PowerPoint presentations followed by proceedings.
Welcome.

The Sixth International Congress of the Institute for Positive Disintegration in Human Development
June 24-26, 2004
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Developmental Potential:
From Theory to Practice –
Educational and Therapeutic Perspectives.
Developmental Potential.

- Dąbrowski developed DP to help explain the different types and levels of both qualitative and quantitative personality development that he observed in people.

- Dąbrowski (1972) described developmental potential as “the constitutional endowment which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for a given individual” (p. 293). [All highlighting in quotes is added.]

- A Platonic approach: not everyone has the endowment needed to proceed through all phases of development.

- DP encompasses a constellation of genetic factors, subsequent environmental interactions and finally, emergent and transcending properties that determine the developmental parameters for an individual.
DP is the Cornerstone of the TPD.

- Dabrowski linked psychoneuroses with personality development because the developmental processes in psychoneurotics and in eminent personalities are similar:
  - “Clinical work and research . . . showed a great similarity in respect to the developmental potential of psychoneurotics and eminent personalities” (Dab. 1972, p. 180).

- In Dabrowski’s theory, personality development occurs through **positive disintegration**.
  - “Personality is thus the aim and the result of development through positive disintegration. The main agents of this development are the developmental potential, the conflicts with one's social milieu, and the autonomous factors (especially the third factor)” (Dab. 1972, p. 181).
A Very Broad Approach.

Dabrowski includes many features under the concept of developmental potential.
Three Critical Factors Anchor DP.

- “The first of these factors involves the hereditary, innate constitutional elements which are expressed in the developmental potential, in a more or less specific way, and are already recognizable in a one year old child” (Dab., 1970, p. 33).

- “Innate developmental potentials may be more general or more specific, more positive or more negative” (Dab., 1970, p. 33).

- First Factor, innate aspects, set the parameters:
  - “Environmental influences collide with those [innate] potentials, strengthen or weaken them, but their outcome always depends on an individual’s hereditary endowment” (Dab., 1970, p. 34).
The Second Factor.

- The second factor is external or environmental influence. The interactive impact of the environment will depend on the strength and the character of the innate potential present:
  - "When the developmental potential is very strong and very rich even a negatively acting social milieu is of secondary importance. If the nuclei of the developmental potential are weak, or if they also contain some negative components then the character of the social milieu is of decisive significance" (Dab., 1972, p. 9).
  - [Dabrowski used to say: “The best environment can’t help the worst genetics and the worst environment can’t stop the best genetics – we can see this everyday”.]
The Third Factor.

- The Third Factor, helps a person to differentiate between developmentally positive and negative alternatives and to make developmental choices between “that which is more myself” versus “that which is less myself”.
- “The third factor is the dynamism of conscious choice (valuation) by which one affirms or rejects certain qualities in oneself and in one's environment” (Dab., 1972, p. 306).
- “The third factor strives to see that every concrete act of a given individual is in correlation with his personality ideal” (Dab., 1964, p. 61).
- With advanced development: “The activity of the third factor transcends the determining influences of heredity and of the environment as well” (Dab., 1972, p. 230).
Dynamisms.

- Dabrowski described many types of developmental and creative **dynamisms**. Many of these dynamisms are critical aspects of developmental potential.

- Dabrowski (1972) defined a **dynamism** as:
  - A “biological or mental force controlling behavior and its development. **Instincts**, drives, and intellectual processes combined with **emotions** are dynamisms” (p. 294).

- **Lower** dynamisms are important at lower levels of development and **higher** dynamisms become important at higher levels of development.

- Dabrowski linked dynamisms and instincts directly with psychoneuroses and psychoneuroses directly with DP.
Psychoneurotic Development.

- DP creates a positive context for crises and disintegration: “experiences of shock, stress and trauma, may accelerate development in individuals with innate potential for positive development” (Dab., 1970, p. 20).

- “These different forms of the psychoneurotic developmental potential constitute in their totality the ‘royal path’ of hierarchical development – through multilevel disintegration, inner conflicts, creative instinct and instinct of self-perfection – toward secondary integration” (Dab., 1972, pp. 10-11).

- “It is the task of therapy to convince the patient of the developmental potential that is contained in his psychoneurotic processes.” (Dab., 1972, p. viii).
Operational Definition of DP.

• “The developmental potential can be assessed on the basis of the following components: psychic overexcitability (q.v.), special abilities and talents, and autonomous factors (notably the Third factor)” (Dab., 1972, p. 293).
  • [psychic = mental]
Overexcitability.

- “Each form of overexcitability points to a higher than average sensitivity of its receptors. As a result a person endowed with different forms of overexcitability reacts with surprise, puzzlement to many things, he collides with things, persons and events, which in turn brings him astonishment and disquietude” (Dab., 1972, p. 7).

- “The individual with a rich developmental potential rebels against the common determining factors in his external environment. He rebels against all that which is imposed on him against his will, against the typical influences of his environment, against the necessity of subordination to the laws of biology” (Dab., 1970, p. 32-33).
A Paradigm Shift.

- Overexcitability changes how a person sees reality:
  - “One could say that one who manifests a given form of overexcitability, and especially one who manifests several forms of overexcitability, sees reality in a different, stronger and more multisided manner” (Dab., 1972, p. 7).

- The “new” multilevel view of life created by OE, sets the stage for the vertical conflicts that are the basis of positive disintegration, leading to the development of the individual’s hierarchy of values and subsequently, of his or her autonomy and personality ideal. This process culminates with the person creating his or her individual personality.
Five Forms of Overexcitability.

- “One can already observe in a child one and a half to two years old certain fairly well differentiated potentials of the developmental instinct. These can be expressed through various differentiated forms of psychic hyperexcitability such as sensual, psychomotor, emotional, imaginative or intellectual hyperexcitability.” (Dab., 1970, p. 31).

- The “big 3”:
  - “Some forms of overexcitability constitute a richer developmental potential than others. Emotional (affective), imaginal and intellectual overexcitability are the richer forms” (Dab., 1972, p. 7).
OE and Creativity.

• “The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this: A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive. To them a touch is a blow, a sound is a noise, a misfortune is a tragedy, a joy is an ecstasy, a friend is a lover, a lover is a god, and failure is death. Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering necessity to create, create, create – so that without the creating of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of meaning, their very breath is cut off . . . . They must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency they are not really alive unless they are creating.” Pearl Buck.
Measuring Overexcitability.

- Michael Piechowski developed a test to measure OE: *The Overexcitability Questionnaire (OEQ)*.
- For the past ~25 years, research on OE has been done in the field of *gifted education*.
- Cheryl Ackerman’s 1997 doctoral thesis summarized the research done using the OEQ. Research consistently found that emotional, intellectual and imaginational overexcitability (in various orders) are elevated in gifted groups with the highest scores seen in a group of *artists*.
- Recent efforts to measure overexcitability have been aimed at creating a new, more user friendly questionnaire: *The Overexcitability Questionnaire Two*. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Are We Today?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In the field of gifted education, overexcitability has become synonymous with developmental potential and for some authors, even synonymous with giftedness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Some authors have connected overexcitability (and giftedness) with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), or even portrayed it as a learning disability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No one has attempted to measure the Third Factor or to integrate findings on overexcitability measures with the other developmental indices outlined in the Theory of Positive Disintegration.</td>
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Discussion Point 1 – Theory.

- Perhaps it is time to return to Dabrowski’s operational definition and to develop a measure of developmental potential reflecting and integrating; overexcitability, the Third factor and special abilities and talents.

- Measurements & discussions of developmental potential grounded within the Theory of Positive Disintegration would give readers a different and richer context to consider – a context that would also speak to applications.

- If we want to use a Dabrowskian perspective, we need to find better ways to integrate Dabrowski’s overall approach into our research and applications, for example, in the field of gifted education.
Discussion Point 2 – Therapy.

• Overexcitability causes mental conflicts. In experiences reminiscent of post traumatic stress reactions, people with strong overexcitability are often tormented by their experiences and are often left with troubling visual images replaying for years. The intensity and perseveration of these experiences combined with the inability to communicate them to others often leads to “tragic gifts” well after the “traumatic” experience.

• A Dabrowskian model calls for a more sensitive, more tolerant and more empathetic approach to counselling people who experience strong developmental potential. This model encourages the individual to embark on his or her own journey of autopsychotherapy.
Discussion Point 3 – Education.

• Can we identify and address systemic attitudes and programs that suppress or extinguish developmental potential?

• Can we develop educational methods and programs that better tolerate and even enhance the expression of strong developmental potential when it is present?

• Can we develop educational or social programs to encourage the person with “average” or equivocal DP?

• Can we, as individuals, find ways to influence and enhance the developmental potential of our own society?
Welcome to the Congress.

I would like to thank our congress coordinator: Ann Greenwood.

On behalf of the Congress committee; Dr. Sal Mendaglio, Dr. Mike Pyryt and myself, Bill Tillier,

I welcome our keynote speaker, Dr. A. Kawczak, all of the other presenters and all of the participants.

Dr. Marlene Rankel, one of Dabrowski’s colleagues and coauthors will now introduce Dr. Kawczak.
Searching for the Ox. The beast has never gone astray, and what is the use of searching for him? The reason why the oxherd is not on intimate terms with him is because the oxherd himself has violated his own inmost nature. The beast is lost, for the oxherd has himself been led out of the way through his deluding senses. His home is receding farther away from him, and byways and crossways are ever confused. Desire for gain and fear of loss burn like fire; ideas of right and wrong shoot up like a phalanx.

Alone in the wilderness, lost in the jungle, the boy is searching, searching! The swelling waters, the far-away mountains, and the unending path; Exhausted and in despair, he knows not where to go, He only hears the evening cicadas singing in the maple-woods.
II

Seeing the Traces. By the aid of the sutras and by inquiring into the doctrines, he has come to understand something, he has found the traces. He now knows that vessels, however varied, are all of gold, and that the objective world is a reflection of the Self. Yet, he is unable to distinguish what is good from what is not, his mind is still confused as to truth and falsehood. As he has not yet entered the gate, he is provisionally said to have noticed the traces.

By the stream and under the trees, scattered are the traces of the lost; The sweet-scented grasses are growing thick--did he find the way? However remote over the hills and far away the beast may wander, His nose reaches the heavens and none can conceal it.

III

Seeing the Ox. The boy finds the way by the sound he hears; he sees thereby into the origin of things, and all his senses are in harmonious order. In all his activities, it is manifestly present. It is like the salt in water and the glue in colour. [It is there though not distinguishable as an individual entity.] When the eye is properly directed, he will find that it is no other than himself,
On a yonder branch perches a nightingale cheerfully singing;  
The sun is warm, and a soothing breeze blows, on the bank the willows are green;  
The ox is there all by himself, nowhere is he to hide himself;  
The splendid head decorated with stately horns what painter can reproduce him?

IV

Catching the Ox. Long lost in the wilderness, the boy has at last found the ox and his hands are on him. But, owing to the overwhelming pressure of the outside world, the ox is hard to keep under control. He constantly longs for the old sweet-scented field. The wild nature is still unruly, and altogether refuses to be broken. If the oxherd wishes to see the ox completely in harmony with himself, he has surely to use the whip freely.

With the energy of his whole being, the boy has at last taken hold of the ox:  
But how wild his will, how ungovernable his power!  
At times he struts up a plateau,  
When lo! he is lost again in a misty unpenetrable mountain-pass.

V

Herding the Ox. When a thought moves, another follows, and then another—an endless
train of thoughts is thus awakened. Through enlightenment all this turns into truth; but falsehood asserts itself when confusion prevails. Things oppress us not because of an objective world, but because of a self-deceiving mind. Do not let the nose-string loose, hold it tight, and allow no vacillation.

The boy is not to separate himself with his whip and tether, 
Lest the animal should wander away into a world of defilements; 
When the ox is properly tended to, he will grow pure and docile; 
Without a chain, nothing binding, he will by himself follow the oxherd.

VI

Coming Home on the Ox’s Back. The struggle is over; the man is no more concerned with gain and loss. He hums a rustic tune of the woodman, he sings simple songs of the village-boy. Saddling himself on the ox’s back, his eyes are fixed on things not of the earth, earthy. Even if he is called, he will not turn his head; however enticed he will no more be kept back.

Riding on the animal, he leisurely wends his way home: 
Enveloped in the evening mist, how tunefully the flute vanishes away! 
Singing a ditty, beating time, his heart is filled with a joy indescribable! 
That he is now one of those who know, need it be told?
VII

The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone. The dharmas are one and the ox is symbolic. When you know that what you need is not the snare or set-net but the hare or fish, it is like gold separated from the dross, it is like the moon rising out of the clouds. The one ray of light serene and penetrating shines even before days of creation.

Riding on the animal, he is at last back in his home,  
Where lo! the ox is no more; the man alone sits serenely.  
Though the red sun is high up in the sky, he is still quietly dreaming,  
Under a straw-thatched roof are his whip and rope idly lying.

VIII

The Ox and the Man Both Gone out of Sight.[1] All confusion is set aside, and serenity alone prevails; even the idea of holiness does not obtain. He does not linger about where the Buddha is, and as to where there is no Buddha he speedily passes by. When there exists no form of dualism, even a thousand-eyed one fails to detect a loop-hole. A holiness before which birds offer flowers is but a farce.
All is empty—the whip, the rope, the man, and the ox:
Who can ever survey the vastness of heaven?
Over the furnace burning ablaze, not a flake of snow can fall:
When this state of things obtains, manifest is the spirit of the ancient master.

IX

Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source. From the very beginning, pure and immaculate, the man has never been affected by defilement. He watches the growth of things, while himself abiding in the immovable serenity of nonassertion. He does not identify himself with the maya-like transformations [that are going on about him], nor has he any use of himself [which is artificiality]. The waters are blue, the mountains are green; sitting alone, he observes things undergoing changes.

[1. It will be interesting to note what a mystic philosopher has to say about this: "A man shall become truly poor and as free from his creature will as he was when he was born. And I say to you, by the eternal truth, that as long as ye desire to fulfil the will of God, and have any desire after eternity and God; so long are ye not truly poor. He alone hath true spiritual poverty who wills nothing, knows nothing, desires nothing."--(From Eckhart as quoted by Inge in Light, Life, and Love.)]

To return to the Origin, to be back at the Source--already a false step this!
Far better it is to stay at home, blind and deaf, and without much ado;
Sitting in the hut, he takes no cognisance of things outside,
Behold the streams flowing—whither nobody knows; and the flowers vividly red—for whom are they?
Entering the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands. His thatched cottage gate is closed, and even the wisest know him not. No glimpses of his inner life are to be caught; for he goes on his own way without following the steps of the ancient sages. Carrying a gourd[1] he goes out into the market, leaning against a staff[2] he comes home. He is found in company with wine-bibbers and butchers, he and they are all converted into Buddhas.

Bare-chested and bare-footed, he comes out into the market-place; Daubed with mud and ashes, how broadly he smiles!
There is no need for the miraculous power of the gods,
For he touches, and lo! the dead trees are in full bloom.

2. No extra property he has, for he knows that the desire to possess is the curse of human life.]
IMAGINARY
GROUPS

by
Clive Hazell

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Object Relations Theory

(a "branch" of psychodynamic psychology)

Assumes the mind is comprised of a matrix of semi autonomous "object relations units" that interact with one another and affect behavior.

An object relations unit is an internal representation of self, other and the links connecting self and other.

The links between self and other may in the form of emotion, affect, cognition, fantasy, phantasy, bodily state, mood, and intention.

Object relations units are dynamic. They are not merely static representations or templates. They operate as semi-autonomous sub personalities, interacting with each other as if in a group. This "group", of course, is inside the mind and operating mostly in the unconscious. Viewed from this perspective, all psychotherapy, even when practiced with an individual is group psychotherapy.
Diagrammatic representation of an Object Relations Unit

Diagrammatic representation of a matrix of Object Relations Units in the mind
Five Levels of Group Analysis

1. Intrapersonal
   - "It's his/her problem."

2. Interpersonal
   - "It's between them."

3. Group as a whole
   - "It's our problem (even though it doesn't look like it)."

4. Intergroup
   - "It's between one group and another" (representation).

5. Interorganizational
   - "It's between one organization and another."
LEVELS OF GROUP ANALYSIS

1. INTRAPERSONAL
   Problems in the group are analyzed as if they stem from problems inside the individual. E.G. The problem is all in his/her personality.

2. INTERPERSONAL
   Problems in the group are analyzed as if they stem from issues between individuals. E.g. "We/they just do not get on with each other".

