TADEUSZ KOBIERZYCKI

FROM CREATIVITY TO THE PERSONALITY
(A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE THEORY OF POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION)


In Poland, in the pre-war period, the relations between creativity and personality were studied by, among others: neurologist, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst Maurycy Bornstein (1874-1952), psychologist Stefan Baley (1885-1952), doctor and psychologist Stefan Szuman (1889-1972), psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Gustav Bychowski (1895-1972) and psychiatrist and psychologist Kazimierz Dąbrowski (1902-1980), the author of the Theory of Positive Disintegration and the founder of the Institute of Mental Hygiene in Warsaw. Beside the psychoanalytical approach, which was best presented by G. Bychowski, K. Dąbrowski developed the analysis of the crises related to creative processes and explained them from the existential perspective.

In the post-war period he continued his research in Poland and abroad and published the results of the researches on students with outstanding abilities and adult creators as well as analyses of historical personalities based on their memoirs and accounts of them.

PART I. CREATIVITY AND POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION

In the research on young people with outstanding abilities carried out in 1962 in Warsaw, the team directed by K. Dąbrowski applied specific research terms. A list of these terms with their explanations is presented below.

Mental Health - is an ability to develop, which is based on inherited data, environmental conditions, culture and personal activity. The development is directed towards the gradual recognizing, discovering and realisation of even more higher levels of reality and hierarchies of values according to a specific personality ideal. The development takes the form of positive disintegration and is the opposite of the negative disintegration.

Psychical Disorders - are nervousness, neuroses and psychoneuroses, which are symptoms of the internal development based on an increased psychic excitability (sensual, psychomotor, imaginative, intellectual and emotional). They favour a loosening and even a breaking up of the primary psychic integration; they manifest themselves in behaviour (nervousness), in the bodily structure (neuroses) and the psychic structure (psychoneuroses). Global disorders, which are the result of a negative disintegration lead to a mental disorder (psychosis).

Outstanding Abilities - were defined on the basis of the achieved results that were significantly exceeding the norm accepted for the people of the same age, education etc. The research involved 50 people talented in fine arts and the humanities, 30 people talented in mathematics and natural sciences, and 30 people below the intellectual norm (oligophrenics) as a control group. The research included internal, neurological, psychiatric, as well as
sociological (community interview, family system, prenatal period). The age of the subjects ranged from 8 to 23 years. The students with artistic talents (music, dance, plastic arts, drama) scored 110 - 155 points in the intelligence test, and the students talented in humanistic, mathematical and natural sciences scored 120 - 146 points.

**Internal Environment** - are: talents, abilities, interests and the type of increased psychic excitability. Its components are: the emotional structure, the hierarchy of values, the personal ideal and developmental aims, which take shape in the personality.

**CREATIVE DISINTEGRATION**
A high IQ does not prevent psychic disorders. A low IQ attenuates or limits them. In order to improve the classification of mental disorders K. Dąbrowski distinguished three groups of symptoms, according to its level and range.

In the first category he included distinct disorders violently disturbing the psyche connected with strong aggressive or suicidal tendencies, a lowered function of reality and distinct psychosomatic disorders. In the second category he included the disorders of a cyclical and recurrent character, but of lower than in the first group intensity and milder course. The last, third category included symptoms related to a specific type of increased psychic excitability, e.g. lability of mood, impulsiveness of actions, slight indications of play-acting, transitional motor anxiety or light, reactive states of anxiety. On the basis of these assumptions and studies I constructed a table of developmental relationships, according to the type of giftedness, the external environment conditions, and the profile of psychosomatic disorders.

In all the profiles of giftedness, hysterical disorders were found, which are correlated with a weak or early internal environment, and psychasthenic and anxiety disorders, which are correlated with a distinct or developed internal environment.

