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Bogna

Love on Different Levels of Personality according to the Theory of Positive Disintegration [EN]

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Witold Wolny

The Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) by Prof. Kazimierz Dabrowski, an outstanding Polish scholar, psychiatrist, psychologist and philosopher has developed a theory that is an exceptional achievement, and as a result it has been accepted as an important contribution to the world's psychology legacy. Abraham Maslow saw great promise in Dabrowski's theory as one that emphasized human potential. One of the most distinctive features of the TPD is its "spiritual nature". It is a theory that takes into special consideration such notions as the following: freedom, responsibility, creativity, contemplation, meditation, empathy, ideals, hypersensitivity and - last but not least – love.

In this article, I will try to determine how love is articulated and understood on a particular level of development according to the Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD). This will enable us to distinguish between objective meanings and subjective ways of perceiving love in relation to different types and levels of development in the individual.

Love is one of the basic notions that identify the psycho-emotional dimension of human life. Paradoxically, it's very difficult to define precisely what love is because of the almost limitless variety of emotional biases in relation to the meaning of this term. This variety is due to an ambiguous understanding of the term and its "symptoms". Consequently, this term has been practically wiped out of psychological texts. Contemporary psychology tends to utilize the methods and language of the natural sciences and marginalize such a "hazy" concept (cf. Grzywiak-Kaczyńska 1975, p. 127). I suggest resolving this problem through an analysis of love from the perspective and within the conceptual model of the Theory of Positive Disintegration.

TPD enumerates five levels of personality development. At the lowest level I, Primitive or Primary Integration, mental functions are subordinated to primitive drives and the individual's biological instincts and needs, including social needs. The individual's intelligence and emotions are focused on self-interest and self-gratification, and inner conflict is almost nonexistent. When it does exist, it typically focuses on the external world. The second level of Unilevel Disintegration triggers the disintegration of the primitive, compact structure through crises and conflicts. The dynamics of ambivalence and competing tendencies appear and mental integration is weakened. However, this disintegration does not lead to integration at a higher level. Level III that of Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration is the first level where the



positive dynamics of development might put an individual on the path of positive disintegration and offer the possibility for advanced development. Level IV, Organized Multilevel Disintegration, sees the rise of developmental dynamics such as autonomy, authenticity, self-education, auto psychotherapy in conjunction with the third factor. The highest level V, Secondary Integration, is the apex of human development where harmonious personality is achieved with no inner conflict due to the higher forms of empathy, autonomy and authenticity. (For a concise description of TPD, cf: Mendaglio 2008)

Let's examine these five levels of personality in relation to the meaning of love. The creator of TPD, Kazimierz Dąbrowski notes:

"We call love a primitive, non-hierarchical sexual instinct, a tendency to discharge sexual energy in a non selective sense, in a cohort sense and we also call love a relationship between a man and a woman that has an exclusive character, that is based on conscious choice, responsibility, a need for continuity, and a need for a mutual emotional enrichment in the relationship. These meanings are so different that we should find for each of them separate, multilevel terms." (Dąbrowski 1979, p. 227)

Dabrowski concurs, that love is multilevel akin to the emotional and axiological reality of man, but he never makes a specific analysis.

At the first level – Primary Integration - the other is treated in a nonsubjective, impersonal manner. The individual is entirely subjugated to and influenced by the basic instincts; the main role is played by the sexual instinct. The "I" of an individual is identified in some way with the instincts, so it is almost impossible to establish a genuine personal relationship "I – You". The partner is treated impersonally as an object of sexual fulfillment or primitive pleasure or of domination, an object to overpower or control. There is almost a complete lack of sensitivity about the partner's needs; - his or her age, health, emotional necessities and availability do not matter at all. As a result of a strong dependence on biological factors at this level, the individual shows "very small inhibition in matters of sexuality in the presence of others" and "very small inhibition about using force" (Dąbrowski 1972, p.72).