3. GROUP-AS-A-WHOLE
   Problems in the group are analyzed as manifestations of issues that affect the whole group. The group is treated as if it were a single entity. E.g. "Bill forgot to show up because we are all anxious about this project." Individuals are seen as repositories of different aspects of anxiety that belong to the whole group. Scapegoating analysis.

4. INTERGROUP
   Problems in groups are analyzed as if they result from conflicts between whole groups. Conflict within a group may mirror conflicts between groups. Conflicts having to do with representation are examined.

5. INTERORGANIZATIONAL
   Problems within the group are analyzed as if they are manifestations of processes existing between organizations that the group is involved in. Again, issues of representation and mirroring are examined.
MODEL OF A WORKING GROUP

"Digestion"

INDIVIDUAL

Projective Identification

(communication)

GROUP

(Containment/metabolism)
synopsis

The group acts as a container for split-off and projected part-objects (affects, phantasies), metabolizes and communicates (communes) back to the individual who can then digest (integrate) previously undigestible parts (experiences). Thus nourished, there is a sentiment of gratitude and accompanying depressive/anaclitic anxiety which is the next issue to be worked through.

This cycle continues in an ever-deepening process/spiral—person by person.

But it is only possible in a working group—in a reasonably well-analyzed group where projective identification and repository functions have been observed and somewhat tamed. Then the "play" of transferences can finally emerge in the deep psychological safety, be analyzed and worked through.

In an anti-work situation the processes of projective identification are rampant and unanalyzed, repository functions are accepted with the "numbing sense of interpersonal reality". Split of parts are projected into others and left unclaimed, depressive anxiety is minimized, meanings are flattened out, play is absent.
Unconscious Dynamics of the Group - As - A Whole

Intergroup Processes

X = Repository → Vulnerable

Low status
- personality features predispose
- located at a boundary
-Singleton

*ORU = Object Relations Unit
Figure 1

Unconscious Dynamics of the

Group-as-a-Whole

---GROUP CULTURE---

Group Mentality

Unconscious

X = Repository ⇒ Vulnerable
- low status
- personality features predispose
- located at a boundary
- singleton
Figure 2

Imaginary Groups:
Multiple, Contemporaneous
Conscious and Unconscious

GROUP MENTALITY

Task Group
Conscious Group
Unconscious Imaginary Groups

projected part selfobjects
DYNAMICS OF DEATH SQUAD DREAD

This type of dynamic - the "floating object" - occurs when there is no available repository in which that which is projectively identified may reside. As a result, it "floats" in the group mentality and exerts its influence from there.
INFORMATION FOR YOUR PHYSICIAN

Please answer the following questions prior to your first examination. It will help your physician to know not only about your health but also about your family and relatives.

TODAY'S DATE

NAME ____________________________  ADDRESS ____________________________  CITY ____________  ZIP ____________

TELEPHONE NUMBER ______________  DATE OF BIRTH ____________  AGE ____________  PLACE OF BIRTH ____________________________  RACE OR NATIONALITY OF PARENTS ____________________________

RELIGION ________________________  EDUCATION (Highest level attained) ________________________  OCCUPATION ________________________  HOW LONG ________________________

PRESENT MARRIAGE (Year married) ____________  PREVIOUS MARRIAGE (Year married and duration) ____________________________

WHERE AND WHEN HAVE YOU LIVED OR TRAVELED OUTSIDE THE U.S. AND CANADA?

ALIVE □ DECEASED □ FATHER Present health or cause of death ____________________________  MOTHER Present health or cause of death ____________________________  SPOUSE Present health or cause of death ____________________________

BROTHERS □ NO ALIVE □ HEALTH □ NO DECEASED □ CAUSE OF DEATH

SISTERS □ NO ALIVE □ HEALTH □ NO DECEASED □ CAUSE OF DEATH

CHILDREN □ NO ALIVE □ AGES & HEALTH □ NO DECEASED □ AGES & CAUSE OF DEATH

CHECK ILLNESSES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN ANY OF YOUR BLOOD RELATIVES
□ Diabetes  □ Cancer  □ Bleeding tendency  □ Kidney disease
□ Tuberculosis  □ Heart disease  □ Stroke  □ High blood pressure  □ Nervous illness  □ Allergy  □ Other

CHECK ANY ILLNESSES OR CONDITIONS YOU HAVE HAD
□ Diabetes  □ Gout  □ Heart disease  □ Stroke  □ High blood pressure  □ Nervous illness  □ Allergy  □ Other

□ Cancer  □ Asthma  □ Jaundice  □ Gonorrhea  □ Bleeding tendencies  □ Tuberculosis  □ Pneumonia  □ Kidney disease
□ Rheumatic fever  □ Nervous disorder  □ Other

LIST OTHER ILLNESSES NOT REQUIRING OPERATION FOR WHICH YOU WERE HOSPITALIZED ____________________________

HAVE YOU HAD SERIOUS INJURIES, BROKEN BONES, ETC.?
□ No  □ Yes □ List:

HAVE YOU HAD ALLERGY OR SENSITIVITY TO MEDICINES OR OTHER SUBSTANCES?
□ No  □ Yes □ List:

DO YOU USE TOBACCO NOW? □ Yes □ No □ In the past? □ Yes □ List:

□ Type and daily amount ____________________________  □ How long ____________________________

DO YOU USE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES? □ Yes □ No

□ Type ____________________________  □ Weekly amount ____________________________  □ How long ____________________________

DO YOU DRINK COFFEE?
□ No  □ Yes □ List:

□ Type ____________________________  □ Weekly amount ____________________________  □ How long ____________________________

CHECK THE DISEASES AGAINST WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN IMMUNIZED
□ Smallpox  □ Tetanus  □ Typhoid  □ Polio  □ Influenza  □ Other

PREVIOUS OPERATIONS (Dates, hospitals and name of surgeon) ____________________________________________________________

DENTAL (List any problems you have now) ____________________________________________________________

MEDICATIONS (Name of or otherwise identify medicines now or recently used) ____________________________________________________________

ONSET DATE OF LAST MENSTRUAL PERIOD ____________________________  PERIODS ARE □ Regular □ Irregular

□ Number of pregnancies ____________________________  □ Number of miscarriages ____________________________

HAVE YOU TAKEN CORTISONE TYPE DRUGS? □ Yes □ No

□ Oral contraceptives? □ Yes □ No

□ Have you received a blood transfusion? □ Yes □ No □ Date ____________________________

DRESSED WEIGHT ____________________________  HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT THIS WEIGHT? ____________________________

□ Height ____________________________  □ Eye color ____________________________

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN PROBLEM AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN SYMPTOM?

REVIEWED BY (Physician) ____________________________  DATE ____________________________
INTER - AND INTRA - NEUROTIC LEVELS OF PSYCHONEUROSES AND PSYCHOSES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Developmental Levels</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
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<td>Organ neuroses</td>
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<td>Paranoia</td>
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<td>Phobias</td>
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<td>Mental retardation</td>
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<td>Primitive criminal behavior</td>
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<td>Characteropathic hysteria</td>
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<td>Psychopathy</td>
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(p.110). Psychoneurosis is not an illness, (1972) K. Dabrowski; GRYF. LONDON.

DABROWSKI NETWORK

WEBSITE: http://members.shaw.ca/positivedisintegration/
E-MAIL: btillier@shaw.ca
DISCUSSION GROUP: http://groups.yahoo.com/dabrowskidiscussiongroup/messages
DABROWSKI NEWSLETTER: vmoyle@hotmail.com
PSYCHOTHERAPISTS APPLYING THE THEORY: norbduda@cs.com
Existential Hysteria (KD) A psychoneurosis at a high level of development arising on a background of existential experiences and actions prompted by empathy (altruistic preoccupations). With hysteria it has the following similarities, though, expressed at a higher level: intense affects, strong dramatization, attitude of gesture, demonstrativeness, tendency toward ecstasy or contemplation.

Existential Psychoneurosis (KD) Psychoneurosis on a high level of development which involves a dominance of existential preoccupations. These existential components are peculiar to each kind of psychoneurosis—depressive, anxiety, infantile, obsessive, etc.

Psychasthenia (KD) A type of psychoneurosis characterized by lowered bio-physic tonus, especially in regard to primitive functions and adjustment to actual reality. Psychasthenia is characterized by feelings of inadequacy, obsessions, anxieties (especially existential), depressions.

Psychoneurotic Depression (PDR) Reduction of the level of functioning. A temporary mental state or chronic mental disorder characterized by feelings of sadness, loneliness, despair, low self-esteem, and self-reproach; accompanying signs include psychomotor retardation or less frequently agitation, withdrawal from social contact, and vegetative states such as loss of appetite and insomnia.

Psychoneurotic Anxiety (PDR) Apprehension of danger and dread accompanied by restlessness, tension, tachycardia, and dyspnea unattached to a clearly identifiable stimulus.

Failure Psychoneurosis A mental or personality disturbance not attributable to any known neurological or organic dysfunction, but lead to poor choices which do not lead to desired goals.

Psychoneurotic Obsession (PDR) A recurrent and persistent idea, thought, or impulse to carry out an act that is ego-dystonic, that is experienced as senseless or repugnant, and that the individual cannot voluntarily suppress.

Schizoneurosis A psychopathological syndrome on the borderline of psychoneurosis and schizophrenia (psychosis).

Psychoneurotic Infantilism (KD) A combination of infantile mental qualities. In its positive form it is associated with plasticity and emotional sincerity characteristic of children. In its negative form it is associated with general lack of developmental potential as in mental retardation.

Conversion Hysteria (PDR) An unconscious defense mechanism by which the anxiety which stems from an unconscious conflict is converted and expressed symbolically as a physical symptom; transformation of an emotion into a physical manifestation.

Neurasthenia (KD) A type of psychoneurosis characterized by cycles of excitation followed by excessive fatigue, even exhaustion. Lower level of psychasthenia, frequently associated with obsessions and phobias.

Sexual Psychoneurosis Sexual Psychoneurosis with disorders such as hypersensitivity towards sexual stimuli, sexual inhibitions and timidity, premature ejaculation, strong tendencies toward masturbation, borderline symptoms of psychoneurosis and perversions.

Psychosomatic Disorders (PDR) Pertaining to the influence of the mind or higher functions of the brain (emotions, fears, desires, etc.) upon the functions of the body, especially in relation to bodily disorders or disease.

Perversion Neurosis (KD) A neurosis resulting from a very strong attraction and repulsion and internal conflict in relation to uncommon sexual urges such as fetishism, necrophilia, homosexuality, or severe masturbation. Internal tension and self-awareness are acting strongly and simultaneously, because there is the awareness of the strength of the impulses and their aberrant nature together
with a refinement which removes the possibility of hurting or shocking a sexual partner.

**Manic-Depressive Psychosis (KD)** An affective psychosis with emotional oscillation as the predominant feature. In the manic phase, the psychological processes are in high gear. The patient is hyperactive and overtalkative. The dominant mood is one of great elation, but this gives way easily to irritability and aggression. In depression, the process is reversed. The patient is sad, and retarded in speech, thought, and actions. Most patients are either excited or depressed but a few show a mixture of symptoms, for example, simultaneous depression and restlessness.

**Catatonic Schizophrenia (KD)** Type of schizophrenia characterized by slowness of movements, or prolonged immobility, sometimes by muscular rigidity and inflexibility.

**Paranoid Schizophrenia (KD)** Type of schizophrenia characterized by delusions of persecution, or delusions of power, or both.

**Schizophrenia Simplex (KD)** Type of schizophrenia characterized by withdrawal, apathy, indifference. It progresses slowly but irreversibly.

**Hebephrenia (KD)** Type of schizophrenia characterized by shallow inappropriate affects, unpredictable behavior, silly manerisms.

**Hypochondria (PDR)** A morbid concern about one's own health and exaggerated attention to any unusual bodily or mental sensations; a delusion that one is suffering from some disease for which no physical basis is evident.

**Organ Neuroses** The engagement of the higher mental functions in the transformation of the lower ones causes psychosomatic, and somatopsychic disorders, neuroses of organs.

**Paranoia (PDR)** A severe but relatively rare mental disorder characterized by the presence of systemized delusions, often of a persecutory character involving being followed, poisoned or harmed by other means, in an otherwise intact personality.

**Phobias (PDR)** Any objectively unfounded morbid dread or fear that arouses a state of panic. The word is used as a combining form in many terms expressing the object that inspires the fear.

**Mental Retardation** This disorder is characterized by significantly subaverage intellectual functioning (an IQ of approximately 70 or below) with onset before age 18 years and concurrent deficits or impairments in adaptive functioning. Separate codes are provided for **Mild**, **Moderate**, **Severe** and **Profound Mental Retardation**, and for **Mental Retardation, Severity Unspecified**.

**Primitive Criminal Behavior** A pervasive pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others that begin in childhood or early adolescence and continues into adulthood.

**Characteropathic Hysteria (Psychopathic Hysteria) (PDR)** A somatoform (psychoneurotic or psychosomatic) disorder in which there is an alteration or loss of physical functioning that suggests a physical disorder such as paralysis of an arm or disturbance of vision, but that is instead apparently an expression of a psychological conflict or need, not realized on a conscious level.

**Psychopathy (PDR)** Obsolete and inexact term referring to a pattern of antisocial or manipulative behavior engaged in by a psychopath.
Table I

FORMS AND EXPRESSIONS OF PSYCHIC OVEREXCITABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSYCHOMOTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus of energy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid speech, marked enthusiasm, fast games and sports, pressure for acting out, dance, aerobics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychomotor expression of emotional tension</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Compulsive talking and chattering, impulsive actions, nervous habits (tics, nail biting), workaholism, acting out</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENSUAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensory pleasure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensual expression of emotional tension</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overeating, sexual overindulgence, buying sprees</td>
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<tr>
<th>INTELLECTUAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Probing questions; problem solving; learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity, concentration, capacity for sustained intellectual effort, avid reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical thinking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about thinking, introspection, love of theory and analysis, moral thinking and development of hierarchy of values, conceptual and intuitive integration</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>IMAGINATIONAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free play of imagination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent use of image and metaphor, facility for invention and fantasy, facility for detailed visualization, poetic and dramatic perception, animistic and magical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spontaneous imagery as an expression of emotional tension</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animistic imagery, mixing truth and fiction, elaborate dreams, illusions, detailed visual recall, fears of the unknown</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity of feeling</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive feelings, negative feelings, extremes of emotion, complex emotions and feelings, identifications with others' feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Somatic expressions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tense stomach, sinking heart, blushing, flushing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inhibition (timidity, shyness)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Strong affective memory</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Relationship feelings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>emotional ties and attachments, concern for others (empathy), sensitivity in relationships, attachment to animals, difficulty adjusting to new environments, loneliness, conflicts with others over depth of relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feelings toward self</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-evaluation and self-judgment, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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From: Piechowski (1979), revised.
# THEORY OF POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>DYNAMISMS</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>V: Secondary Integration:</strong></td>
<td>Personality—a self-aware, self-chosen, self-affirmed, &amp; self-determined unity of essential individual psychic qualities.</td>
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<td><strong>IV: Organized Multilevel Disintegration:</strong></td>
<td>Personality Ideal</td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>Education-of-oneself</td>
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<td>Autopsychotherapy</td>
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<td>Self-Control</td>
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<td>Self-Awareness</td>
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<td>Inner Psychic Transformation</td>
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<td>Third Factor</td>
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<td>Subject-Object in oneself</td>
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<td><strong>III: Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration:</strong></td>
<td>Positive Maladjustment</td>
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<td>Feelings of Guilt</td>
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<td>Feelings of Shame</td>
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<td>Astonishment with oneself</td>
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<td>Disquietude with oneself</td>
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<td>Inferiority toward oneself</td>
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<td>Dissatisfaction with oneself</td>
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<td>Hierarchization</td>
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<td><strong>II: Unilevel Disintegration:</strong></td>
<td>Inner Conflicts</td>
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<td>Ambivalences</td>
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<td><strong>I: Primary Integration:</strong></td>
<td>External Conflicts</td>
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<td>Environment: Second Factor</td>
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<td>Heredity: First Factor</td>
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A THEORETICAL PATTERN OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF DYNAMISMS AT EACH LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT (Dabrowski, 1977)
## THERAPY TASK CHECKLIST

### PAST

**1st & 2nd Factor**
- Heredity
- Environment

**INQUIRY:** Initial Assessment of Development

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY:**
Please, describe on 6-8 pages (minimum) your personal history from childhood till the present. Concentrate especially on the sad and joyous experiences that you can remember, as well as your thoughts, reflections, dreams and fantasies associated with them. Include your emotional relationships to parents, siblings, etc. Describe your most prominent or important (positive or negative) personality traits.