**THE DYNAMICS OF PSYCHONEUROSIS. K. DĄBROWSKI’S STUDY IN 1962**

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<tr>
<th>Giftedness and School Type</th>
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<td>Lack or Weak Internal Environment</td>
<td>Early or Developed Internal Environment</td>
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<td>Plastic arts</td>
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<td>Ballet</td>
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<td>General</td>
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<td>2. anxiety neurosis</td>
<td>2. hypochondria</td>
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<td>3. hypochondria</td>
<td>3. neurasthenia</td>
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THE OLGONOMICAL PROFILE OF CREATIVITY

A low IQ does not impede the activeness of "naive, weekend, wild creators". Oligophrenics can be regarded as creative individuals. What they create is full of fairy-tale, fabulous and mythical atmosphere. Their creativity is archetypical, magical, therapeutic, and their personality is not burdened with neuroses, as it is in case of exceptionally gifted individuals. Primitive anxieties, vegetative neuroses coexist in them with an increased sexual and psychomotor excitability. They frequently manifest: "light-heartedness, exaggerated courage, low susceptibility to suggestions, lack of shame, excessive talkativeness or euphoria" (K. Dąbrowski 1963, p. 61). The dominance of sensory sensations integrates the behaviour of oligophrenics: "the best in the world is a dish or a person that gives something and the most unpleasant things are insults, battering, noise". They like to talk about tragic events in a light-hearted manner.

As the term "oligophrenia" refers to people of a low "intelligence quotient" (IQ), oligothymia refers to people of a low "emotional quotient" (EQ). The idea of the emotional quotient was introduced by K. Dąbrowski and methodologically specified by Michael Piechowski. The group of oligothymics includes, e.g. psychopaths and people with personality disorders. Their main fault is a "deficiency of emotional memory", whereas their intellect is frequently exceptional. Earlier, their "moral anaesthesia" (Kurt Schneider) and a "high self-preservation instinct" (M. Tramer) were stressed. The imagination, feelings and intellect of oligophrenics are subject to impulsive management.

The Nobel prizewinner, Charles Sherrington, noted that the majority of the works of culture was created thanks to the ability to restrain and transform external and internal impulses. Oligothymics do not have such abilities in an extent that would enable an exceptional humanistic creativity. Instead, they are effective as creators of technology. They have a specific technical foresight, which they realise in their life.

Their creativity is above all manifested in: tattoos, rhymed songs, obscene songs, the need for ecstasy caused by destruction, epistolographic mania, perverse eroticism mixed with religious taboo. Characteropathic hysteria is an image of alternative possibilities of their development. There is a distinct similarity in the creative profile of oligophrenics and oligothymics. This profile of creativity was appreciated by C. G. Jung by stressing the importance of the expression of the archetypes hidden in the unconsciousness.

THE HYSTERICAL PROFILE OF CREATIVITY

By the end of the 19th century Jean M. Charcot recognized hysteria as a "mental illness" whose origin lies in "suggestiveness". Emile Bernheim claimed that its main feature is "excessive attention". Sigmund Freud maintained that the origin of hysteria lies in a transference of primitive or hostile feelings and impulses of a child or an adult from the closest persons (mother, father, sister, brother) to the persons that are important for the individual in the present situation (doctor, teacher, tutor). The hysterical symptom is a form of psychological defence resulting from the obligation to suppress the sexual wishes. They are symptoms of resisting unconscious, suppressed contents, which, in combination with fear, result in phobias.
K. Dąbrowski claimed that hysterical individuals are retarded in psychophysical development, which manifests itself in partial or total infantilism. The hysterical personality is integrated by increased imaginative excitability combined with increased psychomotor or somatic excitability. The conflict among intellectual, emotional and imaginative functions is a source of whimsical behaviours, a tendency to pretend, imitate, lie or fantasize.

As it can be noticed, the main creative dynamisms, in case of the individuals with a high IQ, but with a weak internal environment, are erotic imaginations, an excess of attention, suggestiveness, imitation abilities and manipulation of perceptions, as well as conversion of experiences into somatic reactions. It is a profile of creative activity in which the control is exercised by imagination, whereas feelings and intellect are its subordinates. This model of creativity, based on the erotic-compensative mechanism was appreciated by Z. Freud.

THE PSYCHASTHENIC PROFILE OF CREATIVITY

The main creative dynamism of psychasthenics is obsession. Psychasthenia means "psychic weakness" combined with emotional fragility, excessive inhibiting, difficulties in decision making, and tiresome. This profile is characterized by a tendency to excessive experiencing of the unpleasant feelings, foreseeing a defeat. Hysterical people passionately look for a pleasure, psychasthenics, in contrast, passionately look for a tribulation, they wait for it, halting the work they have undertaken. This is why, e.g. a neurosis of anticipation has been distinguished.