There is an interesting explanation about this issue proposed by one of Dabrowski's disciples, Tadeusz Kobierzycki who, using TPD as a background writes: the instinctive "I" is so strongly solidified, almost identified with biological factors and expressed by its necessities, that it gets annihilated when these needs are satisfied. That's why an individual feels an emotional emptiness, and when it is not fulfilled, nor balanced with higher experiences and values, this might be understood as taking away the "I", and the partner is seen as an aggressor and the origin of this act of "I"-killing. Consequently, feelings of fear and helplessness appear installed as a protection against this annihilation. As a result, there is a reaction of aggression towards the partner that in the case of psychopaths might even take the form of physical torture, beating or even murder. This aggression can take more or less sublime, moral or psychological forms (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 240).

Let's take into account another kind of love, maternal love. It also appears here rather as a primitive (in a multilevel sense) maternal instinct rather than one of true love. However as Grzywak-Kaczynska observes: "There is a genuine altruistic element here that differentiates the maternal instinct from the sexual one" (Grzywak-Kaczyńska 1975, p. 130). In this case a child is treated as an object. His/her real needs do not count, and this instinctive maternal love frequently leads to subjugation and the repression of the child who is trapped in the net of the mother's emotions. It seems like this altruistic element of the maternal instinct works as a force that situates this kind of love at a higher level, at the verge of level II or even III. It needs to be clarified whether this phenomenon is limited just to mother's love or could become a real positive energy that allows the individual to break or to control primitive levels and to integrate at a stable, higher level.

The third characteristic manifestation of love is its spiritual dimension that is displayed by religious experiences in particular in a relationship with God. Characteristic of

this kind of love is its transcendental dimension which is a capacity for trespassing our own limits, going towards someone, yielding. The higher the degree of biological integration, the more difficult it is to abandon oneself in an authentic act of self-transcendence. Evidently at this level it is impossible to talk about a truly personal loving relationship between the I and a divine You. It doesn't mean that the act of faith is not viable; on the contrary, the faith might be of enormous importance. However, at this level God appears as the authority of power, command, supremacy that we need to fear, to submit to, or the authority in the name of whom we can manipulate, subdue and even destroy others. In this state of religious fervor, the magical attitude is predominant. "Man invokes a higher power in order to obtain help and protection in relation to his primitive needs, above all biological" (Dąbrowski ,typescript, p.1). Religious fundamentalism, the expressing of categorical, dogmatic moral sentences in the name of God or even more sublime manipulations of religious doctrine in order to acquire power; these are only a few possible symptoms of this submission to a god or rather God's submission to the instinctive needs of man.

A special group within level I (Primitive Integration) is made up of psychopaths. Among them, Dabrowski points out dictators and mass murderers like Nero, Stalin, Ivan the Terrible, Hitler or Mason. The motto of the Wehrmacht "Got mitt uns" and the quasi-religious structure of Manson's Family are just a few extreme manifestations of religiosity at level I. Less extreme symptoms are anthropomorphization and magical thinking and the non-reflexive, non-critical approach to good and avoidance of evil (Musiał 2006, p. 51).

As shown, at level I, it would be difficult to talk about the existence of an authentically human love. In fact, Dabrowski notes that here "a loving relationship cannot be formed" (Dąbrowski 1984b, p. 72).

At level II – the Unilateral Disintegration – the solid biological structure is broken. Sporadic reflection appears, i.e. an unstable syntony with the partner, periodic retrospection and prospection, an unstable balance between sexual arousal and inhibitions. The individual's identity, "narrowed" at the previous level, now is widened through judgment, syntony, identification, emotional memory etc., but all these factors work periodically, haphazardly with so-called ambivalences and competing tendencies. For that reason, the relationship I-You has also an unequal, irregular and ambivalent character - partially positive, personal and partially negative, non-personal. Nevertheless the range of aggression towards the partner diminishes, whereas sensitivity about his/her needs and the needs of the family increases. It is not yet at the level, where dependability and exclusiveness of emotional relationships are well understood. At this point the individual shows certain easiness on changing objects or concepts of love, which is understood more as an emotional projection than as a true relationship. This is related to multiple, unilevel and non-hierarchical conflicts of the command-directive centers (Dąbrowski 1984b, p.73).