- What is your FIRST MEMORY?
- What was your MAIN DREAM (RECURRING)?
- What was your MAIN DAYDREAM (FANTASY)?

**GENOGRAM:**
- O = Female
- ☐ = Male

[Norbert J. Duda, Ph.D.]

### PRESENT

- □ MEDTS: 6 drawings & 1 story for each:
  - One person; Two persons; Three persons; House-tree-road; Monster; Your Family, with each person doing something.

- □ B-G □ LUSCHER □ 16 PF

- □ WAIS: VERBAL ____, PERFORMANCE ____, TOTAL ____,

- □ RORSCHACH

- □ NEUROLOGICAL LEVEL
  - 1. ____, 2. ____, 3. ____, 4. ____
  - 5. ____
  - 6. ____, 7. ____, 8. ____, 9. ____
  - 10. ____, 11. ____
  - 12. ____
  - 13. ____, 14. ____
  - 15. ____
  - 16. ____
  - 17. ____

- □ MMPI □ Review of the Day: Written

- □ VERBAL STIMULI
  Please describe freely in relation to each word listed below your emotional associations and experiences. Use as much space as you feel you need.
  - Great sadness
  - Great joy
  - Death
  - Uncertainty
  - Solitude & loneliness
  - Suicide
  - Nervousness
  - Inhibition
  - Inner conflict
  - Ideal
  - Success
  - Immortality

**OVEREXCITABILITIES:**
- MOTOR ☐, EMOTIONAL ☐,
- SENSUAL ☐, INTELLECTUAL ☐,
- IMAGINATIVE ☐

**TALENTS...**

**SPECIAL INTERESTS...**

### FUTURE

**3rd Factor Self-determination**

**SELF-PROGRAMMATION:**
- Write Priorities, Plans, Desires, Dreams, Hopes, Aspirations

**INNER GOALS**
- □ HUMAN BEING:
  - Value System,
  - Ethical, Spiritual,
  - Mental, Educational

- □ MALE/FEMALE: Physical & Health, etc.

- □ HUSBAND/WIFE: Love, Transparency, Intimacy, etc.

- □ FATHER/MOTHER: Family, Home

- □ WORKER: Career, Financial

- □ FRIEND: Social, Cultural

**OUTER GOALS**
- □ 1 year...
  - 2 years...
  - 5 years...
  - 10 years...
  - 20 years...

**IMPLEMENTATION**
- □ SPACED REPETITION & AFFIRMATION:
  - Listen to tape or read goals
  - 3 times a day + Relaxation:
  - Imagine doing them.
APPENDIX

ITEMS OF THE OVEREXCITABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (OEQ)

1. Do you ever feel really high, ecstatic, or incredibly happy? Describe your feelings.
2. What has been your experience of the most intense pleasure?
3. What is your special kind of daydreams and fantasies?
4. What kinds of things get your mind going?
5. When do you feel the most energy and what do you do with it?
6. In what manner do you observe and analyze others?
7. How do you act when you get excited?
8. How precisely can you visualize events, real or imaginary?
9. What do you like to concentrate on the most?
10. What kind of physical activity (or inactivity) gives you the most satisfaction?
11. Is tasting something very special to you? Describe in what way it is special.
12. Do you ever catch yourself seeing, hearing, or imagining things that aren't really there? Give examples.
14. When do you feel the greatest urge to do something?
15. Does it ever appear to you that the things around you may have a life of their own, and that plants, animals, and all things in nature have their own feelings? Give examples.
16. If you come across a difficult idea or concept, how does it become clear to you? Describe what goes on in your head in this case.
17. Are you poetically inclined? If so, give an example of what comes to mind when you are in a poetic mood.
18. How often do you carry on arguments in your head? What sorts of subjects are these arguments about?
19. If you ask yourself "Who am I," what is the answer?
20. When you read a book, what attracts your attention the most?
21. Describe what you do when you are just fooling around.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 CAPITAL SINS</th>
<th>GROUPS FOR 7 CAPITAL ADDICTIONS</th>
<th>7 CAPITAL DRIVES</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>SELF-ESTEEM GROUPS</td>
<td>SELF-ESTEEM</td>
<td>PROUD AS A PEACOCK; PRESTIGE, HEROISM, POWER, ELECTED OFFICIALS, TITLES, NAZI, SUPER RACE, APARTHEID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREED AVARICE</td>
<td>GAMBLERS/SHOPPERS ANONYMOUS</td>
<td>POSSESSIONS</td>
<td>SQUIRELLING AWAY: MONEY, POSSESSIONS, SHOPAHOLICS, GAMBLERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUST</td>
<td>SEX ANONYMOUS</td>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>SEX: PORNOGRAPHY, TV-ON-LINE SEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLUTTONY</td>
<td>OVEREATERS/ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS</td>
<td>FOOD &amp; DRINK</td>
<td>BULIMIA, ANOREXIA, FOOD, DRINK, ALCOHOL, CHEMICALS, PILLS, STREET DRUGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEALOUSY</td>
<td>GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS</td>
<td>COMPETITION</td>
<td>WINNING, GAMES, SPORTS, RIVALRY, RIOT, GANGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER</td>
<td>RAGEAHOLIC ANONYMOUS/ANGER MANAGEMENT/ MILITARISM/CIVIC VIOLENCE/SPouse ABUSE GROUPS/CHILD ABUSE GROUPS</td>
<td>SELF-DEFENSE</td>
<td>MERCENARIES, MILITARY SOCIETY, SPARTA VIOLENCE, RAGE, ANGER, PASSIVE-DEPENDENCE, SPOUSE, CHILD, OR ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT/GANG VIOLENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLOTH</td>
<td>WORKAHOLICS</td>
<td>REST/WORK</td>
<td>WORK: FALSE, WORKMAN COMP CASE REST: WELFARE SYNDROME, UNEMPLOYMENT REPEATER, INSURANCE FRAUD, WHIPLASH SYNDROME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADDICTION = A PATHOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP TO AN ACTIVITY OR SUBSTANCE

CO-DEPENDENCY = A PATHOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP TO A PERSON
The Sixth International Congress of the Institute
For Positive Disintegration in Human Development

June 24-26, 2004

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Developmental Potential – From Theory to Practice:

Educational and Therapeutic perspectives.

Proceedings Assembled by Bill Tillier
Contents: Congress Papers

Biography of Dr. Andrew Kawczak, Keynote Speaker. ----------------------------- Page: 5

Opening remarks and Introduction (Power Point Presentation)
Also see the actual presentation directly by going to the file menu on the CD and double clicking on: 2004DP.htm

Paper 1b). Bill Tillier: ------------------------------------------------------------- Page: 17
Opening remarks and Introduction (Paper)

Paper 2). Andrew Kawczak: Keynote Speaker -------------------------------------- Page: 34
Development Potential & Authentic Mental Development.

Paper 3). Laurie Nixon: ------------------------------------------------------------- Page: 51
A Dabrowskian Analysis of the Ten Oxherding Pictures
Also see the accompanying web page directly from this file by going to the file menu and double clicking on: Kaku-an The Ten Oxherding Pictures, I.htm

Paper 4). Elizabeth Robinson:------------------------------------------------------ Page: 77
Could the Application of TDP Psychotherapy Have prevented the Suicide of Sylvia Plath?

Paper 5). Norbert Duda: ------------------------------------------------------------- Page: 93
How Inter and Intra-Neurotic Levels of Psychoneurosis and Psychosis Reflect Developmental Levels and Developmental Potential. With pdf file of handouts.

A Journey Through Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms by Kazimierz Dabrowski

Children and Non-Gifted Parents, Educators and Therapists: The Sacrifice of True Genius to False Pride

Paper 8). Rita Culross:--------------------------------------------------------------- Page: 153
Developmental Potential Among Creative Scientists

The Role of Intelligence in the Theory of Positive Disintegration
[Editor’s Appendix to Mendaglio and Pyryt]
Potential For Positive Disintegration And IQ by L. Nixon--------------------------- Page: 172

This presentation will demonstrate useful linkages between psychodynamic object relations theory and the theory of positive disintegration
See accompanying file HazellHO.pdf.

Becoming a Person: A Dabrowskian Perspective No Paper was supplied by the speaker.

DP meets DP: Multilevelness and the Crucial Role Of DP Identification in the Therapeutic Relationship No Paper was supplied by the speaker.

Paper 13). Elizabeth Mika:-------------------------------------------------------------- Page: 185
Ecce Homo: Adam Chmielowski’s Growth Through Positive Disintegration
Also see the file of photos that go with this artilce.

Divorce and The Disintegrative Process

Paper 15). Dexter Amend:-------------------------------------------------------------- Page: 227
Developmental Potential from an Experiential Point of View No Paper was supplied by the speaker.

**Paper 16). Marek Celinski:** Page: 228

Traumatic Disintegration and Zeigarnik’s Effect As a Creative Force No Paper was supplied by the speaker.

**Paper 17). Malgorzata Tatala:** Page: 226

The Symbolical Context in Kazimierz Dabrowski’s Positive Disintegration Theory (Paper submitted but not presented at congress).

**2004 Dabrowski Congress Schedule** Page: 238

**Congress Handouts:** Page: 249

1). CD reproduction of Dabrowski's major English books.
2). CD reproduction of ten of Dabrowski's major Polish books.
3). Relevant Web Pages

**List of Congress Attendees.** Page: 255
Dr. Andrew Kawczak

Keynote Speaker

Andrew (Andrzej) Kawczak was born in 1926 in Poland where he completed his studies in law, philosophy, and psychology. After several years of practicing law he turned to research and academic teaching, first at the Silesian Teachers College, then at the University of Warsaw, where he obtained his Ph.D. in philosophy.

In 1959 he received a Ford Foundation fellowship and, after two years of studies and research at Columbia University in New York, he moved to Montreal, where he taught philosophy at Concordia University until his retirement in 1992. He was chairman of the Philosophy Department from 1974 - 1982.

Shortly after Dr. Dabrowski's arrival in Canada in 1964 the two entered into a close friendship and scholarly cooperation which resulted in writing "Mental Growth" and "The Dynamics of Concepts", also published in French, Spanish, and Polish.

Dr. Kawczak is a coauthor of several books and numerous scholarly papers. In recognition of his intense social and political activity, dedicated to reconciliation and human rights, his name has been engraved at "The Wall of Tolerance" at Montgomery, AL. The Government of Poland acknowledged his involvement in the struggle for the liberation of his native country with the Golden Cross of Merit and the order Polonia Restituta. He also was awarded the Jubilee Medal of Elizabeth II "for outstanding contribution to Canada".

Dr. Kawczak is married to the writer Elizabeth Robinson and has two children.
An overview of developmental potential will be presented and several discussion points will be raised.

**Opening remarks and Introduction**

*Slide 1*

**Welcome.**

The Sixth International Congress of the Institute for
Positive Disintegration in Human Development
June 24-26, 2004
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Developmental Potential:
From Theory to Practice –
Educational and Therapeutic Perspectives.

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**Developmental Potential.**

- Dabrowski developed DP to help explain the different types and levels of both qualitative and quantitative personality development that he observed in people.
- Dabrowski (1972) described developmental potential as “the constitutional endowment which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for a given individual” (p. 293).

- A Platonic approach: not everyone has the endowment needed to proceed through all phases of development.

- DP encompasses a constellation of genetic factors, subsequent environmental interactions and finally, emergent and transcending properties that determine the developmental parameters for an individual.

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**DP is the Cornerstone of the TPD.**

- Dabrowski linked psychoneuroses with personality development because the developmental processes in psychoneurotics and in eminent personalities are similar:

  = “Clinical work and research . . . showed a great similarity in respect to the developmental potential of psychoneurotics and eminent personalities” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 180).

- In Dabrowski’s theory, personality development occurs through positive disintegration.

  = “Personality is thus the aim and the result of development through positive disintegration. The main agents of this development are the developmental potential, the conflicts with one's social milieu, and the autonomous factors (especially the third factor)” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 181).
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A Very Broad Approach.

[Picture of a kitchen sink]

- Dabrowski includes many features under the concept of developmental potential.

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Three Critical Factors Anchor DP.

- “The first of these factors involves the hereditary, innate constitutional elements which are expressed in the developmental potential, in a more or less specific way, and are already recognizable in a one year old child” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 33).

- “Innate developmental potentials may be more general or more specific, more positive or more negative” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 33).

- First Factor, innate aspects, set the parameters:

  = “Environmental influences collide with those [innate] potentials, strengthen or weaken them, but their outcome always depends on an individual’s hereditary endowment” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 34).

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The Second Factor.

- The second factor is external or environmental influence. The interactive impact of the
environment will depend on the strength and the character of the innate potential present:

= “When the developmental potential is very strong and very rich even a negatively acting social milieu is of secondary importance. If the nuclei of the developmental potential are weak, or if they also contain some negative components then the character of the social milieu is of decisive significance” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 9).

- [ Dabrowski used to say: “The best environment can’t help the worst genetics and the worst environment can’t stop the best genetics – we can see this everyday”.

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The Third Factor.


- The Third Factor, helps a person to differentiate between developmentally positive and negative alternatives and to make developmental choices between “that which is more myself” versus “that which is less myself”.

- “The third factor is the dynamism of conscious choice (valuation) by which one affirms or rejects certain qualities in oneself and in one's environment” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 306).

- “The third factor strives to see that every concrete act of a given individual is in correlation with his personality ideal” (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 61).

- With advanced development: “The activity of the third factor transcends the determining influences of heredity and of the environment as well” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 230).

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Dynamisms.

- Dabrowski described many types of developmental and creative dynamisms. Many of these dynamisms are critical aspects of developmental potential.

- Dabrowski (1972) defined dynamism as:
  
  A “biological or mental force controlling behavior and its development. Instincts, drives, and intellectual processes combined with emotions are dynamisms” (p. 294).

- Lower dynamisms are important at lower levels of development and higher dynamisms become important at higher levels of development.

- Dabrowski linked dynamisms and instincts directly with psychoneuroses and psychoneuroses directly with DP.

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Psychoneurotic Development.

- DP creates a positive context for crises and disintegration:
  
  “experiences of shock, stress and trauma, may accelerate development in individuals with innate potential for positive development” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 20).

- “These different forms of the psychoneurotic developmental potential constitute in their totality the ‘royal path’ of hierarchical development – through multilevel disintegration, inner conflicts, creative instinct and instinct of self-perfection – toward secondary integration” (Dabrowski, 1972, pp. 10-11).
- “It is the task of therapy to convince the patient of the developmental potential that is contained in his psychoneurotic processes” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. viii).

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**Operational Definition of DP.**

- “The developmental potential can be assessed on the basis of the following components: psychic overexcitability (q.v.), special abilities and talents, and autonomous factors (notably the Third factor)” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 293).

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**Overexcitability.**

- “Each form of overexcitability points to a higher than average sensitivity of its receptors. As a result a person endowed with different forms of overexcitability reacts with surprise, puzzlement to many things, he collides with things, persons and events, which in turn brings him astonishment and disquietude” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 7).

- “The individual with a rich developmental potential rebels against the common determining factors in his external environment. He rebels against all that which is imposed on him against his will, against the typical influences of his environment, against the necessity of subordination to the laws of biology” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 32-33).
A Paradigm Shift.

- Overexcitability changes how a person sees reality:

  “One could say that one who manifests a given form of overexcitability, and especially one who manifests several forms of overexcitability, sees reality in a different, stronger and more multisided manner” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 7).

- The “new” multilevel view of life created by OE, sets the stage for the vertical conflicts that are the basis of positive disintegration, leading to the development of the individual’s hierarchy of values and subsequently, of his or her autonomy and personality ideal. This process culminates with the person creating his or her individual personality.

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Five Forms of Overexcitability.

- “One can already observe in a child one and a half to two years old certain fairly well differentiated potentials of the developmental instinct. These can be expressed through various differentiated forms of psychic hyperexcitability such as sensual, psychomotor, emotional, imaginational or intellectual hyperexcitability” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 31).

- The “big 3”:

  = “Some forms of overexcitability constitute a richer developmental potential than others. Emotional (affective), imaginational and intellectual overexcitability are the richer forms” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 7).
- “The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this: A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive. To them a touch is a blow, a sound is a noise, a misfortune is a tragedy, a joy is an ecstasy, a friend is a lover, a lover is a god, and failure is death. Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering necessity to create, create, create – so that without the creating of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of meaning, their very breath is cut off . . . . They must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency they are not really alive unless they are creating.” Pearl Buck.