A tendency to postpone the work that has been started creates an attitude of pathological chewing, incessant intellectual and emotional weighing "pros" and "cons". This is the origin of the feeling of guilt, shame, anxieties, scruples, the mental, emotional and behavioural obsessions. In case of a weak impulsive dynamism, psychasthenics have difficulties with finishing the works that they have begun. In order to deal with the doubts arising after a meticulous analysis, they recur to the magical and symbolical solutions, which calm down the feeling of uncertainty, the feeling of senselessness of what they do, even the senselessness of existence. Poor mental synthesis and poor adaptation to the external world, to the activities of everyday life can lead to depression, psychological bankruptcy, to anxiety neurosis, and even to suicide.

Excessive inhibitions in the kinetic sphere, excessive perceptiveness, impulsive and emotional weakness create a system whose dominating factor is an analytical intellect, which intervenes in the emotional structure and stratifies it giving a great spiritual richness, but also great sufferings. This profile of creativity was appreciated by Pierre Janet.

THE DEPRESSIVE PROFILE OF CREATIVITY

Creativity based on cognitive-imaginative factors gains depth in depressive experiences. The depth of the "creative depression" depends on the type of emotional resources stabilizing the cognitive disintegration. The effect of an excessive effort related to "creative passion" is a breakdown, a feeling of a loss of power and a loss of the control of thoughts, a feeling of psychic degradation. The tension between consciousness and unconsciousness weakens. It is accompanied by the fading of the world, the dimming of perception caused by weakened or weak emotionality.

The creator becomes, for a certain period of time, unproductive, devoid of dynamism. His thoughts wander around one problem without achieving a perfect imaginative and emotional
solution. The feeling of barrenness, the loss of power often changes into the dark night of the soul (St. John of the Cross). The world seems to be dead, dry and colourless, bereft of the former dimensions. In such states, intensive doubts and suicidal thoughts mixed with a desire to destroy what has been made by one or by others arise.

An intellectual, up to this moment precise, cold and logical, who has been "affected by depression", will not free himself from it with the help of anxieties, psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, unless he does not change his attitude to himself and his own method of creation. For reaching the heights, one must pay with depression, one has to descend down into the depths of his own psyche, one has to experience sorrow, pain, loneliness and humiliation in a way as if the psyche demanded maintaining a symmetry, a balance of "heights" and "vales". Descending into the depths of oneself can have its end in madness or suicide. The experience of isolation provokes tendencies to destroy one's works or to destroy oneself; it is an "expensive norm" of the creative dynamism. An outstanding creator is sentenced to depression.

Depression is an experience of the breakdown of the centre of psychic integration, which did not enable other fragments of the personality to develop. The breakdown of a totalitarian dynamism is painful, it forces the creator to step back to the level of prelogical, "childlike", activities, with which persons "overcome" by depression cannot manage. It is, nevertheless, a dynamism preventing a psychotic disintegration. This type of creativity was appreciated by K. Dąbrowski in his Theory of Positive Disintegration.

CONCLUSION

Without a "hysterical talent", one cannot be an actor, a dancer cannot show his body, a singer cannot sing on stage. In drama or an art schools hysteria evolves towards psychasthenia, in ballet schools, towards vegetative neurosis and in secondary schools, towards anxiety neurosis. Thus, a certain "kinship" can be noticed of the disorders occurring in ballet schools with certain types of oligophrenic disorders ("vegetative neurosis") or with the disorders occurring in secondary schools ("anxiety neurosis").

There is also a similarity between the creative profile of the oligophrenics and oligothymics. What they have in common is characteropathic hysteria and massive eroticism entangled in a sadomasochist complex. Among oligophrenics it takes the form of archaic integration, among oligothymics, the form of archaic disintegration. It is an inverted need for an ordered world mixed with a passion for destroying it. The organizational obsession is related to a certain lack of "internal organization". The insufficiency of internal constructs is symmetrical to the destructive tendencies that are characteristic for the oligonomical personality type.

The creative profiles, from the perspective of internal dynamisms, are divided into archetypical and archaic activities, and artistic and autonomous activities. Different forms of creativity have different profiles. Their dynamism is related. The higher ones include the lower ones. And vice versa. This does not eliminate the differences between what is archaic and what is artistic. It is also proved by various forms of disorders relieving the psyche from an excess of unconscious contents.

PART II. THE CREATIVE PERSONALITY AND POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION

Creativity is a way of discovering and forming one's self, which allows the transferring of the body and soul from the sphere of enslavement to a life of liberation, from the body's
cave to its surface. Thanks to this, the body appears inhabited by the soul. Creative energy: impulse, compulsion, obsession needs a model, scheme, form to express unconscious tensions and inner conflicts. Otherwise the personality undergoes destruction and manifests itself in strange life forms. Such a situation can be described as a negative state of activity.