The activity of factor II is very typical here. It shows up as a result of a fracture in a compact axiological and biological structure, as a result of positive disintegration. Through this crack irrupt models of social relations and sexual life, which are generated outside, and the individual only adopts them as such models (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 243). Hence the relationship I-You is determined by the opinion of a group, by trends, current models of values and behaviors. If an individual is deemed by society as unique and unrepeatably, then the value of the relationship I and You will be seen as exceptional as well (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 244). That's why somebody might swear that marriage is sacred just because this is what the Church says, even though has never experienced this sacredness of marriage as a sign of internal transcendence. For this person "to become one flesh" as God's blueprint for marriage (Genesis 2:24) has just a physical meaning and is not a philosophical or spiritual reality. At level I, jealousy is linked to possessiveness and may be very violent, because it is related to questioning one's value, to feelings of inferiority and to shaking the existing unilevel order. The lack of multilevel perspectives, as well as the lack of empathy, makes impossible a more flexible, reflexive and philosophical approach to crisis situations, both real and imaginary.

So, how does this relationship I-You at the level II occur, and what is its nature? In his work on positive disintegration and the levels of love John Mc Graw quotes Theodor Keik, who stated, that love is based on exchanges of the ideals of "I". Dissatisfaction with oneself, disquietude originated by disintegration, is a result of the distance from this „ego – ideal". Its realization is impossible due to the lack of hierarchical values and a steady disposing and directing center. "The fulfillment of the ego-ideal will make the individual being self-satisfied and self-sufficient and will erase internal stress." In this instance to love means "to transfer the ideal to another person" (McGraw 1987, p.8). This kind of love we can call romantic, since the beloved person becomes an idol, lacking real empathic insight and devoid of an authentic evaluation. A similar intuition is shown by Max Scheler, obviously without the TPD as the background. In his comparative analysis of love and shared emotions he writes that the pure act of sharing feelings itself is totally blind to the value of these feelings (Scheler 1986, p. 18). Let me remark, that on this level the main dynamism of relationship is syntony, that is the capacity for insight into and participation with other people's feelings and experiences but at a low level, not like the more sublime form of empathy that is a kind of joint-being. Mc Graw observes that love at this level is rather ostentatious; this kind of love is frequently a cause and an effect of psychoneurotic and neurotic processes. That's why there is a gigantic amount of romantic literature, erotic art, music and movies that revolve around problems related to love. On the one hand, typical for romantic love in the process of personality development is the period of pubertal development and, as Dabrowski notes, "this is precisely the period in which processes of unilevel disintegration are distinctive (Dąbrowski 1984a, p.60)." At this level suicidal tendencies may appear as a demonstration of revenge or anguish, which are themselves the outcome of the unfulfilled need for love and attention (Dąbrowski, 1984b, p. 119). According to Dabrowski, the transformation of romantic love into authentic love requires the participation of the dynamics of multilevel disintegration (Mc Graw 1987, p. 9).

On the other hand, the religious attitude reveals signs of fears and internal conflicts. The ambivalences and multiple tendencies cause feelings of being rejected by God or of lacking His grace. Moreover, an atheistic position emerges that coexists with a periodical quest for contact with God, mainly caused because of defensive reasons (Dąbrowski, typescript, 81-83; Kobierzycki 1982, p. 244). It is accompanied by fears, tensions, a lack of self-confidence and self-identification, but there is also a component of an authentic contact with God and an emergence of a genuine religious experience, described by Rudolf Otto as experience of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Musiał 2006, p. 56).

An authentic personal love appears on the third level of Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration. There is a quality change here, because the character of determination changes from an external to an internal one, from instincts and emotions to feelings and values. The psychological emancipation of the individual from determination by biologically driven forces (like instincts), to the emergence of a hierarchy of values in company with the inner psychic milieu is the basis for a conscious and rational selection of a love partner. At the same time, this selection is deeply emotional. In sexual activity, emotional ingredients prevail over physical (Dąbrowski 1984b, p. 73). This possibility of autonomy of love in relation to sexual life was also acknowledged by Karen Horney, who affirmed that love and sensitivity might not be connected with sexual desires (Horney 1982, p. 107). It does not mean that sexuality is perceived as a lower quality level of love, but that it is profoundly saturated with feelings. Sexual needs emerge not as the cause for, but rather as the effect of a deeply conscious, emotional love.