- Michael Piechowski developed a test to measure OE: The Overexcitability Questionnaire (OEQ).
- For the past ~25 years, research on OE has been done in the field of gifted education.
- Cheryl Ackerman’s 1997 doctoral thesis summarized the research done using the OEQ. Research consistently found that emotional, intellectual and imaginational overexcitability (in various orders) are elevated in gifted groups with the highest scores seen in a group of artists.
- Recent efforts to measure overexcitability have been aimed at creating a new, more user-friendly questionnaire: The Overexcitability Questionnaire Two.
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Where Are We Today?

- In the field of gifted education, overexcitability has become synonymous with developmental potential and for some authors, even synonymous with giftedness.
- Some authors have connected overexcitability (and giftedness) with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), or even portrayed it as a learning disability.
- No one has attempted to measure the Third Factor or to integrate findings on overexcitability measures with the other developmental indices outlined in the Theory of Positive Disintegration.

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Discussion Point 1 – Theory.

- Perhaps it is time to return to Dabrowski’s operational definition and to develop a measure of developmental potential reflecting and integrating; overexcitability, the Third factor and special abilities and talents.
- Measurements & discussions of developmental potential grounded within the Theory of Positive Disintegration would give readers a different and richer context to consider – a context that would also speak to applications.
- If we want to use a Dabrowskian perspective, we need to find better ways to integrate Dabrowski’s overall approach into our research and applications, for example, in the field of gifted education.
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Discussion Point 2 – Therapy.

- Overexcitability causes mental conflicts. In experiences reminiscent of post traumatic stress reactions, people with strong overexcitability are often tormented by their experiences and are often left with troubling visual images replaying for years. The intensity and perseveration of these experiences combined with the inability to communicate them to others often leads to “tragic gifts” well after the “traumatic” experience.
- A Dabrowskian model calls for a more sensitive, more tolerant and more empathetic approach to counselling people who experience strong developmental potential. This model encourages the individual to embark on his or her own journey of autopsychotherapy.

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Discussion Point 3 – Education.

- Can we identify and address systemic attitudes and programs that suppress or extinguish developmental potential?
- Can we develop educational methods and programs that better tolerate and even enhance the expression of strong developmental potential when it is present?
- Can we develop educational or social programs to encourage the person with “average” or equivocal DP?
- Can we, as individuals, find ways to influence and enhance the developmental potential of our own society?
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Welcome to the Congress.

On behalf of the Congress committee;

Dr. Joanna Dabrowski,

Dr. Sal Mendaglio, Dr. Mike Pyryt

and myself, Bill Tillier,

I welcome our keynote speaker, Dr. A. Kawczak,

all of the other presenters and all of the participants.

Dr. Marlene Rankel, one of Dabrowski’s colleagues and coauthors will now introduce

Dr. Kawczak.

[END]
Paper 1b). Bill Tillier:
Opening remarks and Introduction (Paper)

Running head: DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL

Introduction to Developmental Potential

William Tillier

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

The Sixth International Congress of the Institute for Positive Disintegration in Human Development

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Developmental Potential: From Theory to Practice – Educational and Therapeutic Perspectives.
Abstract

Developmental potential is a complex theoretical description formulated by Dabrowski to help explain the different types and levels of both qualitative and quantitative development that he observed in people. Dabrowski believed that a constellation of genetic factors, subsequent environmental interactions and finally, emergent properties, create a set of parameters that determine an individual’s potential to develop. This introduction to the 2004 Dabrowski Congress will touch on several aspects of developmental potential and create a context for our discussions and further questions.
Introduction to Developmental Potential

Dabrowski (1970, p. 59) said, “The achievement of mental health requires specific potentials for the development of all main psychic functions”. Dabrowski (1973, p. 165) spoke of a “constellation of creative developmental forces” and cast a wide net when he described many aspects of this potential, under the general label of Developmental Potential (DP). Dabrowski (1972) described developmental potential as “the constitutional endowment which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for a given individual” (p. 293).

In many ways, developmental potential represents the cornerstone of Dabrowski’s theory and was an important impetus in its development. In Dabrowski’s clinical practice and research, he was struck that the life histories of many “eminent personalities” display periods of intense stress and in most cases mental breakdowns. Dabrowski recognized that people diagnosed with psychoneuroses also display the same types of breakdowns. Dabrowski says:

Clinical work and research which gave the basis for the formulation of the theory of positive disintegration showed a great similarity in respect to the developmental potential of psychoneurotics and eminent personalities. This similarity appears to be close in regard to the course of development, its underlying overexcitability, nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, nuclei of talents and special abilities. These similarities are particularly strong when we compare the development of eminent personalities with the course of psychoneuroses at a higher level of mental functions (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 180).

Dabrowski described “two general kinds, or better, two levels of mental development” that he felt summarized human growth (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 29). Table I describes these two types of development using quotations taken from Dabrowski, 1970, pp. 29-30.
### Table I Two Types of Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type I</th>
<th>Type II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displays “conformity to the universal laws of development of the human species, to the biological cycle of life”</td>
<td>“takes an accelerated form and transcends the cycle of biological transformations”</td>
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<td>“passes through the stages of childhood, maturity, aging, and culminates in death. It is characterized by gradual psychobiological integration of functions, growing biological perfection, activities typical for universal phases of development (acquirement of psychosomatic and intellectual skills specific to man, adjustment to the external environment, engagement in commonly practical, sexual, professional, and social pursuits)”</td>
<td>Involves “transcendence of those activities, in some degree of maladjustment to the universal phases of development. It is characterized by mental hyperexcitability, that is to say nervousness, frequent disintegration of functions, psychoneuroses, social maladjustment and accelerated process of mental transformations.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“mental hyperexcitability and maladjustment appear usually in specific developmental phases and in situations of stress. They vanish when a biological phase or a grave experience comes to an end.”</td>
<td>“hyperexcitability, maladjustment, creative projections become permanent, or almost permanent elements and manifest themselves not only in difficult periods.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“biologically determined, universal, and ordered in a narrow and rigid way.”</td>
<td>“Development . . . is an expression of individual differentiation, autonomy in relation to the laws of biology, authenticity, creativity, transformation of the innate psychological type. It involves maladjustment to the environment and the biological cycle, and thus to a certain extent a transcending of this cycle.”</td>
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<td>We see “an average level of intellectual functions and some degree of emotional underdevelopment”</td>
<td>“The individuals who manifest the second kind of development are from their childhood maladjusted, talented, experiencing serious developmental cries. They show a tendency toward mental hyperexcitability, toward dissolution of lower levels in their drive toward higher levels. Hence, they exhibit disturbances and disharmony in their internal and external environment, the feeling of “otherness”, strangeness. In this group we can find bright children, creative and outstanding personalities, men of genius, i.e. those who contribute new values.”</td>
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One of the critical aspects that differentiate these two types of development is the presence of developmental potential. As these potentials are expressed, a developmental process occurs that leads the individual toward autonomy:

The individual with a rich developmental potential rebels against the common determining factors in his external environment. He rebels against all that which is imposed on him against his will, against the typical influences of his environment, against the necessity of subordination to the laws of biology. At the same time there may arise a positive or negative attitude with respect to some of his own hereditary traits and inborn inclinations.

The individual begins to accept and affirm some influences and to reject others from both the inner and outer milieu. There arises a disposition towards conscious choice and autodetermination. Self-awareness and self-control increase: retrospection and prospection become stronger; imposed forms of reality begin to weaken. The individual seeks his own higher identity, chosen and determined by himself. He does not want to be content with only one level of mental life which has been imposed on him by his social milieu. He searches for his own hierarchy of values and is sensitive to the distressing, negative facets of life. When he has a happy experience, he remembers the sad fact that it will not endure. He tries to overcome his sensory and logical world by striving to create, in imagination, a better world. He attempts to go beyond a sense-oriented, rationalist empiricism, since he recognizes it to be only one level of reality, and attempts to reach the higher level of synthesis, intuition, existential and transcendental experience (Dabrowski, 1970, pp. 32-33).
In looking at the roots of developmental potential, Dabrowski described three broad types of factors that influence people’s development. He concluded that the essential qualities of an individual are largely determined by his or her innate or genetic potentials – the first factor. He said that environment and external forces constitute a second important set of influences on the individual. Finally, Dabrowski described a third set of forces that arise from within the individual. He referred to these forces as autonomous factors because they can often be seen confronting or even transcending innate or environmental factors.

Here are Dabrowski’s descriptions of the three factors in personality development. “The first of these factors involves the hereditary, innate constitutional elements which are expressed in the developmental potential, in a more or less specific way, and are already recognizable in a one year old child” (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 33). Dabrowski (1970) goes on “Innate developmental potentials may be more general or more specific, more positive or more negative. General excitability, nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, general interests and aptitudes are examples of general and positive potentials. Specific forms of hyperexcitability such as emotional, imaginational or sensual hyperexcitability, as well as specific interests or aptitudes, such as musical, choreographic or mathematical aptitudes, constitute specific and positive potentials” (pp. 33-34). The first factor emphasizes Dabrowski’s Platonic approach to development, that Human Beings have an inner, (genetic) essence that determines their developmental outcome.

The second factor is environmental influence. Environment (the social milieu) operates through an ongoing interaction with the unique traits of the person. The interactive impact of the environment will depend on the strength and the character of the person’s innate potential. If innate potential is strong, the role of the environment is limited. If the innate potential is neutral in character (neither positive nor negative) or is weak, then the environment takes on an
important role in determining the outcome. As Dabrowski (personal communication, 1977) said many times, “the best genetics can not be stopped by the worst environment and the worst genetics can not be overcome by the best environment”. Dabrowski says:

Environmental influences collide with those [innate] potentials, strengthen or weaken them, but their outcome always depends on an individual’s hereditary endowment. We can distinguish three main forms of the interaction between innate potentials and environmental influences:

(1) If the developmental potential is distinctly positive or negative, the influence of the environment is less important.

(2) If the developmental potential does not exhibit any distinct quality, the influence of the environment is important and it may go in either direction.

(3) If the developmental potential is weak or difficult to specify, the influence of the environment may prove decisive, positively or negatively (Dabrowski, 1970, p. 34).

In another passage, Dabrowski explains: “When the developmental potential is very strong and very rich even a negatively acting social milieu is of secondary importance. If the nuclei of the developmental potential are weak, or if they also contain some negative components then the character of the social milieu is of decisive significance” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 9). Dabrowski (1972) gives an example of the interaction between developmental potential and the influence of the environment, “Quite often the child shows some dissatisfaction with himself and is feeling different from what he thought he was and what his parents thought he was” (p. 9).

Dabrowski described the third factor as “the totality of the autonomous forces” (Dabrowski, 1970, pp. 72-73). With the third factor, Dabrowski adds an existential element to
Human nature, emphasizing the role of autonomy and individual choice in development. Through the third factor, the individual is able to differentiate between developmentally positive and negative alternatives and to make positive, developmental choices. “The theory of positive disintegration postulates the existence of a ‘third factor’, whose role lies in making conscious choices through the affirmation or negation of certain values, trends, behavior, people, etc. These choices apply both to the inner milieu and to the external environment. The activity of the third factor transcends the determining influences of heredity and of the environment as well” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 230). “The third factor is the dynamism of conscious choice (valuation) by which one affirms or rejects certain qualities in oneself and in one's environment” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 306). The third factor guides the individual’s actions toward the idealization of his or her personality: “The third factor strives to see that every concrete act of an individual is in correlation with his personality ideal” (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 61). Dabrowski (1972) emphasized this third category of emergent factors arise as the individual matures: “These are the autonomous factors which develop gradually throughout the individual's life experiences. Becoming more and more conscious they often come to play the most important role in the evolution of psychoneurosis as a growth towards autonomy and self-determination” (p. 10). Dabrowski (1970) proposed a complex genesis for these features: “We can only suppose that the autonomous factors derive from hereditary developmental potential and from positive environmental conditions; they are shaped by influences from both. However, the autonomous forces do not derive exclusively from heredity and environment, but are also determined by the conscious development of the individual himself” (p. 34).

Another critical aspect of developmental potential is the presence of developmental dynamisms. Dabrowski (1972) defined a dynamism as a “Biological or mental force controlling
behavior and its development. Instincts, drives, and intellectual processes combined with emotions are dynamisms” (p. 294). Dabrowski described a host of developmental and creative dynamisms that are important at various stages of development. He outlined lower, initial dynamisms linked to initial disintegrations (for example, “feelings of inferiority”, “feelings of guilt”, “astonishment with respect to oneself”, “disquietude or dissatisfaction with oneself” and “sinfulness”) and he described higher, creative dynamisms linked to advanced personality development (for example, “personality ideal”, “empathy”, “self-awareness”, “a sense and philosophy of life”, “inner psychic milieu”, “third factor”, “subject-object in oneself” and “identification with one's own development”).

Dynamisms also hold a “disintegrative power” and can “easily generate psychoneuroses” (see Dabrowski, 1970, p. 4). In turn, Dabrowski (1972) also directly links psychoneuroses with developmental potential, saying “In the great majority of cases of psychoneurotic ‘constitution’ the author sees present, more or less clearly, nuclei of a positive developmental potential” (p. 6). Dabrowski (1972) says, “In our opinion most Psychoneuroses are cases of very high hereditary potential for development” (p. 159). “According to this theory psychoneurotic symptoms, except for a rather insignificant percentage gravitating towards involution, are expressive of positive human development. One could almost risk a statement that creative human development is rarely, if at all, possible without some nervous, neurotic, or psychoneurotic dynamisms” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 108). Dabrowski (1972) describes the psychoneuroses as “a more or less organized form of growth through positive disintegration” (p. 303). Dabrowski developed therapeutic approaches in keeping with this theoretical position: “It is the task of therapy to convince the patient of the developmental potential that is contained in his psychoneurotic processes” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. viii). The patient is encouraged to preserve and work with his or
her psychoneuroses and to develop his or her own therapeutic strategies to transform these
conflicts into creative forces.

In the Theory of Positive Disintegration, crises, psychoneuroses and positive
disintegration lead to advanced development by the transcendence and transformation of lower
structures. However, for disintegration to be positive, it must occur in the presence of positive
developmental potential. “According to this hypothesis, which eventually evolved into the theory
of positive disintegration, experiences of shock, stress and trauma, may accelerate development
in individuals with innate potential for positive development” (Dabrowski, 1970. p. 22). “The
developmental process in which occur ‘collisions’ with the environment and with oneself begins
as a consequence of the interplay of three factors: developmental potential which is positive for
the most part (different forms of over excitability), an influence of the social milieu, and
autonomous (self-determining) factors. With time there is an increase of excitability, inhibitions,
inner conflicts, external conflicts and tensions” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 77). “When the
developmental potential is strong then a new and very important factor comes into play, namely
hierarchization. This is the beginning of the development of a multilevel inner psychic milieu”
(Dabrowski, 1972, p. 79).

In summary, Dabrowski describes a very broad range of features that contribute to
positive developmental potential. Four key types of factors are involved: genetic or innate
features, the environment acting on the individual, the interaction of the environment and the
individual’s unique features and emergent, autonomous factors. He also describes lower and
higher dynamisms that influence growth and he interconnects dynamisms and psychoneuroses.
Finally, Dabrowski links development with positive disintegration making psychoneuroses and
positive disintegration another aspect of developmental potential.
How do we cope with a theoretical construct embracing so many ideas? How could we measure developmental potential? Dabrowski (1972) helps us by offering a more focused and more manageable operational definition, “The developmental potential can be assessed on the basis of the following components: psychic overexcitability (q.v.), special abilities and talents, and autonomous factors (notably the third factor)” (p. 293).

Overexcitability has certainly become the most recognizable aspect of developmental potential in the literature. This long quote describes overexcitability:

The main form of the positive developmental potential are five kinds of psychic overexcitability namely, sensual, psychomotor, affective (emotional), imaginational and intellectual. Each form of overexcitability points to a higher than average sensitivity of its receptors. As a result a person endowed with different forms of overexcitability reacts with surprise, puzzlement to many things, he collides with things, persons and events, which in turn brings him astonishment and disquietude. One could say that one who manifests a given form of overexcitability, and especially one who manifests several forms of overexcitability, sees reality in a different, stronger and more multisided manner (Dabrowski, 1972, pp. 6-7).

Dabrowski believed that advanced development involves a qualitative shift in how a person sees the world. This shift is linked to overexcitability: “One could say that one who manifests a given form of overexcitability, and especially one who manifests several forms of overexcitability, sees reality in a different, stronger and more multisided manner. Reality for such an individual ceases to be indifferent but affects him deeply and leaves long-lasting impressions. Enhanced excitability is thus a means for more frequent interactions and a wider range of experiencing” (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 7). The different forms of overexcitability are not of
equal importance, but all work together: “Some forms of overexcitability constitute a richer developmental potential than others. Emotional (affective), imaginational and intellectual overexcitability are the richer forms. If they appear together they give rich possibilities of development and creativity. If these three forms of overexcitability are combined with the sensual and psychomotoric then these latter two are both enriched and enhanced in their positive developmental possibilities” (Dabrowski, 1972, pp. 7-8).