Imitating, copying, reproduction, duplication indicate that there exists a type of unconscious creativity, which take on a magical, mythological, oneiric form enclosed in the archetypes (C. G. Jung). Ritual expressions renew and strengthen the communication channels. Energetic, emotional, intellectual and imaginal chaos throws the body and soul out their harmony, out of their equilibrium, out of the transferred order, making the person incapable of adapting, unhappy, ill, disturbed, neurotic, psychotic, disintegrated with himself and the world. Tearing away, separation, individuation are man's lot and a calling for his existence. He would not manage with them without creative abilities, which are called the "creative instinct".

THE CREATIVE INSTINCT

The creative instinct is a common ability to communicate in a symbolical, prelogical and iconic way. It is a prophylactic force for individual existence, which is torn away from the maternal sources of life. Most people possess this instinct or rather it possesses them, expresses and denotes them and manifests them to themselves. In this case the analytical perspective of depth psychology coincides with that of structuralism. However, there exists a creative, individual, autonomic and despeciesizing instinct. Thanks to it, man acts as a cosmic force, connecting what exists with what might exist and what should exist. This means linking superconscious and fatherly with preconscious and maternal sources of creativity.

The unconsciousness keeps the individual in the boundaries of a schematic, integrated world and reduces inner and outer activities. In moments of disintegration, unconscious contents penetrate the consciousness. This happens throughout life, and increases in times of accelerated development (crises, maturation, puberty, suffering, illness, trauma). These times and events trigger a rise of consciousness, which becomes a defense mechanism of the disintegration. The new dynamics of the consciousness and unconsciousness heals wounds, takes control over reactions of anxiety, silences the restlessness, and gives a feeling of safety. The triad - unconsciousness, feelings, consciousness - what is torn apart and has broken up unifies into new wholes. The first case concerns the aesthetics of existence ("beauty"), the second one - the ethics of existence ("good"), while the third one - the autonomy of existence ("truth").

Primary creativity expresses itself in different kinds of destructions, distortions and antiforms. The exaggerated, duplicated or fragmented becomes the source of tremulous admiration. Broken, destroyed objects hypnotize just as the cut body, wounds. That is why many objects of art expose the dynamics of the trauma, especially in advertisements.

TRAUMA AND CREATIVITY

The psychic trauma finds an outlet in destructive creativity. Rock idol performances attract more viewers to the stadium at one time than the works of Michaelangelo do for decades. The images and sounds of the trauma syntonize with the most shallow layers of the psyche. They exploit the anxiety and fear of life and death. The lack of a healthy creative initiation directs one to the psychiatrist. Trauma creativity is focused on body, sensual and sexual sensations.
The trauma dynamizes the psychological transformations, it is connected with neurosis, unrest and anxiety states, which are reduced by creativity. The artist changes the trauma into signs and symbols, which create his identity. They give him stability and heal him.

Creativity stimulated by trauma takes the individual to the other side of day and night. It is a place where being becomes nothingness, and nothingness being. Plato in his dialogue "Phaedrus" analyses states of mania, states of hysterical ecstacies and hysteria-epilepsy, which are accompanied by the loss of consciousness, a split, strange behaviour, for the "the gift of the heavens", allowing one to see the invisible, remember the forgotten, understand the incomprehensible. Creative experiences make man capable to a creative dynamization of his existence, to have insight into the secrets of the cosmos.

In traumatic creativity, usually one theme dominates - the antinomy of beauty and ugliness, good and evil. In works of a higher order, the antinomies are replaced by pictures of nature, psychological portraits and an inner drama. In great works they assume the form of a code.

PATHOLOGY AND CREATIVITY

Although for many years now there have been attempts made to redefine the psychopathological diagnoses into diagnoses related to development and creativity, there still persists a discriminative approach to phenomena which are statistically rare. People who are extremely talented are treated as "weird objects", which should rather not exist in nature and society. They do not fit the schemata describing the standard and common phenomena. Following this, is giving a psychiatric label, which is supposed to protect society from the threat which comes from these atypical individuals. Fortunately such defence is never effective, though it is still carried out with passion. In order to do so, broad criteria is applied in the index of the diagnostic system DSM-III. In such a system, if there is a need to, anyone can be regarded as a bearer of pathology, and assessed, treated and controlled "psychiatrically". Many eminent people have been categorized according to this system by three syndromes: acute personality disorders which comprise psychotic episodes; medium personality disorders, where depressive tendencies dominate; and light personality disorders, where "small neuroses" come into being. In my understanding, it is only the acute syndromes that can be treated as psychopathic if they are mixed with sociopathy, thus strong destructive tendencies, alcoholism, drug addiction or suicidal obsession. Other criteria, which are emphasized in western psychology, e.g. sexual orientation, should not be included in the psychopathology of creativity, but to the psychology of development.