Among other characteristics of this level of love, Dabrowski mentions uniqueness and exclusivity of feelings, as well as responsibility for the partner and the family. The need for exclusivity and uniqueness in the relationship could be perceptible during an impasse in sexual activity or even during impotency when the beloved partner is dying, ill or inaccessible because of prolonged physical distance. This illustrates how the higher level of sexual instinct causes the inhibition of its lower levels (Dąbrowski

1984b, p. 74). Furthermore, syntony as a non-distinctive feeling disappears, and it is substituted by empathy, namely a deep and conscious emotional, intuitive understanding of others. The empathy is coupled with identification, which according to McGraw, is “more intellectual than empathy” and appears in Dabrowski’s thought as a form of alter-centrism (Mc Graw 1987, p. 114).

The dynamics of level III play a very important role in the process of the formation of love. They form a twofold sequence: one with a negative aspect, another positive. This is characteristic of this level where a conscious, although not yet systematic and spontaneous negation of that which is lower, is taking place along with an affirmation of that which is higher. Because you becomes an object that I experiences as an object of love, the dynamics of negation act against all that make this object vulgar and simplistic, i.e. against instincts that “command” the I to treat the you as a usable object (Dąbrowski 1984b, p. 74-76). Consequently, the dynamics of astonishment with oneself become visible when the individual is aware of this blind, biological driving force not correlated with his/her actual needs; in other words, without empathy. This astonishment triggers reactions of “slowing down” or inhibition.

Analogous negative characteristics have other dynamics, i.e. disquietude with oneself, feelings of inferiority, guilt and shame, dissatisfaction with oneself and positive maladjustment (Dąbrowski 1982b, p. 74). These dynamics transform instinctive love into emotional love. Conflict that appears as a result of negative experiences of love in its biological, instinctive, non-personal plane, and correlated feelings of inferiority can be resolved through such emotional encounters like sharing an experience of beauty in nature or the arts or sharing an experience of truth. Finally there are also positive dynamics, those that “lift up”, namely the dynamics of self-affirmation. Higher feelings ought to compose the makeover. Consequently they emerge from a process of an emotional split with the lower reality, caused by a stronger dynamic, in this case the axiological one (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 250). The main dynamics quoted by Dabrowski are identification and empathy that “form the proper relations of love” (Dąbrowski 1984b, p. 77).

In the religious attitude a more differential and spiritual picture of God is possible. He is felt and understood not just as immanent (namely subjective) but also as transcendent (namely objective). Similarly, grace is understood and accepted as a personal gift, hence unique and exclusive, but at the same time, as an experience of the higher reality (Dąbrowski, typescript, p. 1).

In conclusion, at level III we can assert the appearance of a truly personal love. We can find here all the “ingredients” necessary to call love truly human and to verify a personalized “I-You” relationship (Szewczyk 1987, p. 68-69).

The forth level – Organized and Systematic Multilevel Disintegration – is characterized by such emotional-cognitive dynamics as Self-Awareness and Self-Control, Subject-Object in Oneself and the Third Factor. Hence, this is the level where intellectual functions are pooled with emotional dynamics (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 254). The ideal of exclusive, unique and stable emotional relationships is – as Dabrowski calls it – a philosophical stance. Highly developed also are empathy and responsibility for the family. The beloved partner is characterized by his/her uniqueness and distinctiveness; love is a motive for contemplation, always active is the memory of exclusive relations of love and friendship. Thanks to the emotional-cognitive dynamics mentioned above, a final rupture with determination by instincts is achieved. The lower forms of behaviour are successfully blocked as well, and all this happens without a great effort or tension (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 7). The so-called Third Factor “cooperates with empathy, self-control and self-awareness, prospection and retrospection in forming a learning experience for matrimony and for family formation” (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 78). The predominant value in the partner is his/her individuality, emotionality and mental ability.

There is a characteristic to this level:

„I could not exchange my relationship for anything in this world. I feel a uniqueness of the physical with the moral and spiritual, a deep bond of our minds and hearts, not

only the physical union. I feel distaste about the exclusively physical aspects of love. And from the spiritual view I feel something like the eternity of genders” (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 78).