After Dr. Dabrowski passed away in 1980, Michael Piechowski went on to develop a test of overexcitability, The Overexcitability Questionnaire (OEQ). Overexcitability has become a popular topic in the field of gifted education and many dissertations and research studies have been done using this test. Cheryl Ackerman’s doctoral thesis (1997a) summarizes the majority of research done using the Overexcitability Questionnaire. Research has consistently found that emotional, intellectual and imaginational overexcitability (in various orders) are elevated in gifted groups with the highest scores seen in a group of artists. In her own study, Ackerman (1997b) found that psychomotor, intellectual and emotional overexcitability were elevated in the group identified as gifted. Subsequent efforts to measure overexcitability have been aimed at creating a new, more user-friendly questionnaire, The Overexcitability Questionnaire Two (Falk, Lind, Miller, Piechowski, and Silverman 1999).

Where have the past twenty-five years taken us? In the field of gifted education, overexcitability has become synonymous with developmental potential and even with giftedness. Ackerman’s (1997b) paper is an example: “OEs are indicators of developmental potential (DP) and therefore giftedness” (p. 230). Also, Ackerman (1997b) assumes that students in her nongifted group who displayed higher overexcitability (35 percent) should also be considered as gifted on this basis. Dabrowski hypothesized that the gifted should display increased
overexcitability but he also saw many people with high developmental potential who were not
gifted in the conventional sense. Therefore it is very possible that this “thirty-five percent”
subgroup of Ackerman’s nongifted group were correctly classified (they were nongifted) and
also displayed higher than average overexcitability.

Some authors have equated overexcitability (and giftedness) with attention deficit
disorder and attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Lori Flint (2001) strives to differentiate
“between a gifted child with overexcitabilities and one with ADHD” (p. 65). Other authors
appear to present overexcitability as a type of disability, on par with disorders like cerebral palsy,
learning disabilities and ADHD (Reis & McCoach, 2002). Finally, we have to aware that some
authors use the term overexcitability in very different ways. For example, Elaine Aron has used
the term overexcitability in her theory of the highly sensitive person. Her theory is unrelated to,
and quite different from Dabrowski’s approach.

In research on overexcitability, there is usually scant mention of any of the other
indicators of developmental potential that Dabrowski described and the presence of OE is
generally offered as synonymous with developmental potential. It should be noted that no studies
have measured the third factor or integrated findings on overexcitability measures with
Dabrowski’s other developmental indices. No one has yet achieved Dabrowski’s tripartite
operational assessment of developmental potential, integrating overexcitability, special abilities
and talents, and autonomous factors – notably the third factor. Therefore it is perhaps somewhat
premature to equate overexcitability so strongly with developmental potential.

In closing, I would like to raise several discussion points. First, perhaps it is time to
develop a measurement of developmental potential integrating overexcitability, the third factor
and special abilities and talents. Measurements and discussions of developmental potential offered within the overall developmental context of the Theory of Positive Disintegration would give readers a new and powerful context to interpret findings. This wider context would also give readers a new context to consider applications. In my opinion, if authors want to use a Dabrowskian perspective, they need to find ways to better integrate Dabrowski’s overall approach into their research and applications, for example, in the field of gifted education. In this way, we can also better use our research findings to refine our theory and definitions.

Second, I see an important role for a Dabrowskian approach to counseling. Often a child is traumatized due to his or her intense experiences but he or she cannot communicate or explain this to their parents or peers. In experiences strangely reminiscent of posttraumatic stress reactions, an individual may be tormented by his or her inner experience and left with troubling visual images replaying for years. The intensity and perseveration of these experiences combined with the inability to communicate them often causes real day-to-day problems well after the “traumatic” experience. Without context, the person’s subsequent actions or moods may seem strange or out of place and his or her overt behavior is often misinterpreted and misunderstood. The focus of traditional counseling is generally to palliate intense experiences and to “put them behind the person”. On the other hand, Dabrowski encouraged people to be open to the “little tragedies of life” and to let these experiences “sink in” and to see where they would lead. In Dabrowski’s approach, the person is encouraged to “work through” intense experiences and to make sense of them in the context of his or her own life and development. The individual will discover his or her own character and developmental potential in meeting the day-to-day challenges provided by life. For example, when St. Francis of Assisi met the leper on the road he also met himself – he felt that God had given him this test. Francis overcame his revulsion and
kissed the leper to show his love and acceptance of a fellow human being. Francis later felt that he had passed the test, so he was happy with his self – his personality ideal had guided him and he had overcome his lower instincts to look away or to let his repugnance guide his actions.

In Dabrowski’s approach, the person is encouraged to become his or her own therapist, using a method Dabrowski called autopsychotherapy. In summary, a Dabrowskian model calls for a more sensitive, more tolerant and more empathetic approach to counselling people who experience strong developmental potential. This model encourages the individual to embark on his or her own journey of autopsychotherapy.

Third, I would like to consider several possibilities under the heading Discussions points – Education. Can we identify and address systemic attitudes and programs that suppress or extinguish developmental potential? Can we develop educational methods and programs that better tolerate and even enhance the expression of strong developmental potential when it is present? Can we develop educational or social programs to encourage the person with “average” or equivocal DP? I agree with Dabrowski that developmental potential appears to be limited and its parameters largely set by genetics. However, I think this leaves open the question – how much can we enhance the person with “average” or equivocal genetics? Is there a large group between “the worst” and “the best genetics” who we can help by using a supportive and enriched environment? Can we develop educational programs to address these questions in students? I think so and I hope someone will pick up the challenge to see how this enrichment could be accomplished. Finally, what can we, as individuals, do to find ways to influence and enhance the developmental potential of our own society? The collective is us, we are not the collective. How can we raise the level of thinking and action in our wider social community? In our political
leaders? Ultimately, this was Dabrowski’s focus of higher personality development. Some have read a little Dabrowski and mistakenly concluded that he simply advocated creating an autonomous ego that would express the person’s own sense of self. In living life with multilevelness, ego shrinks and the focus shifts from the self to the other. Compassion and social action become the guiding principles and often self-sacrifice facilitates “doing the right thing for someone else”. Take for example, Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan priest who was a prisoner at Auschwitz. Kolbe offered himself as a substitute for one of ten prisoners – a man who had a wife and family – who were chosen to die by starvation as a reprisal for an escape from the camp. In the starvation bunker, Father Kolbe, prisoner 16670, continued his ministry for two weeks until he was the last of the group left alive. Finally, on August 14, 1941 he was killed with an injection of phenol. Father Kolbe gave his life that another man with a family might live (Francis Gajowniczek survived the camps and lived into old age). Father Kolbe also illustrated Dabrowski’s multilevel approach to life and to the self. He was a journalist, who wrote: “The real conflict is inner conflict. Beyond armies of occupation and the catacombs of concentration camps, there are two irreconcilable enemies in the depth of every soul: good and evil, sin and love. And what use are victories on the battlefield if we ourselves are defeated in our innermost personal selves?” (Kolbe, 1940).

In conclusion, developmental potential involves many aspects of Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration. As we learn more about developmental potential and understand it better, we will learn how to better assess developmental potential. We will also be in a better position to learn how to maximize its expression and turn developmental potential into developmental reality.
“The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this: A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive. To them a touch is a blow, a sound is a noise, a misfortune is a tragedy, a joy is an ecstasy, a friend is a lover, a lover is a god, and failure is death. Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering necessity to create, create, create – so that without the creating of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of meaning, their very breath is cut off . . . . They must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency they are not really alive unless they are creating.” Attribution: Pearl Buck.

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Kolbe, Father. (December 1940). *Knight of Mary Immaculate* [A monthly Newspaper.]

Paper 2). Andrew Kawczak: Keynote Speaker

Development Potential & Authentic Mental Development

The concept of developmental potential is related to how Dabrowski understands mental growth. In the theory of positive disintegration it is the transformation of mental functions and structures towards higher levels, towards increased awareness and critical reflection, empathy, autonomy and authenticity.

By autonomy Dabrowski means the ability to transcend the dictates of instincts and environmental pressures, the ability to choose and make decisions, guided and inspired by gradually developed higher complex emotions, understanding and empathic identification. The autonomous individual becomes “his own person”, directed and controlled by his own forces, no more a plaything of blind instinctive drives, social conformity and indoctrination. Human autonomy, as understood by Dabrowski, implies a profound sense of responsibility for further development and creative fulfillment of oneself and others.

The transformation of mental functions and structures in the direction of autonomy Dabrowski called authentic mental development. The paper will deal with the questions: What kind of potential is needed for this kind of development? What innate qualities, sensitivities and inclinations foster this development? What are the forces and approaches which promote it? What practices and methods of education and psychotherapy really advance an authentic mental development?
ANDREW KAWCZAK

DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL

AND

AUTHENTIC MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Paper presented at the Sixth International Congress
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1. HUMAN POTENTIAL

The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, published in Polish three years ago at the Catholic University of Lublin, the alma mater of Dr. Dabrowski, includes a substantial entry about him and about the theory of positive disintegration. The article identifies him as a psychologist, psychiatrist, and a philosopher. Dabrowski completed his studies in psychology and philosophy before the study of medicine and obtained a PhD. apart from his medical degree. The entry in the Encyclopaedia emphasizes not only his multidisciplinary studies, but also the interdisciplinary of the theory of positive disintegration (TPD) and the philosophical significance of the concept of multilevelness, the hierarchical, multilevel vision and perspective on human life and human reality.

The awareness of this scholarly background and interests of Dabrowski can be helpful to deepen our understanding of his idea of development and developmental potential. Philosophers speak rather of human development, while psychologists and psychiatrists are more at ease with the term mental development. Dabrowski’s invaluable contribution is precisely in the understanding that an adequate and successful theory of mental development of human beings must do justice to philosophical and moral concerns.

How did he meet this requirement? At the core of his solution is the distinction of a biologically determined mental development and that which he called the authentic mental development (AMD). The biologically determined mental development is closely related to the changes of the bodily substance of the individual and follows the cycle settled by the laws of the body. This development goes from infanthood through adolescence and youth to maturity and then to a gradual deterioration, decline and final demise.
On the other hand, the AMD transcends the biological forces. Dabrowski believed that it has its own dynamics. While it may suffer temporary arrests and even reverses, there is no limit to its progress and once it reaches a sufficiently advanced level, it becomes immune to deterioration.

The AMD is shaped by the psychological dynamisms of positive disintegration and advances in the direction of a self-chosen ideal of personality. Once it reaches the stage of secondary integration, its central qualities become permanent, immune to senile decay. The personality will further develop, but rather by accruement than disintegration.

It is easy to see how this concept of mental development corresponds to the saying of one of Dabrowski’s favorite thinkers Soren Kierkegaard: *Man is not a fact, man is a task*. It is a task, indeed, to reach the secondary integration and keep growing!

To construct and work out the concept of AMD it was necessary to introduce into the theory the philosophical concept of multilevelness, which is a hierarchical, vertical vision of reality. The distinction of levels, Dabrowski emphasized, has its factual, empirical foundation. It also has a clear evaluative dimension. Higher levels can be established and tested empirically, but they also represent what is better and higher humanly and especially morally, what is for human beings a worthy goal to pursue.

Multilevelness represents what Maslow called *a fusion of fact and value*. Dabrowski by his incisive use of the distinction of lower and higher levels of mental functions and mental structures provided a more coherent theoretical foundation for value judgments than any other approach, known to me. In my opinion, this is one of the underestimated assets of the TPD that it provides a foundation to overcome the allegedly *unbridgeable gulf* between fact and value.
The soundness of Dabrowski’s concept of moral values and moral progress seems to me to withstand critical arguments.

2. THE STUDIES OF GIFTEDNESS

Before going further, it will be useful to look at the studies of giftedness as presented in Mensa of 1989.

A questionnaire, devised for measuring overexcitability, was used with three different groups: artists, scientists, and graduate students. No spiritual leaders, educators, social leaders or social reformers were examined.

The reported main results can be summed up in three conclusions:

1] Artists score on all overexcitabilities significantly higher than graduate students do.

2] Scientists score on intellectual, emotional and imaginational overexcitabilities significantly higher than graduate students do.

3] Artists score on emotional and imaginational overexcitabilities significantly higher than scientists do.

The first two conclusions confirm Dabrowski’s hypotheses. The third conclusion was not expected, but does not contradict the main ideas of Dabrowski. The term overexcitability, introduced by Dabrowski already in 1937, means an enhanced, above average form of experiencing external and internal stimuli, and an intensified mental activity. Stimulability and superstimulability (or arousal of awareness) may better express what Dabrowski had in mind when he used the Polish terms pobudliwosc and nadpobudliwosc. In agreement with Dabrowski, the strength of overexcitabilities was in this study taken as a measure of developmental potential.

The report emphasizes that intellectual OE should not be simply equated with intelligence. It includes curiosity, a questioning, probing attitude and thirst for knowledge and
truth, interest in ideas and intellectual analysis. Emotional OE involves intensity, depth and a wide range of feelings. Imaginational OE refers to vividness of imagery, richness of associations, fantasies and inventions, also interest in non-academic accomplishments, such as distinction in writing, drama, music.

Sensual OE means enhanced intensity, aliveness and differentiation of sensual experience, enhanced responsiveness to light and color, sound, touch, taste, or scent. Psychomotor OE involves the liking of physical movement, restlessness, also energy and drive, strenuousness of effort, and a sense of urgency.

The researchers themselves reported several difficulties inherent in their approach. They suspect that the control group that was the sample of graduate students was not representative, because it looked, they say, that the selection for admission to graduate studies in science and professions favors candidates with higher adaptability, calm, moderation, seriousness, solid work, and not imagination, emotionality, tension, peculiarity. It is rather grades and school rank than evidence of talent that is taken into account. They further observe that real life creative achievement is not correlated with test scores and grade averages, but rather with distinction in writing, art, drama, music, social action and social service.

As a consequence the selective process of admission, especially in the area of science and professions, seems to favor candidates with a softened OE profile. No wonder, therefore, that artists and scientists had higher OEs than graduate students did.

Another difficulty was related to the use of productivity and success in the selection of the sample of artists, while neither bears a direct relationship to the nature of talent. It is often observed that less talented artists are more productive and enjoy more recognition than their more talented confreres.
However, the researchers noticed that in each group of subjects there was a wide range of scores on each form of OE. They have found such a wide range of individual differences that the question imposed itself: which is more important, the differences between individuals in each domain or the differences between diverse kinds of art or scholarly discipline? This observation puts in question the basic assumption of the entire investigation that talent is a function of overexcitabilities. It is somewhat reminiscent of the typical problem related to IQ tests. When we ask what is intelligence (that the IQ tests are supposed to measure), the only answer seems to be, it is what these tests measure.

Beyond that, I am inclined to think that artistic giftedness is related to aesthetic sensitivity. I agree with those philosophers who, like Immanuel Kant, consider the experience of beauty a specific kind of human experience that is distinct from all other experience. People notoriously differ in the ability and intensity of their response to beauty. It is puzzling to me how the study of DP in artists can ignore this aspect of their abilities and talents.

An analogous question can be raised with regard to moral sensitivity. The more I study and meditate on moral philosophy; the specific distinctive nature of moral feelings becomes increasingly evident to me. They are distinctly different from purely utilitarian, instrumental, or prudential considerations. They refer to the realm of what is just, what ‘ought to be’, and generate a sense of obligation, of duty, a consideration that transcends and dominates other concerns. People immensely differ in moral sensitivity; some children of the same parents differ like fire and water. Moral development is at the core of Dabrowski’s mental development toward a true, autonomous personality and secondary integration. Can we ignore excitability of this nature in our studies of developmental potential?
3. TALENT AND CHARACTER

The studies published in *Mensa*, in spite of all reservations and limitations, provide one more confirmation of Dabrowski’s claim that overexcitability, especially intellectual, emotional, and imaginational, correlates favorably with creative accomplishments. This correlation is more strongly marked in the area of art than in science. It also seems to square with a common sense idea that great works are a product of heightened mental activity.

If Dabrowski was right in considering DP to be basically genetic, the question is what are the chances of enhancing positive potential and suppressing negative potential. In other words, we are asking whether factor two, environment, and factor three, autonomous, independent thinking can change something that is, at least initially, innate and hereditary, that is, so to say, ‘in the genes’. This is an issue of crucial importance for education and psychotherapy, for psychological counseling and pastoral work, traditionally known as nature/nurture or aptitude/ability.

