those that were authentically ideal, saturated with immutable values, those who represented “what ought to be” against “what is.” And it often turned out that among such persons the “what ought to be” was already there and at times in its noblest manifestations.

Experiencing the contradictions of values in everyday observations had its counterpart in extensive study and examination of conceptions and theories offered by Jackson, Janet, Freud, and others. In the development of my attitude toward these ideas, the discriminating criterion was the presence or absence of multilevel conceptions or at least some approximation to that. The presence of multilevel approaches in their theories made me receptive toward Jackson, Sherrington, Jung, and Rorschach, while the absence of multilevel components made incomprehensible to me psychoanalytic theories, Pavlov’s theory, behaviorism, or even some of Adler’s, ideas such as the assumption that there is no inheritance of psychological traits, or that there is only feeling of inferiority toward others but none toward oneself.

I could not agree with the idea of early childhood frustrations as an explanation for the origin and development of psychoneuroses when everyday observation and my clinical practice were demonstrating the link between psychoneurotic and creative processes. I could not accept the one-sided and unilevel transposition of experimental results with animals carried out by Pavlovians or behaviorists onto the complex, subtle and multilevel human mechanisms. I could not accept certain theories (Janet, Adler, and others) which associated human development with external conditions only and did not take into account the developmental potential of the inner psychic milieu.

In these searches I tried to base myself on broad comprehensive experiments and studies. On the basis of these studies and conceptions in which I perceived outlines of a hierarchy of values, I felt the need to create such a hierarchy of values which would be described with precision, empirically developed, and objectively testable.

One more remark. The recognition of the importance of multilevelness required that one looked for its elements and manifestations in all areas of human process and experimentation: that is, in neurophysiology, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and education. The complexity of the phenomena of human life, as well as their multilevelness, could not be understood without the investigation of links, aggregations, and interactions of factors operating in the external environment, as well as, and foremost, of those operating in the inner psychic milieu.

Psychological and educational experiments enabled me to see the multilevelness of phenomena also in the area of education. A sensitive, capable, introverted child is often given negative evaluation because of his shyness and lack of self-confidence. How often does one see how psychoneuroses are pushed out to the margin, while society yields to the influence of psychopaths—individuals who act without inhibition, without scruples, without emotional responsiveness: that is, individuals who are deficient in the constituting elements of the inner psychic milieu.

The world of external and internal phenomena began to form itself in my experience as a world of values arranged in a hierarchy of levels. Values appeared to represent different levels. The span between the levels of a given phenomenon became by far more significant than the content of the term defining the phenomenon. Each level covered a distinctly different range of a given phenomenon. Thus empathy appeared as something different from primitive synony, primitive immobilizing fear as something totally different from and unrelated to existential fear, brutal and wild laughter as something different from and unrelated to a subtle smile manifesting depth of inner experience in respect to others and to oneself. It was striking that these disparate manifestations of behavior never coexisted in the same individual. Existential fears, obsessions, and depressions turned out to be unrelated to egocentric fears, obsessions, and depressions. The first were the result of excessive sensitivity, disappointments, sadness, and suffering;
the second were most often the result of lack of success in life, thwarted ambition, material losses—in short, of primitive egocentrism shaped by external stimuli.

In numerous mental disorders, and especially in psychoneuroses, I found again and again great creative and developmental richness. Such patients, not reconciled to their concrete reality but rather opposed to it, were undergoing psychoneurotic processes generated by the multidimensionality of their experiencing. They manifested trends and efforts in search of a reality of higher level. And often they were able to find it unaided.

The label "degénéré supérieur," applied to such individuals, became for me the very representation of an artificial solution to the truth that many mental disorders do not manifest degeneration but, on the contrary, a high level of overall mental development. On the basis of detailed biographical studies I saw that geniuses of mankind and saints manifested psychoneurotic processes, even borderline of psychosis, combined with the highest level of experience, as well as of understanding and attaining the highest levels of reality.

In relation to social structures these experiences led me to distinguish three groups composed of (a) primitive and brutal elements, acting toward their own advantage and often determining the course of events, (b) so-called normal individuals subordinated to the primitive ones, and (c) nervous individuals and psychoneurotics characterized by enhanced psychic excitability, mainly emotional, imaginative, and intellectual, who are pushed out to the margin and yet who create the highest and the most lasting values. These three groups formed themselves in my mind in a "natural" manner, with the first having the greatest developmental advantage, showing the greatest aggressiveness but no scruples, the second at a developmental disadvantage, and the third—developmentally the richest—being forced out. The third group is the most vulnerable in terms of individual and social development.