As a result of the feelings of exclusivity, love acquires a new quality; it turns out to be immortal. Dabrowski writes: “It is necessary to remember the beloved person –as a fresh flower and a fresh wound. It is necessary to live together as with a real person, if only in thoughts, imagination and desire; it is necessary to create his/her transcendental image, and if it’s possible – never again to have this, namely such a close relationship” (Dąbrowski 1982, p. 12).

Very strong dynamics at level IV are empathy and identification that embrace not only those with whom we form relationships of love, but they are also very powerful feelings of empathy towards those who are humiliated, suffering or disgraced (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p.111). Tadeusz Kobierzycki calls love at level IV moral love, because here moral experiences in particular improve and make the development of love more selective (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 250). This is love in its aspect of perfection, apart from instinctive and emotional dimensions that encompass also the axiological feature. It is correlated with self-awareness that is intrinsically associated with the highest values of good, truth and beauty” (Kobierzycki 1982, p. 260).

Dabrowski pointed out that Michelangelo is a good example for this level of love. Because he couldn’t find a human love, the dynamics and depth of his feelings were expressed in his art. He was the man who “loved always and everything /.../ Loved his close family, servants, disciples, the poor and disgraced, loved the country and all humankind. He loved beauty in all its forms: freedom and truth, nobility and power, poetry and singing, a sense of humor and sincerity, facial beauty and the harmony of the human body, all the miracles and beauty of heaven and earth/.../ He loved God with a love that later becomes unique love” (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 174).

According to by Dabrowski, characteristic feature of a religious attitude is that God is acknowledged as essence of love and harmony between Him and the human being who is aware of the uniqueness of his own personality and the Uniqueness of God (Dąbrowski, typescript, p. 2). The emotional-cognitive character distinguishes love at level IV. This makes love an attitude, namely a constant disposition to feel emotions in opposition to love as more or less volatile, emotional episodes (Błażejewska 1983, p. 35). In conclusion this is what differentiates this level of love from the former one.

At level V – Secondary (Heroic) Integration – it is very difficult to give more or less assessable characteristics of love because of its sublime character at the highest level. Love is expressed through the highest attitude I-You: responsibility for the partner and his/her development, elevated exclusivity, uniqueness and inimitability of the relationship. Sexual instinct is totally subordinated to a hierarchy of values, i.e. a hierarchy of higher and lower levels of emotions, as well as moral, emotional and ideological ideals. There are also the higher levels of uniqueness, inimitability and responsibility for the partner and family, for the I and you in matrimony and friendship. At the same time, the dynamic of autonomy facilitates attention and mindfulness related to the realization of the ideals of truth and conscious idealism with reference to the beloved person. Empathy as a capacity of understanding and intuitively feeling others and through others to understand oneself, together with the personality ideal, “inspires the highest level of love that tends to overcome separation and death” (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 81). Dąbrowski describes this kind of love as „infinite and unconditional” (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 93). The culmination of love is a certain intuitive understanding of other people’s needs, having somehow put one’s own ideals on the backdrop. Dąbrowski writes:

„At the highest level, which is at the level of Secondary Integration, we are capable of a deeper understanding of every human being, his level of development, internal potential and similar functions. This comes together with a greater understanding of the total psychic structure of every person that is met. Simultaneously with the understanding of the deep needs of others, a constant readiness to help them, together with the identification with others and deep empathy, comes internal peace. Its sign is the attitude of syntonic wisdom, understanding, kindness and generosity”

(Mc Graw 1987, p. 6).

Love at this level is expressed by two essences: individual and social. It is interesting that TPD in its empirical studies did not find anybody with such a high level of development – with one exception. It is, according to Dabrowski, Jesus Christ as a man. He presents both essences at the highest level. In him the highest interests, talents and capacities are directed to the spiritual development of oneself. These radiate to others to stimulate their development. Jesus also showed symptoms of exclusive, inimitable feelings towards some people spiritually close to him like Martha, Mary, Lazarus and the Apostles - especially the “beloved disciple” John. He also displayed the highest social essences in his attitude of empathy and love for all human beings, as well as in the attitude of responsibility and readiness to sacrifice, - that was shown in Golgotha (Dąbrowski 1985, p. 245).