Daily experience seems to indicate that much of the genetic material is flexible, plastic, that it can be transformed to an amazing degree. This plasticity seems to offer great opportunities for improvement, particularly at a very early age. We have difficulty to find out how much of the great music of Mozart is owed to his genes and how much to his father who taught his son to become a concert pianist at the age of five. We do know how much of the profound philosophical insights in the works of John Stuart Mill was the result of being at preschool age introduced to the study of Plato by his father, also an outstanding thinker. We do not know how much of the wonderful music, composed by the various members of the Bach family was a matter of the genes or of the unique household of Johan Sebastian Bach, considered by many the greatest musician of all times. His four sons were outstanding composers in their own right.
What conclusions should we derive from the story of American writer, educator and social reformer Helen Keller who since the nineteenth month of her life was completely blind and deaf, but this did not prevent her from learning several languages and making a significant and highly inspiring contribution to society as a writer, thinker, and social reformer?

It is true that Dabrowski believed DP to be primarily genetic, but it is also true that his favorite quote from the Bible were the words of Jesus to his disciples: *You will do greater miracles than I do* (The Gospel of St. John). The deepest motivation of Dabrowski’s lifetime work was to liberate human potential in everyone. For him one of the important elements in mental development through positive disintegration is the transcendence of the psychological type, the gradual acquisition of the qualities of the opposite type. In his own self-evaluation, he was by nature an introvert, but ceaselessly struggled to develop in himself the positive qualities of an extravert. A true, fully developed personality, in his opinion, should go beyond the limitations of a one-sided, narrow psychological type.

He was aware and deeply troubled by the corruptive impact of psychopathic individuals and did not have any illusions about their developmental chances. Nonetheless, when I asked him, whether for a psychopath there is any chance of authentic mental development, his answer was not altogether negative. *Yes, he said, but in cases of serious psychopathy only under the impact of a very hard experience, a really heavy blow.*

Interestingly, the same insight seems to have guided another subtle master of the workings of the human mind, William Shakespeare. In one of his great masterpieces *King Lear* he puts these words in the mouth of the mortally wounded notorious villain Edmund: “I pant for life. Some good I mean to do despite of my own nature.”
However, when we examine the issue of DP, there may be a significant difference between the progressive advancement of talent and the development of character and personality. Talent, especially artistic talent, seems to be an innate aptitude, a sort of natural facility that enables the individual to perform in a graceful, original and creative manner. Some people seem to be born with it and others do not. Quite often, the lack of talent is not difficult to notice and appears to us as a clear, definite, insurmountable limitation.

On the other hand, is the traditional thinking wrong in assuming that everyone is responsible for his character? Does Dabrowski consider the success in the development of personality as much dependent on the genetic endowment as is the case of artistic creativity? Great artists are admired for both innate talent and creative effort. Is it the same with great personalities and moral heroes?

There are analogies, but there also are differences between the way human beings achieve great artistic success and genuine moral greatness. People are born with different sensitivities and excitabilities, different interests and inclinations. The appearance of early disintegrative dynamisms, such as ambivalencies and ambitendencies, astonishment with oneself or disquietude with oneself, is clearly dependent on the genetic endowment, although the environment may stimulate it. In this sense, in the early stages of positive disintegration, authentic mental development may decisively depend on innate developmental potential.

However, the crucial difference is the appearance of the third factor, which is the capacity to question, resist and overcome both innate drives and social influences. The third factor is the new faculty that allows the individual to rise above both the inclinations, carried by the genes and the pressures exercised by society. It is indispensable for the transition from being controlled by blind forces to self-determination, from heteronomy to the autonomy of the individual. Thus,
the appearance of the third factor seems to be rightly called by some the second birth, a true birth of a human being.

Although this new factor cannot make a painter from a person who is colorblind, it can generate substantial changes in the mental structure and attitudes of the individual, it can make a hero of a coward, it can even bring about the change of the psychological type. While the creative process in the arts has its own dynamics, largely determined by intuitive and subliminal forces, the development of personality in Dabrowski’s sense is basically a matter of deliberate, conscious choice, followed by deliberate, sustained effort.

It is hard to overestimate the role of the third factor. Once it appears, it is an entirely new game. It allows human beings, as Jean-Paul Sartre liked to say, getting drunk alone or making of themselves a true work of art.

4. INNER MENTAL TRANSFORMATION

Dabrowski’s concept of authentic mental development has at its core his idea of inner mental transformation (IMT). It consists of the gradual replacement of mental functions, which are less conscious, thoughtless, simple, automatic, and rigid by more conscious, more thoughtful, complex, voluntary, and flexible functions. Dabrowski not only joins all those who consider this rising mentalism or spiritualization to be a basic law of the phylogenetic evolution of the forms of life, but he sees in it the essential trend and pattern of individual, ontogenetic development.

What are the forces that make such a transformation possible within the short span of human life? In his account of IMT, Dabrowski referred to the transformative powers of the dynamisms of positive disintegration. He put special stress on the dynamisms of empathic identification, personality ideal and critical self-evaluation, for which he used the term subject-object in oneself. This dynamism consists of taking interest in and observation of one’s own
mental life in an attempt to gain a better understanding of oneself and to critically evaluate oneself. Unlike introspection, which is rather intellectual and descriptive, this dynamism has strong emotional and evaluative components. Critical self-evaluation is an essential element in inner mental transformation of stimuli and in the transformation of the entire mental structure through positive disintegration. Many people go happily through their lives without ever experiencing the discomfort of such a critical look at themselves. The price they pay for it is a narrow, limited mental profile and developmental stagnation.

5. EMPATHY

What is the meaning and place of the dynamism of empathic identification in the TPD? It is very important to understand the concept of empathy as used by Dabrowski, because different writers give this term different meanings. Some speak of the empathy of a torturer who tries to understand his victim’s pain in order to apply the most effective instruments of torture. This certainly is not the sense, in which Dabrowski lists empathy among developmental dynamisms. Other writers relate empathy to compassion, a feeling of tenderness and understanding, combined with a desire to aid. Most dictionaries cite vi-carious experiencing, participation or intellectual identification with the feelings, thinking and attitudes of another person.

Dabrowski sees the roots of empathy in early forms of syntony, emotional ‘tuning in’, which is an expression of the gregarious instinct, an uncritical, temperamental association. At the lower level, the gregarious instinct might be expressed in an uncritical camaraderie, such as sharing the joyful mood of drinking and dancing together, thoughtless joining a street demonstration, etc. At a higher level, this instinct may be at the service of noble causes, such as the involvement in organizations like the Red Cross, Amnesty International, Physicians without Borders, etc.
In *Psychoneurosis is Not an Illness*, Dabrowski gives a definition of empathy, which emphasizes four aspects of this dynamism: the cognitive, emotional, volitional, and evaluative. There is in empathy understanding, there is also sharing, being emotionally involved, and a desire to help. There is a partial, qualified identification, but without endorsement of objectionable behavior or activity.

The influential contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum in her recent study of “the intelligence of emotions” offers fascinating insights into the place of empathy in human activities and moral development. I refer here to her comments not only because of their inherent value, but also because of their relevance to the TPD and clear confirmation of the validity of Dabrowski’s belief that the ability to empathize is indispensable for human development.

*There is something correct*, Nussbaum writes, *that empathy is psychologically important as a guide. Usually, without it, we are likely to remain obtuse and unresponsive, not even knowing how to make sense of the predicament we see. It is a very important tool in the service of getting a sense of what is going on with the other person, and of establishing connection.*

Evidence of a connection between empathy and compassionate emotion is significant, in both the psychoanalytic and experimental literature.

*If empathy is not clearly necessary for compassion, it is a prominent route to it. Without an attempt at empathy, we would surely be less likely to have appropriate compassion, or to take any actions that might be associated with this emotion.*

Heinz Kohut, the leading theorist of empathy within psychoanalysis, during his long career was very critical of those who, in his opinion, inflated the therapeutic role of empathy. He insisted that empathy is limited, fallible, and value-neutral. Nonetheless, he stressed that empathy is a valuable guide to accurate responding. He called it “an informer of appropriate action”.
Furthermore, in a speech given shortly before his death he made a dramatic confession:

*Empathy serves also, and this is for me the most difficult part – that despite all that I have said, empathy is a therapeutic action in the broadest sense of the word. That seems to contradict everything I have said so far, and I wish I could simply bypass it. But since it is true (and I know it is true) and I have evidence for its being true, I must mention it. Namely, that the presence of empathy in the surrounding milieu, whether used for compassionate, well-intentioned therapeutic, or even for utterly destructive purposes, is still an admixture of something positive. In other words, there is a step beyond an empathy-informed hatred that wants to destroy us, and this is an empathyless environment that just brushes you off the face of the earth. The dreadful experiences of prolonged stays in concentration camps during the Nazi era in Germany were just that. It was not cruelty on the whole………..They totally disregarded the humanity of the victims. They were not looked at as human. That was the worst.*

Nussbaum comments on the same point that there is something still worse than an empathetic villain:

*The evil of utter dehumanization seems worse For Jews, or blacks, or women, or any other victims to be treated as mere objects whose experience does not matter may involve more profound evil than for them to be tortured by an empathetic villain who still recognizes them as human.*

*The inability to empathize at all with others is closely linked to a total lack of awareness that one is doing wrong in killing a human being. Typically, we find a person without empathy frightening and psychopathic. We see in it an incapacity to recognize humanity.*
6. CONSEQUENCES OF INNER MENTAL TRANSFORMATION

The practice of developmental IMT, that is of self-critical reflection, which follows the ideas explained in Dabrowski’s works and makes full use of positive disintegrative dynamisms, gradually raises all mental functions to higher levels and integrates them into a new mental structure. It is as though a new person would be emerging. It can be briefly characterized as a transition from being controlled by blind forces to self-determination.

The consequences of this transition include:

1] A significant increase in the scope and quality of consciousness, in the richness, depth, and subtlety of all mental qualities and processes. The transition moves away from automatisms, routine, and conformity to highly conscious, independent, autonomous thinking and experiencing. The sense of the increasing self-determination is a powerful source of moral strength, confidence, hope, and legitimate optimism.

2] There is a broader and deeper understanding of life and of the drama of individual human existence.

3] There is a broader, deeper and subtler understanding of other persons, their developmental level and developmental difficulties, including a possible developmental impasse. The consequence of it is a decrease of the possibility of external conflicts, with a release of time and energy for the important and constructive tasks in life.

4] There is an increased awareness of actual and remote problems and a greater ability to confront and cope with new difficulties and threats. With the evolution of civilization new challenges and dangers arise, which can be effectively handled only by people at an advanced level of mental richness, depth, and refinement.
5] At higher developmental levels new unexpected insights and qualities enrich the individual and his life. The opening of new horizons increases the possibilities of further development.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In his book, Psychoneurosis is not an Illness, Dabrowski (1972) gives the following definition of developmental potential:

The constitutional endowment which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for a given individual. The developmental potential can be assessed on the basis of the following components: psychic overexcitability, special abilities and talents, and autonomous factors (notably the third factor). (p.293)

The phrase “possible for a given individual” suggests that there are definite individual limits to mental growth, even though we may not be able to determine these limits. This limitation, however, may be more relevant to the assessment of artistic abilities and talents than to the chances for authentic mental development. Due to the autonomous factors and inner mental transformation, genuine human growth has its own individualized dynamics, which allows for more flexibility, more transformability, and more diversity.

I would like to suggest that it is risky and easily counterproductive to intuitively assess the limitations of a person’s potential, because it can discourage both the educators and the individual from the possibly successful more ambitious efforts. The amazing case of Helen Keller is a powerful source of hope and a serious warning against the risk of setting the threshold too low. Dabrowski himself even with regard to psychopaths emphasized that the degree of psychopathic deficiency may be decisive for the outcome and believed that even very bad cases of psychopathy may have a chance, if the stimulation and the hardship are strong enough.
What is crucial for educational and psychotherapeutic practice is the awareness of the decisive impact of autonomous factors. This awareness strongly points to the importance of fostering and refining the dynamisms of empathic understanding and identification, as well as critical, especially self-critical thinking. The various humanistic trends in psychology have tried this approach with at least a partial success. More emphasis on and ingenuity in triggering and stimulating the dynamisms of autonomy, empathy, and inner mental transformation may bring unexpected unfolding and blossoming of developmental potential. The focus on these dynamisms may offer us the key to unprecedented successes in education, psychological counselling, and psychotherapy.

Paper 3). Laurie Nixon:

A Dabrowskian Analysis of the Ten Oxherding Pictures

I will begin by presenting a series of the twelfth-century Chinese images, known as The Ten Oxherding Pictures, along with their prose and verse commentaries. These ten images symbolize ten stages in the progress toward Buddhist enlightenment of a Zen Buddhist meditator. Next I will look at the commentaries on these images by several twentieth-century Zen masters. And finally I will compare the remarks made in the commentaries of the Zen masters with the process of personality development described by Kazimierz Dabrowski. I will suggest that although the two models emphasize different dimensions of development, they can be seen as complementary, or mutually enriching.

[At the time of printing, the pictures are available on the web at:
http://www.terebess.hu/english/oxherd.html They are also available directly from this file by going to the file menu and double clicking on: Kaku-an The Ten Oxherding Pictures, I.htm ]
A comparison between the Zen Buddhist Ten Oxherding Pictures and the Theory of Positive Disintegration

In this essay I would like to interpret a series of ink drawings, called The Oxherding Pictures, from the Chinese Song dynasty (specifically from the twelfth century), in terms of the theory of positive disintegration. The artist was a Buddhist meditation teacher named, Kuo-an Shih-yuan. In addition to the paintings themselves, Kuo-an provided a prose commentary on the pictures and either he, or a disciple of his, provided verse commentaries as well. The reproductions along with translations of the prose and verse commentaries can be found in D. T. Suzuki’s *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, and at the time of this writing were available on the web at:

http://terebess.hu/english/oxherd.html

The reason why I thought that those who are interested in Kazimierz Dabrowski’s model of personality development also would be interested in this series of pictures is that there are some striking parallels between the two. Both models describe a series of developmental stages in which there is a period of multilevel struggle and in which the ultimate goal is to actualize (or to use one of Dabrowski’s terms, to dynamize) an authentic, responsible and compassionate personality ideal.

In these ten images, the dramatis personae are a youth, who represents a novice monk (or spiritual seeker) and an ox, who represents the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path, namely the Buddha nature (in Dabrowskian terms, the personality ideal). The props
used in The Oxherding Pictures are a tether with which to hold on to the ox, and a whip with which to control the ox. These props represent the means by which a seeker advances in his or her spiritual journey, specifically they symbolize the practice of meditation and accompanying virtues, such as perseverance, vigilance, concentration, etc. Dabrowski likewise emphasizes the important role of meditation, or contemplation, in achieving the personality ideal:

Personality ideal acts as a force of transposition to ideal reality which one achieves only by way of true empathy, mystical contemplation and ecstasy, a reality which is free from selfishness and from temperamental egocentric actions and concerns. (Dabrowski, 1996:64)

The first of the Ten Oxherding Pictures is entitled, Searching for the Ox. In this image a youth is shown in a natural setting, his body and feet oriented to the viewer’s left while his head is turned around facing the right. This youth has not yet found the direction he wants to pursue, although he knows that there is something missing, or that there is something more to life. The fact that his body faces one direction while he turns his head in another direction is reminiscent of what Dabrowski referred to as ambitendencies.

In the second picture, entitled Seeing the Traces, the youth is shown as more focused. His body and his head are all facing in the same direction----the direction of the footprints of the ox. These footprints represent the indications of an ultimate goal that can be found in the writings of sages. Since the Oxherding Pictures are Buddhist images, the tracks of the ox are allusions to the Buddha nature in Buddhist texts. By analogy one
could say that for a seeker at an advanced stage of unilevel disintegration, a first encounter with the theory of positive disintegration might be a source of inspiration to the extent that it suggests a direction to life. Thus, in the second oxherding picture a search for a hierarchy of values is suggested.