These three types of groups can be observed with some variation almost anywhere in social structures: in the family, school, administration, industry, higher education, international relations. Here again appeared the problem of multilevelness of social groups and of multilevelness of social values. The distinction of levels, their organization and development became for me the key to the answers I sought.

The definition of five levels of development of emotional and instinctive functions, their detailed description and elaboration of methods of their diagnosis, brought the concept of multilevelness to the realm of objective operations, similar to those employed in the study of human intelligence. This, in turn, allowed me gradually to elaborate philosophical ideas in regard to the problem of values. The distinction of levels of values is more meaningful and more crucial than the distinction of kinds of values. This introduces into axiology in place of relativism of values their hierarchization.

In conclusion I would like to say that perhaps it was a certain amount of cognitive, as well as experiential, potential that enabled me to reach to a multidimensional and multilevel reality and establish some of its dimensions. The consequences of such an approach are rather obvious for philosophy of education and for creating educational models, for diagnosis and therapy of mental disorders, especially of psychoneuroses, for comprehensive multilevel and multidimensional psychology, and for philosophy which in my approach represents an objective protest against the hegemony of positivism.

Finally, I would like to express my profound appreciation and affection for my young friend Dr. M. M. Piechowski, for his original and creative approach to the theory of positive disintegration, for his numerous conceptions enriching the fundamental structure of the theory and also those going beyond the present scope of problems encompassed by the theory.

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April 1974

Kazimierz Dabrowski
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This monograph was produced in two phases. The empirical studies were completed first and presented for publication (parts III-VI). However, the Editor recommended a more thorough presentation of the theory and this was subsequently included (parts I and II).

In the first phase, Drs. John Hartz, Philip A. Morse, Leendert P. Mos, and Millard Susman were generous with penetrating criticisms and much needed encouragement. Drs. P. A. Perrone and J. L. Lee provided suggestions for the description and computation of results. Dexter R. Amend and Marlene King have been faithful companions in the struggle, Dr. Sylvia Sheridan—a nurturing associate, and Dr. K. Dabrowski—the protagonist, taskmaster, antagonist, creator of the impossible, and an unfailing source of strength, inspiration, and existential meaning.

In the second phase, the unflagging interest and stimulation generated by Dr. Philip A. Morse propelled the author toward unsuspected breakthroughs, while Dr. K. Dabrowski must be credited with bringing this part of the monograph into existence, the fruit of collaboration on the revision of the first volume of his book Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions.

The author also wishes to thank Rosemary Hopkins for her grace and help in the technical production of the manuscript.

The major part of the research was carried out at the Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, under Canada Council grants nos. 55-03099, 55-56099, and 55-56156 to Dr. K. Dabrowski, and with support received from the Department of Psychology of the University of Alberta.

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SUMMARY

Developmental psychology, in spite of its dynamic growth, has not, thus far, generated a general theory of human development. Present developmental theories are either cognitive or ontogenetic, or both. All are descriptive. Their powers of explanation are limited. None of them include emotional development.

It is argued that a theory of development in order to claim generality must (a) include emotional development, and (b) offer means of explaining, rather than only describing, developmental transformations. A nonontogenetic theory of development, called theory of positive disintegration, appears to fulfill these conditions. It is built on Jacksonian principles of evolution of levels of functioning.

The central concept of the theory is that of multilevelness of developmental phenomena. Development is seen to be a function of the level of behavioral organization. The theory defines five levels. Each level constitutes a distinct structure. The dynamic elements of the structure of each level are identified. Positive disintegration is the name for the process by which the structure of a higher level replaces the structure of a lower one.

The theory explains different developmental patterns by introducing the concept of developmental potential (DP). Although DP is a purely logical notion, it is given observable dimensions designated as dimensions of mental functioning. There are five of these and they correspond to psychomotor, sensual, imaginative, intellectual, and emotional modes of functioning.

The first half of the monograph is devoted to the conceptual structure of the theory. The second half to empirical tests of the theory. Three such tests were made on data generated from an atomistic analysis of autobiographies.

The first test consisted of the comparison of developmental cross-sections obtained from different sources of data (subjects) with the overall pattern of five levels of development. The different cross-sections overlap with each other and with different segments of the total theoretical pattern. Superimposed on each other they reconstitute the total pattern.

The second test consisted of a comparison between computed and clinically derived values for DP for each subject in the study.

The third test was a comparison of DP values obtained from early and late parts of an autobiography.

An empirical equation for DP was used in the second and the third test. Parameters represented in the equation appear sufficient to account for individual differences in patterns and levels of development.