The religious attitude at level V is characterized by the dialogue I-You. It encompasses “affirmation of the absolute values linked to an all-embracing empathy and universal love.” Dialogue with God can be experienced in the middle of a crisis of faith, in the midst of the dark night of soul, but it does not question the need for this dialogue. That endures as “intense but peaceful” (Dąbrowski, typescript, p. 2). God is a God of sensitive heart, sensitive to love, to the emotional attitude” (Dąbrowski 1984 b, p. 134).

I described characteristics of love according to the Theory of Positive Disintegration at all levels of personality development. As a start for this analysis we considered love, understood as a feeling between two human beings as well as a personal relationship man-God including its universal, transcendental, meta-personal dimension. In the course of this analysis it became clear that according to TPD, we can only talk about a truly conscious understanding and experiencing of love as personal from the third level of development, although a few of these components appear at level II. Emotional-cognitive love, moral love, appears at level IV, while its apogee is achieved at the level of the Secondary (Heroic) Integration. There it is a kind of a perfect liaison I-you, where “you” means both a personal and exclusive relationship and also a relationship without boundaries that embraces all people, all nature and the entire universe. It embraces even more; the transcendent You in many cultures is equivalent to God.

If we were tempted to find just one or main dynamic of personality development, a sort of *condicio sine qua non* for creating truly human love, the kind of love that trespasses integrated, instinctual and biological levels and dynamics of development, it will certainly be the so called Third Factor. However, here we find a difficulty: if the First and the Second Factors (respectively biology and environment)- are relatively easy to define, (Dąbrowski 1984a, p. 101) the Third Factor is much more intricate and complex. Dąbrowski defines the Third Factor as a synthesis of all autonomous and authentic factors needed for development, as a force, or group of forces, that “position negatively and positively to oneself as well as negatively and positively to one’s environment” (Dąbrowski 1975, p. 54). The activity of the Third Factor is expressed by a conscious confirmation of acceptance of certain tendencies, forms of thinking, ways of behavior etc. according to the value hierarchy, which emphasizes personality development, and by taking apart and rejecting those that the individual does not affirm, does not accept, and considers as syndromes of the lower self. The Third Factor is an expression of, not a negative, but a positive personality split, so that one thinks and becomes aware of this thinking, one feels and considers the feeling, one acts and deeply and methodically analyses this performance (Dąbrowski 1980, p. 11). Hence this is a very conscious, autonomous directing of self development, a control of processing, choosing and affirming that which is positive for development in the inner and outer environment as well as negating, a weakening and rejecting of those elements that are not favourable, that slow down or repress the development.

The Third Factor, as a synthesis of autonomous factors, contains such dynamics as the following: dissatisfaction with oneself, positive maladjustment, feelings of shame

and guilt, self-control and autopsychotherapy, a high level of self-awareness, empathy and more multilevel dynamics, above all the object-subject in oneself. All these autonomous factors as more or less developed third factors are ingredients of a single, powerful Third Factor.

A more precise description of the Third Factor is difficult. It's true that Dąbrowski is certain about its existence, one that can be empirically demonstrated, when he states: "clinically it is clearly and definitively located in place and time", but there are cases where: „we cannot verify even traces of the Third Factor” (Dąbrowski 1975, p. 55). In another place the author puts forward a hypothesis that the Third Factor is a consequence of the hereditary potential for development and positive influences of the environment (Dąbrowski 1970, p. 34). However, when we compare it with other terms that have entered the dictionary of the psychology of personality, we have a different quality, as if the language of psychology reached its own limits and had to borrow definitions, terminology, and notions typical of philosophy or even metaphysics. To prove this point, let me call attention to the fact, that in professional literature many speculations of different authors become visible about what actually this- as Kramer said – “blurry Third Factor” is in its essence (Kramer 1984, p. 106). Halina Romanowska-Łakomy compares this notion to V.E. Frankl's subjective experience, S.A. Kierkegaard's spirit of personality, A. Schopenhauer's that what somebody is, Heidegger's Dasein, J.P. Sartre's being for itself or finally J. Moreno's expressive-creative and spontaneous attitude (Romanowska-Łakomy 1980, p. 36). Lina Gaudette calls the Third Factor auto-description (Gaudette 1980, p. 56), and Kramer prefers to define it as something that motivates human consciousness acting from a certain deep font of understanding. Or, in another place: “organized framework of that which compels a superficial consciousness to get organized in a certain definitive, stable personality, that is wholly unique, highly functional, that acts efficiently and purposely” (Kramer 1984, p. 107). What is particularly interesting, later Kramer announces the impossibility of expressing the nature of the Third Factor using categories and notions to which we are accustomed. And he says: “this would be like a description of perceptions of a three-dimensional being made to a two-dimensional one.” Kramer assumes that only those who attained level IV or V can comprehend the Third Factor, although he did not deny that its premonitions exist at level III (Kramer 1984, p. 107).