In the third picture, Seeing the Ox, the youth sees the hindquarters of a large ox and is shown running after this ox. In his meditation practice the youth has catches a momentary glimpse of his Buddha nature (or personality ideal), focuses on it, and enthusiastically pursues it. In his discussion of intuition at level III Dabrowski says that there are the

Beginnings of differentiating intuitions of lower and higher level. Beginning of attempts at concentration and meditation. Intuition is the product of hierarchization of values and of gradual detachment from ongoing involvements and preferences...Intuition ceases to be concerned with the manifestations of external reality, such as telepathy, ESP, and the like, but begins to outline the shapes of truths yet unknown to the individual. (Dabrowski, 1996:103)

With respect to the personality ideal, which can appear briefly as early as level II (unilevel disintegration), Dabrowski says,

In the transition states from one set of tendencies to another there may arise certain, usually short-lived, glimpses of the "ideal." If these glimpses become more frequent then there is a greater probability of the formation of a nucleus of an ideal. These moments...are, however, transitory and changeable, and most often an ideal is understood in terms of imitation of another, or of flowing with one's moods and changes. (Dabrowski, 1996:93)

But by level III there is a
Transition from an imitative to an authentic ideal...Ideal becomes something essential and concrete. The realization of ideal gives meaning to one's existence. (Dabrowski, 1996:94)

In the third oxherding picture a hierarchy of values has been established, although the struggle to attain the higher level values, and suppress the lower level values, has not yet begun.

In the fourth oxherding picture (entitled Catching the Ox), the youth is shown in an active struggle with the ox, a process parallel perhaps to the multilevel struggle in level III and the beginning of level IV. The youth is holding a tether attached to the nose of the ox and in the prose commentary it is stated that, “If the oxherd wishes to see the ox completely in harmony with himself, he has surely to use the whip freely.” As indicated above the tether and the whip are symbolic of Buddhist practice, particularly meditation practice, so the commentary is in effect saying that in order for the youth to integrate his personality ideal into his life, he must be diligent in his practice of meditation.

From the commentaries made on the fourth oxherding picture by contemporary Zen masters and writers on Zen Buddhism, it is clear that this picture represents a multilevel struggle in which the seeker plays an active role. In some cases these commentaries speak of the multilevel struggle within the practice of meditation itself, and most often refer to the effort the practitioner has to make to keep the mind from becoming distracted. The Reverend Eshin, associated with the organization called Buddhist Door, wrote that the fourth oxherding picture has the following meaning:
For the first time the undisciplined activities of the mind are addressed. At first it seems so difficult with old, habitual patterns of thought rising up and overwhelming us. Sometimes our mind runs wild. Sometimes it is stuck, not moving with circumstances. (Eshin, 2004)

An anonymous Korean commentary on the fourth oxherding picture says,

What exactly is this difficult time? It refers to the stage when the meditation is composed partly of the [insight], partly of distracted thoughts, and partly of sinking into dullness. At this time, these three factors seem to be competing with one another: at some times you find yourself in a state of dullness, at other times beset with distracting thoughts, and at other times concentrating on the [insight]. This is a very difficult period because now you are really fighting with the ox. (Anonymous, 2004)

Martine Batchelor, who conducts Buddhist retreats with her husband Stephen Batchelor, says of the stage represented by the fourth oxherding picture that

We feel very much like the oxherder when we start to meditate. As soon as we sit down with the aim of concentrating on the question or the breath or just being aware, our mind is flooded with thoughts, memories and plans and our body is not comfortable...Like the oxherder we have to be firm and hold on tightly. There are many obstacles: restlessness, sleepiness, daydreaming, etc. We have to realize that for the last twenty, thirty years we have cultivated many habits which promoted distractions and when we meditate we go against all these habits. It is going to take some time before we dissolve the power of these tendencies. (Batchelor, 2004)

In this last cited passage there is a suggestion that the struggle in meditation to control the mind from distracted thoughts is rooted in general habit patterns within the personality.

Some commentaries are quite explicit about the global nature of the struggle at this stage. According to one commentator, Katsuki Sekida, there is a struggle between lower level passions and desires, such as anger, greed, and jealousy, on the one hand, and his true nature (i.e., the ox), on the other.
At this stage, his kensho [mystical insight into his true nature] has become confirmed. However, as you see in the picture, the ox is inclined to run away willfully, and the man to hold it back with all his might...in his everyday life he cannot control his mind as he wishes. Sometimes he burns with anger; sometimes he is possessed by greed, blinded by jealousy, and so on. Unworthy thoughts and ignoble actions occur as of old. He is exhausted by the struggle against his passions and desires, which seem uncontrollable. This is something he did not bargain for: in spite of having attained kensho he seems to be as mean-spirited as ever. Indeed kensho has seemingly been the cause of new afflictions. He wants to behave in a certain way but finds himself doing the opposite...However he cannot let go of the bridle [the tether or rope] and tries to keep the ox under control, even though it seems beyond him. (Sekida, 1981:226-227)

What is interesting to note here is that while there is a struggle against lower level passions, there is simultaneously a struggle to hang on to the ox (i.e., the personality ideal). Victory in the struggle against self-centered desires is achieved through becoming one with the personality ideal.

John Daido Loori, abbot of the Zen Mountain Monastery in Mt. Tremper, New York, interprets the fourth oxherding picture as a struggle between self-centeredness and wisdom.

The term kensho, frequently used in Zen writings, literally means seeing the nature of the self. But [as Kuo-an says,] "Still, its will is forceful and its body spirited." That's the ego. We see into the nature of the ego, but it doesn't die easily. It is programmed to reappear, to constantly reassert itself....

[But] With the original breakthrough, wisdom begins to function...Wisdom is the direct appreciation of the oneness of the universe and the self. But that functioning of wisdom is very inconsistent. It runs hot and cold.

Frequently our actions are not in accord with our clarity. We know what we should be doing, we know what is right, but that is not what we do. Often, in fact, we do exactly the opposite...This is a tremendous and all-pervasive struggle, the
stage of the journey when we are beginning to transform habits developed over a lifetime to accord with our emerging understanding. (Loori, 2002:29-30)

Loori makes the interesting point that lower level passions can survive in a different guise. For example, the desire to possess other’s material goods can change into jealousy with regard to the moral and spiritual attainments of others.

At the very same time when we have seen the futility of our ingrained habit patterns, they continue to propagate themselves...Instead of coveting our neighbor's new car...we begrudge their progress on the spiritual path...But coveting is coveting.... (Loori, 2002:30)

And even when there is some success in the multilevel struggle, the root of lower level values, i.e., pride, persists in asserting itself.

After the initial breakthrough, there also appears the tendency to get inflated with our insight...This is one of the worst possible delusions...To even give rise to the thought that there is a distinction between ordinary beings and Buddhas, a gap between our ordinary mind and our enlightened mind, is a defilement.... (Loori, 2002:30)

Loori also notes that partial multilevel disintegration has to become more global and this is done by allowing the illumination of the ideal permeate one’s being and by letting go of previous conditioning.

Despite insight, despite realization of the nature of reality, conditioning is still present. We have a breakthrough. For a moment there is clarity, for a moment the light of our mind shines. Then very quickly, it clouds over, because our conditioning is fathomless...From this point on, our spiritual journey is about letting go of our conditioning in view of our clarity; it is about actualizing our insight. (Loori, 2002:32)

Loori’s commentary is consistent with Dabrowski’s description of intuition at level IV.
Development and deepening of intuition is closely related to the increasing distance from lower levels of reality...perception is multilevel and multidimensional having its source in the highest level which organizes...all the lower levels of reality. Intuition is...developed through detachment from the needs of a lower level and through closer binding with the personality ideal. Meditation and contemplation contribute to the growth of intuition. (1996:103)

The comments of the Chinese Ch’an (Zen) master, Master Sheng-yen, nicely summarize the points made by the interpreters cited above.

The practitioner catches the ox and tries to control it with a rope...He perceives his own Buddha-nature, but still experiences vexations caused by greed, anger, dislike and resentment...the practitioner is careful not to give rise to vexations...Still, he experiences vexations and must use appropriate methods and views, such as meditation and the understanding of causes and conditions, in order to deal with these problems. The methods and views of Ch’an comprise the ox-controlling rope. (Sheng-yen 1992)

Dabrowski’s comments on the gradient of reflection at higher levels of personality development mirror the comments made by the Zen teachers in general and Sheng-yen in particular.

The process of inner psychic transformation started with the aid of meditation and contemplation is carried on in a more essential all-inclusive manner. Reflection becomes a systematic practice of deep calm concentration. It ceases to be an analytical argument but begins to depend more and more on the operation of intuition. (1996: 69-70)

The remaining oxherding pictures represent various stages following the momentous multilevel struggle depicted in the second, third and fourth images. In the fifth oxherding picture, Herding the Ox, we see the youth waking along, holding the tether (but not tautly) and the ox meekly following behind him. At this stage the seeker has achieved a tentative accord with his personality ideal, but he must remain vigilant, as
the prose commentary states, “Do not let the nose-string loose, hold it tight, and allow no vacillation.” In the picture entitled, Coming Home on the Ox’s Back, the sixth oxherding picture, the youth is shown riding on the back of the ox, no longer holding the tether. Instead both hands hold a flute which the youth is playing. The struggle is truly over, and the seeker and his personality ideal are one. This unity is even more graphically displayed in the seventh oxherding picture, The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone. Here we see the youth serenely contemplating nature as the moon arises in the background—the ox has disappeared, as it is now one with the youth. The eighth oxherding picture (called The Ox and the Man both Gone out of Sight) is what is called an enso—a circle created by a single broad brush stroke. In this painting, even the experience of being a peaceful person integrated with one’s personality ideal is transcended. This image symbolizes the complete annihilation of self-centeredness. The ninth oxherding picture is Returning to the Source, in which we see a blossoming branch of a cherry tree—but no ox and no youth. This image symbolizes the totally transformed consciousness of the youth. Finally in the tenth oxherding picture, In Town with Helping Hands, we see the “youth” who has become a bald, bearded, pot-bellied, and disheveled old man encountering (and implicitly advising) another person (represented as a youth) in search of his personality ideal.

In view of Dabrowski’s objections to what he understood as the ultimate goal of Buddhism, I feel it would be helpful to clarify the Buddhist position, and compare it with the views of Dabrowski. To do this I will summarize the Buddhist understanding of the person as given in an analysis, by Sallie B. King (1989), of an ancient Chinese Buddhist
text entitled the *Buddha Nature Treatise*. Dabrowski felt that Buddhism adopted as its ultimate goal a form of monism—i.e., that Buddhist enlightenment consisted of a complete annihilation of the individual personality. I have described Dabrowski’s view of Buddhist enlightenment, the dependence of this view on inadequate sources and the reasons why I think Dabrowski was mistaken, in a presentation given at the Fifth International Conference on the Theory of Positive Disintegration at Fort Lauderdale in 2002. (This paper is available in the Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference and therefore on the CD of Dabrowski’s works.)

In King’s reading, the *Buddha Nature Treatise* distinguishes first between the ontological and the existential dimensions of the human persons. According to King,

There are two main points to the *Buddha Nature Treatise*’s understanding of the ontological nature of a human person: first, a person is not an entity of any kind, but consists of actions; and second, a person does not exist in contradistinction to a world, but is...conceived as inseparable from that world.... (King, 1989)

However the focus of the Buddha Nature Treatise, and correspondingly of King’s analysis, is on the existential dimension, which is divided into two stages or modes: before and after a process of spiritual transformation (i.e., multilevel disintegration). This process of spiritual (and personality) transformation, referred to by King as conversion, is one in which the person is changed from a deluded into an awakened being. Before conversion the person is deluded; after conversion the person is awakened. How does this relate to the synthesis between universal qualities versus individual qualities—the preservation of which Dabrowski believes is essential? To begin with the *Buddha Nature*
*Treatise* identifies the Buddha nature (the Buddhist personality ideal) as a universal which is present in both deluded and awakened existential modes of personality.

In whichever existential mode a person finds him or herself, a human being is always identifiable with the Buddha nature...If the Buddha nature is the essential nature of a human being, then there is, on this level and in this context, a universal sameness shared by humanity at the core of our identity. We are all intrinsically enlightened and compassionate beings...To the extent that this hidden reality is not yet manifest, though, the sameness which it implies is all the greater. We can speak of it only as wisdom and compassion and cannot specify its character further; active manifestation is required for that. (King, 1989)

The difference between the presence of the Buddha nature in the two modes is as follows.

In the deluded mode, the personality ideal is hidden; in the awakened mode the personality ideal is manifest, or to use Dabrowski’s term, dynamized.

What about individual traits in the two modes? In the deluded mode, individual traits are determined, according to the *Buddha Nature Treatise*, by the unique configurations of what in Buddhism are called kleśa, or defiling passions, such as greed, sloth, anger, and jealousy. As King puts it:

...what does distinguish us one from another is our individual karma and kleśa [or defilements], the past history and defilements which together are responsible for the creation and constitution of our bodies as well as what we...call our various personalities. To the extent that a person exists in the deluded existential mode, that person's individual character traits, beliefs, habits, tendencies, values, mannerisms, and so forth simply are kleśa [defilements].... (King, 1989)

These defilements are precisely what constitute the driving force of primary integration, and even for the most part, the multiplicity of wills in unilevel disintegration. These are not the individual features of personality that Dabrowski sees as enduring.
From the Buddhist perspective, these defilements are not ultimately real, or enduring, and therefore cannot be the basis of true personality.

We therefore have a situation in which persons in the deluded existential mode can only be differentiated one from another by virtue of the kleśa which constitute their personalities and have constructed their bodies, but the themselves are unreal and therefore cannot serve as any real basis of differentiation. The kleśa, therefore, have no value in constituting a person's identity. In the existential mode of delusion, then, a person can truthfully be identified with the universally identical Buddha nature but cannot truthfully be identified with the distinctive kleśa which constitute that person's individuality.

Within the purview of Buddha nature thought, the person in the deluded existential mode is ahistorical and lacking in individuality. History and individuality are comprised by the kleśa which constitute a person's personality; since these are simply negligible, so are history and individuality as pertaining to persons in the deluded existential mode. (King, 1989)

The Buddha Nature Treatise makes the additional point that true autonomy does not exist in the deluded mode, except inasmuch as one conforms to the impulse derived from one’s Buddha nature, which impels one toward the freedom of Buddhahood.

...autonomy and freedom are largely, though not entirely, negligible for the deluded person. Most of the deluded person's actions are driven by karma and as such identifiable with the realm of kleśa and utterly lacking in real freedom. However, there is one important exception to this statement. Buddha nature...[impels] one towards Buddhahood. The drive to spiritual freedom impelled by the Buddha nature is an act of authentic freedom. Buddha nature... [having] nothing to do with the realm of karma and kleśa, can serve as the basis of acts of real freedom.... (King, 1989)

A similar position is found in Dabrowski’s definition of autonomy. Autonomy, he says, is Freedom from lower level drives and behavior and from the influence of the external environment (which does not negate responsiveness to its needs).
Autonomy is a function of identification with the highest levels, in particular with personality ideal. (1996:42)

In other words according to both the *Buddha Nature Treatise* and Kazimierz Dabrowski, the more one identifies with (and is responsive to the urges of) the personality ideal, the greater is one’s autonomy, understood in both cases to be freedom from the influence of the defiling passions.

King’s conclusion regarding the view of the *Buddha Nature Treatise* on the deluded mode of the existential dimension of the human person is as follows:

....as presented in the *Buddha Nature Treatise*, the person (or human being) in the deluded existential mode is not a person as we ordinarily use the term in the popular Western sense. There is no real historicality or individuality accruing to the "person" and precious little freedom. What we consider to be the basis of individual personhood is written off as unreal. What is real is the universal sameness of Buddha nature; in this sameness, individual personhood, as we ordinarily use the term, cannot be found. Thus, before "conversion" and while in the existential mode of delusion, a person is not a person. (King, 1989)

This view is not so very different from Dabrowski’s idea that true personality (along with autonomy) is not a given, but is something which is acquired through a process of personality development from primary integration toward secondary integration.

So much for the view expressed in the *Buddha Nature Treatise* about the deluded mode, but what about the awakened mode, subsequent to a process of personality transformation or conversion? To begin with, the universal aspect is the Buddha nature
(or personality ideal), although now the Buddha nature is manifest (dynamized). And it is precisely in this manifestation or dynamization that true individual traits emerge.

What, then, of the person after "conversion," the "pure" or enlightened person? Again we must begin by stating that the person is the Buddha nature. Thus, also in the existential mode of enlightenment there apparently is this degree of universal sameness. But how far, in this mode, does this sameness extend? The fact that we are all the Buddha nature means that we are all characterized by clear seeing and altruistic behavior. But persons in the enlightened existential mode, unlike persons in the deluded mode, have made this Buddha nature manifest in real acts of clarity and altruism. This manifestation in action, therefore, brings the Buddha nature into the realm of particularity and individuality....Hence, once the Buddha nature moves into the realm of manifestation, it is no longer appropriate to speak of universal sameness, since the Buddha nature is no more than those particular acts of clarity and altruism and no entity of any kind. (King, 1989)

King concludes her analysis of the view of the human person found in the Buddha nature Treatise as follows:

Thus, history and individuality, which were lacking in the deluded existential mode, enter the constitution of the person now, in the enlightened existential mode. The particular behaviors, mannerisms, and even the personality of the person now possess reality and value. Moreover, the actions of the person now possess complete autonomy and freedom....