CREATORS AND SUFFERING

In order for the reader to know who is mentioned here, I have attached a list of creators who have experienced mental difficulties and who are named most often. The list is based on the diagnosis of these creators, who "underwent examination" the most by psychologists, doctors and psychiatrists. The lists which are arranged according to the severity of disorders, in a scale: A) acute, B) considerable, C) mild, include the following persons:

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<th>ARTISTS</th>
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Tadeusz Kobierzycki
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<th>Group</th>
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I have not included the list of politicians, because it shows how imprecise are the criteria that the analysts are using, giving in to political influences. It is enough to mention that Hitler has been placed next to Lincoln in the group of acute disorders, Stalin can be found in
the group of considerable disorders next to Piłsudzki, and Lenin next to Ben Gurion in the group of mild disorders. At the same time Gandhi was recognized as having no disorders and he was put next to General Franco. These positionings are completely false because the criteria used, disregarded the phenomenon of the psychopathology of power, which the greatest dictators of the 20th century became famous for, like e.g. Mao-Tse-tung who allegedly had "mild" disorders.

The presented list should be revised in accordance with the available information and criteria of personal development. Much of the so-called psychopathological phenomena, is the effect of developmental transformations, creative disintegration, during which a strong stratification of the personality occurs. They are subordinated to constructing and not destroying, even though destructive processes also occurs during the creative processes. In the case of politicians, we are dealing with "hard pathology", where destruction is a mechanism of power, in other words - having control over others, and not creativity, which assumes control over oneself.

THE CREATIVE PERSONALITY

Attaining the personality means mastering by the "I" its whole self in harmony with transcendence. Immanent development ends in the personality stadium, which becomes more susceptible to the steering of spiritual, angelic and daimonic forces.

This type of force, these spiritual sources dynamize the creative act, identifying it with the personal forces of creation. In the form of talents, gifts, interests, the creative acts are an analogue of divine forces in man. The real identity begins at the moment of birth and never disappears. It lights up in moments of creativity, illness or death. It becomes a light exteriorized from the bodily-spiritual bond. The light of the personality becomes the personality of the light, the force of creative being in the world. In such an act, the creator breaks free toward transcendent sources of life.

Creativity is an incorporation of what is spiritual or a spiritualization of what is bodily. Creativity alongside symbiosis, syntony, sympathy becomes the highest, essential expression of transcendence. A great creator as a prophet warns about an approaching extermination. Just as a poet, he compiles a threnody about love and death. His irrational (admiration) and irrational (thought) experiences fill the emptiness of transcendence.

Talented or gifted man says more in his creativity than his personality does. Hidden in his instinct, talent, gift, he is difficult to recognize, because he transfers his self to the object that he is creating.

CONCLUSION

Using the model of multilevel theories of development, I am going to present the most important traits of creators and creativity.

On the first level – the creator identifies with the child, magician, with the "uncertain forces" of nature; the childlike unconsciousness displays the archetypical forms and contents of what fascinates and brings fear, clichés and fairy-tale creatures, sleepy visions; the unconsciousness releases the passion for magical imitation.

On the second level – the creator has a need to oppose the environment, destroy objects used in creativity; creativity is identified with anti-creativity, creative thinking with
disintegration; ambivalencies release the passion for disintegration.

**On the third level** – the creator discovers vertical relations, e.g. the paths upwards, cathedrals, the feeling of man's insignificance, man extended upwards, the need to spiritualize oneself or sanctify the body, the releasing of the passion for moral or religious judgment.

**On the fourth level** – the creator searches for autonomy (A. Dürer), he discovers the transparency of the body and soul, searching for the form stabilizing the corporeality in the soul and the soul in the body, releasing the passion for autonomy (Michelangelo).

**On the fifth level** – the creator analyses darkness (H. Rembrandt), the reflections of light in human faces, symbolizing the soul of the dying man; the tearing of the bond of the soul and body releases the passion for transcendence (Leonardo da Vinci).

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