No less interesting seem to be the questions posed by Bohdan Urbankowski. He goes even further and suggests that the solution of the Third Factor mystery lies in Dąbrowski's religious beliefs, which supposedly constitute the hidden roots and assumptions for the entire Theory. More specifically, the Theory is about the connection between Dąbrowski's style of thinking and evaluating Christianity. The potential for development is like the divine spark, like the soul in development. The Third Factor articulates the responsible art of directing oneself beyond freedom and necessity (Urbankowski 1987, p. 77). This idea is close to how the Third Factor was defined by a former student of Prof. Dąbrowski, Dr. Maria Braun-Galkowska, who studied the TPD at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). She affirmed that in fact it is a spiritual factor and that the quite unclear name of Third Factor was used as a result of the political situation in Poland during the 1950's when overwhelming Marxist terminology did not allow the usage of such a “spiritual” notions.

Finally let me quote Dąbrowski's significant statement to better address the problem of the mysterious Third Factor:

“The presence of a mystery in the creation of internal autonomy. People ask me where it comes from, because it breaks away and even is in opposition with hereditary tendencies and environmental influences. I answer – I don't know. I have a little bit of hidden joy that I cannot give a scientific answer, just an intuitive one. This is simply such a highly human issue that it makes it impossible to give a scientific answer. We can only say that it comes out of development, out of conscious transformation, and maybe... maybe as a result of subtly touching the transcendental level” (Dąbrowski 1972, p. 14).

So if the Third Factor is, on one hand, necessary for development of the higher

levels of personality, and consequently an authentic love and, on the other hand, its transcendental character can only be grasped by a very subtle intuition, then we can take a deep breath: the mystery of love will not be entirely analysed by the means and methods of science and described by its language. It's worthy to evoke here once again Dabrowski's words that have already been quoted about the possibility of clinical confirmation of the presence or lack of the Third Factor in a given individual and , consequently, his/her capacity to experience true love.

Finally it is pertinent to highlight that TPD has a dynamic character. The notional structures of the Theory "lives", are in motion, sometimes in very complicated constellations. That's why it is important to avoid simplifications. For instance, in the above description of the scheme of love the tendency to over-simplify could appear, i.e. the suggestion that every phenomenon of love might be placed within the framework of one of its five dimensions. However, in practice structures of two or even three levels may exist in parallel or even in tension and conflict with each other. Passage to the higher level is completed when one of these structures is eliminated or if it is under total control by the structure of the higher level.

In conclusion it would be worthwhile, in my opinion, to stress one of the most interesting characteristics of TPD: the levels of personality development, hence levels of love that TDP describes are measurable. And this is important in spite of the, at times, uneasy adaptation of language of a sublime psychology. Pragmatists may sometime resist being forced to use a terminology that might be considered too spiritual, hence naturally inappropriate according to the requirements and standards of scientific methodology. Nevertheless the Theory of Positive Disintegration elaborated rigorous research methods that might be used to diagnose love, methods that could be enormously useful for psychotherapy and different forms of pastoral and family counselling as well as other forms of relationship counseling. It could answer such critical questions like why people so frequently make wrong choices in the selection of „Mr. or Ms Right”, why the painful discovery of the impossibility of sharing common emotions and experiences, of developing and deepening the experience of love, has to be so difficult, filled with many painful years of arguments and suffering. Finally, could answer why there are so many different ways of understanding or reading the physical, sexual sphere of the human being and other forms of the language of love. Deeper understanding of these phenomena could help us choose the right partner, or at least clarify existing potentials and dangers in the way of ordinary living.

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