We must emphasize this remarkable point: "conversion" and enlightened behavior not only do not rob a person of individuality, but in fact constitute its very possibility for the first time. (King, 1989)

To me the conception of the Buddha nature that is found in the Buddha Nature Treatise appears to be rather similar to Dabrowski’s description of the personality ideal in secondary integration:

Secondary integration as the highest level of development is also called here the level of personality. By personality we mean a self-aware, self-chosen, and self-affirmed structure whose one dominant factor is personality ideal...
the synthesis and organization carried out in level IV, all dynamisms operate in
harmony. They become more unified with the DDC [disposing and directing
center] established at a high level and inspired by the personality ideal. Out of all
the developmental distillation, personality ideal remains as the only dynamism
recognizable in the fifth level. (1996:42)

Note also that in the above quoted passage, Dabrowski defines personality as that which
is achieved, in the same way that the Buddha Nature Treatise does.

Similarly in the glossary of *Psychoneurosis is Not an Illness*, Dabrowski defines
personality as,

>A self-aware, self-chosen, self-affirmed, and self-determined unity of essential
individual psychic qualities. Personality as defined here appears at the level of
secondary-integration... (1972:301)

Hence, when Dabrowski refers to the importance of preserving individual traits, he is not
referring to lower level structures that are generally understood when psychologists speak
of “personality,” but rather a level of being in which the only recognizable dynamism is
the personality ideal, or in Buddhist terms, the Buddha nature. The features of lower level
“personality” have no value for Dabrowski whatsoever. He states unambiguously that,
“The instinct of partial death is the inner drive which compels the individual to let die or
to actively destroy his lower levels -- that which is less himself” (1996: 89).

According to Sallie King’s analysis of the *Buddha Nature Treatise*, at the highest
level of personality (the level of enlightenment), there is both a universal and an
individual dimension. I will repeat here a quote given above:
...in the existential mode of enlightenment there apparently is this degree of universal sameness. But how far, in this mode, does this sameness extend? The fact that we are all the Buddha nature means that we are all characterized by clear seeing and altruistic behavior. But persons in the enlightened existential mode, unlike persons in the deluded mode, have made this Buddha nature manifest in real acts of clarity and altruism. This manifestation in action, therefore, brings the Buddha nature into the realm of particularity and individuality. (King, 1989)

I find this statement of both the universal and individual nature of personality in the enlightened state, to be consistent with Dabrowski’s description of awareness at the level of secondary integration:

Strong increase of awareness through systematic meditation and contemplation. Resolution of the distinctness of one's awareness and of one's unity with others. Self-awareness and awareness are in the service of highest empathy as well as one's independence, i.e. one's individual essence. (1996: 106)

From the above remarks I draw the following conclusions:

(1) The Buddhist view of the Buddha nature and its role in shaping true personality is entirely consistent with Dabrowski’s notion of the personality ideal and its role in personality development.

(2) The Ten Oxherding Pictures and the commentarial tradition that surrounds them, (only one of the models of psycho-spiritual development found in Buddhism), is parallel to Dabrowski’s model of positive disintegration.
(3) Like the advanced personalities they seek to promote, various religious models have individual qualities as well as universal ones, and these can add to the sum total of our understanding of personality development.

(4) Throughout Dabrowski’s published works can be found numerous references to the value of the practice of meditation and contemplation, but practically nothing on how to excel at this important means of development. The study of parallel systems of development in which the various means of growth, such as meditation, are explored in great detail could further enhance our understanding of the process of realizing personality in the sense meant by Dabrowski. In fact, in *Personality-shaping through positive disintegration*, Dabrowski specifically recommends this,

> The fundamental quality shaped by the everyday effort of the individual aiming at personality is the ability to meditate. We have referred to it repeatedly. It has its origin in a form of reflection, a predisposition for deep meditation...*The individual may avail himself of the many works of various schools dealing with spiritual life in order to deepen this capacity for meditation.* (1967:166) [my emphasis]

**References**


**Pictures**

[From: http://terebess.hu/english/oxherd.html]

**Terebess Asia Online (TAO)**

D. T. Suzuki: Manual of Zen Buddhism

The Ten Oxherding Pictures, I.

by Kaku-an
I

Searching for the Ox. The beast has never gone astray, and what is the use of searching for him? The reason why the oxherd is not on intimate terms with him is because the oxherd himself has violated his own inmost nature. The beast is lost, for the oxherd has himself been led out of the way through his deluding senses. His home is receding farther away from him, and byways and crossways are ever confused. Desire for gain and fear of loss burn like fire; ideas of right and wrong shoot up like a phalanx.

Alone in the wilderness, lost in the jungle, the boy is searching, searching! The swelling waters, the far-away mountains, and the unending path; Exhausted and in despair, he knows not where to go, He only hears the evening cicadas singing in the maple-woods.

II
Seeing the Traces. By the aid of the sutras and by inquiring into the doctrines, he has come to understand something, he has found the traces. He now knows that vessels, however varied, are all of gold, and that the objective world is a reflection of the Self. Yet, he is unable to distinguish what is good from what is not, his mind is still confused as to truth and falsehood. As he has not yet entered the gate, he is provisionally said to have noticed the traces.

By the stream and under the trees, scattered are the traces of the lost; The sweet-scented grasses are growing thick--did he find the way? However remote over the hills and far away the beast may wander, His nose reaches the heavens and none can conceal it.

III

Seeing the Ox. The boy finds the way by the sound he hears; he sees thereby into the origin of things, and all his senses are in harmonious order. In all his activities, it is manifestly present. It is like the salt in water and the glue in colour. [It is there though not distinguishable as an individual entity.] When the eye is properly directed, he will find that it is no other than himself,

On a yonder branch perches a nightingale cheerfully singing; The sun is warm, and a soothing breeze blows, on the bank the willows are green; The ox is there all by himself, nowhere is he to hide himself; The splendid head decorated with stately horns what painter can reproduce him?
IV

*Catching the Ox.* Long lost in the wilderness, the boy has at last found the ox and his hands are on him. But, owing to the overwhelming pressure of the outside world, the ox is hard to keep under control. He constantly longs for the old sweet-scented field. The wild nature is still unruly, and altogether refuses to be broken. If the oxherd wishes to see the ox completely in harmony with himself, he has surely to use the whip freely.

With the energy of his whole being, the boy has at last taken hold of the ox:
But how wild his will, how ungovernable his power!
At times he struts up a plateau,
When lo! he is lost again in a misty unpenetrable mountain-pass.
**Herding the Ox.** When a thought moves, another follows, and then another—an endless train of thoughts is thus awakened. Through enlightenment all this turns into truth; but falsehood asserts itself when confusion prevails. Things oppress us not because of an objective world, but because of a self-deceiving mind. Do not let the nose-string loose, hold it tight, and allow no vacillation.

The boy is not to separate himself with his whip and tether,  
Lest the animal should wander away into a world of defilements;  
When the ox is properly tended to, he will grow pure and docile;  
Without a chain, nothing binding, he will by himself follow the oxherd.

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**VI**

**Coming Home on the Ox's Back.** The struggle is over; the man is no more concerned with gain and loss. He hums a rustic tune of the woodman, he sings simple songs of the village-boy. Saddling himself on the ox's back, his eyes are fixed on things not of the earth, earthy. Even if he is called, he will not turn his head; however enticed he will no more be kept back.

Riding on the animal, he leisurely wends his way home:  
Enveloped in the evening mist, how tunefully the flute vanishes away!  
Singing a ditty, beating time, his heart is filled with a joy indescribable!  
That he is now one of those who know, need it be told?
VII

*The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone.* The dharmas are one and the ox is symbolic. When you know that what you need is not the snare or set-net but the hare or fish, it is like gold separated from the dross, it is like the moon rising out of the clouds. The one ray of light serene and penetrating shines even before days of creation.

Riding on the animal, he is at last back in his home,
Where lo! the ox is no more; the man alone sits serenely.
Though the red sun is high up in the sky, he is still quietly dreaming,
Under a straw-thatched roof are his whip and rope idly lying.

VIII

*The Ox and the Man Both Gone out of Sight.*[1] All confusion is set aside, and serenity alone prevails; even the idea of holiness does not obtain. He does not linger about where the Buddha is,
and as to where there is no Buddha he speedily passes by. When there exists no form of dualism, even a thousand-eyed one fails to detect a loop-hole. A holiness before which birds offer flowers is but a farce.

All is empty—the whip, the rope, the man, and the ox:
Who can ever survey the vastness of heaven?
Over the furnace burning ablaze, not a flake of snow can fall:
When this state of things obtains, manifest is the spirit of the ancient master.

IX

_Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source._ From the very beginning, pure and immaculate, the man has never been affected by defilement. He watches the growth of things, while himself abiding in the immovable serenity of nonassertion. He does not identify himself with the maya-like transformations [that are going on about him], nor has he any use of himself [which is artificiality]. The waters are blue, the mountains are green; sitting alone, he observes things undergoing changes.

[1. It will be interesting to note what a mystic philosopher has to say about this: "A man shall become truly poor and as free from his creature will as he was when he was born. And I say to you, by the eternal truth, that as long as ye desire to fulfil the will of God, and have any desire after eternity and God; so long are ye not truly poor. He alone hath true spiritual poverty who wills nothing, knows nothing, desires nothing."—(From Eckhart as quoted by Inge in _Light, Life, and Love._)]

To return to the Origin, to be back at the Source—already a false step this!
Far better it is to stay at home, blind and deaf, and without much ado;
Sitting in the hut, he takes no cognisance of things outside,
Behold the streams flowing—whither nobody knows; and the flowers vividly red—for whom are they?
Entering the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands. His thatched cottage gate is closed, and even the wisest know him not. No glimpses of his inner life are to be caught; for he goes on his own way without following the steps of the ancient sages. Carrying a gourd [1] he goes out into the market, leaning against a staff [2] he comes home. He is found in company with wine-bibbers and butchers, he and they are all converted into Buddhas.

Bare-chested and bare-footed, he comes out into the market-place; Daubed with mud and ashes, how broadly he smiles! There is no need for the miraculous power of the gods, For he touches, and lo! the dead trees are in full bloom.

[1.] Symbol of emptiness (*sunyata*).  
[2.] No extra property he has, for he knows that the desire to possess is the curse of human.
Paper 4). Elizabeth Robinson:

Could the Application of TDP Psychotherapy Have prevented the Suicide of Sylvia Plath?

This paper will examine the psychotherapeutic problems related to the American poet Sylvia Plath. Her suicide at the age of 30 confirms Dabrowski's claims regarding the dangers of a protracted stage of unilevel disintegration. Reference to Plath's one-sided development during her early years, and her love relationship and marriage with the British poet-laureate Ted Hughes, will illustrate how the lack of developmental dynamisms can mar human relationships. A study of Plath's life and writing reveals that her mental turmoil stemmed from her inability to experience inner psychic transformation and a rise to higher levels of development. The paper will attempt to answer the question: Could TPD counselling have helped her to avoid suicide?
THE TRAGIC LIFE OF SYLVIA PLATH: A CASE OF ONE-SIDED DEVELOPMENT.

By Elizabeth Robinson, M.A.

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More has been published about Sylvia Plath than about any other twentieth century American poet. The story of her life and tragic death have fascinated the public for over four decades, provoking the question: why did such a brilliant young poet kill herself at a time when she was producing her greatest poems? The answer, I believe, can be found in a psychological study of her development from the perspective of Positive Disintegration.

In Mental Growth, Hypothesis 8, page 149, Dabrowski said that the one-sided development of certain exceptionally talented people is typical of unilevel disintegration, characterized by lack of self-awareness, lack of self-control and the failure to develop an inner psychic milieu. Dabrowski could have been talking about Sylvia Plath when he shows how prolonged states of unilevel disintegration can lead to suicidal tendencies and a drama without exit.

To understand the one-sided development of a person like Sylvia Plath, it is crucial to examine Dabrowski’s description of the over excitabilities: the intellectual, theimaginational, the emotional, the sensual and the psychomotor.

In Plath’s case, the two most powerful over excitabilities were the intellectual and the imaginative. Intellectually she thirsted for knowledge and was strongly analytical and logical in her approach. This was combined with a vivid imagination and a rich association of images and impressions, expressed brilliantly through her use of metaphor and original use of language.
Unfortunately Plath’s very high intellectual andimaginational over-excitabilities were not combined with the most developmental excitability of all: the emotional one, expressed in the gradual appearance of such developmental dynamisms as astonishment with oneself, feelings of inferiority towards the self, and feelings of shame and guilt. Dabrowski believed that emotional over excitability is at the foundation of a person’s relation to the self. It entails a deep sense of responsibility, compassion and responsiveness to others and to the world at large.

Although Plath was frequently in a state of mental excitation and tension, she did not experience emotional excitability in the Dabrowskian sense. Although she felt dissatisfaction, guilt and shame for not achieving sufficient fame and recognition, these feelings were not at the service of reaching higher levels of development. Her approach to life was subjective and was overly influenced by her concern about how others judged her. True emotional development is only possible when a higher understanding of life is reached, and it springs from empathy, understanding, caring for others and reaching out beyond the self. Plath remained at the second stage of development until the end of her life: that of unilevel disintegration. We notice here symptoms of ambivalence and ambitendencies, inner conflicts with the environment, lack of any clear mental transformation, and the presence of many wills, or disposing and directing centers.

Plath’s Journals abound with examples of depression, anxiety and panic. As a student at Smith she wrote in February, 1956: “I long to escape from the terrifying, hellish weight of self-responsibility and ultimate self-judgment...How can I ever find that permanence, that continuity with past and future, that communication with other human beings that I crave? ...I do not know who I am, where I am going...I long for a noble escape from freedom...”

At the same time Plath was haunted by feelings of humiliation at not reaching the high levels that she felt others demanded of her: her dead father, her mother, her benefactress, Olive
Higgins Prouty, her teachers and professors. But these feelings were not dynamisms which would lead her to the third level of development; they were the result of her own obsession for fame and achievement, fuelled by the expectations of her environment. She clearly needed a Dabrowskian type of therapy.

Dabrowski advises that therapy at unilevel disintegration must begin by identifying the kind of disintegration involved. Is the anxiety altero-centric (anxiety about living up to one’s autonomous hierarchy of values)? If so, the individual may be close to reaching the third level, where self-shaping and inner psychic transformation could take place. But Plath’s anxiety stemmed largely from her concern to achieve, and was therefore egocentric in nature.

Dabrowski warns that a person with “excessive psychic sensitivity” must find ways of directing this sensitivity upwards, to higher levels, and eventually towards inner mental transformation.

How could this have been done in the case of Sylvia Plath?

Dabrowskian psychotherapy would have been geared towards stimulating the development of her awareness and self-control. For example, at the age of twenty-one, Plath was disgusted at the hype and commercialism of her magazine experience as a student editor in New York, and suffered deep depression. This dynamism could be used for initiating discussion about her attitude towards values of a higher and lower level. Her outrage at the electrocution of the Rosenbergs for spying could have initiated a discussion about the dynamism of “what is” as opposed to “what ought to be.” Her attitude to these two events could be used therapeutically to show Plath that her moral awareness could lead her to a higher level of development. But instead of a Dabrowskian type of therapy, she was subjected to brutal and misapplied electro-convulsive treatment, along with strong antidepressants which further increased her turmoil and depression.
and led to such terror of further treatment that she attempted suicide in 1953 when she was twenty-one. Plath’s signs of emotional and moral development had been ignored by the therapists who were hired to help her, and instead they tried without success to return her to what they considered normal functioning, that of primary integration.

In Dabrowskian terms Plath had not attained a hierarchy of values. She had not reflected on why she worked so hard, took on so many college functions, or why she felt such a failure if one of her poems were rejected. The attempt to inculcate in her a hierarchy of values could have included a reduction in her over-riding ambition, and redirecting more effort to create friendships, more interest in the outside world, and greater concern for her own health through relaxation and outdoor activities, and the development of empathy for others.

A TPD therapist would be attentive to any signs of sympathy Plath showed to others, and would try to awaken genuine empathy in her, a necessary step to reduce her self-absorption in her own achievement and fame. An example of germinal empathy occurred in 1956 on her honeymoon in Spain, when Plath expressed horror at bullfighting in a poem she wrote after witnessing five bullfights with Hughes. Her poem, *The Goring*, expresses her distress, while Hughes enthused over the Spanish ritual of blood and sacrifice.

A fragment from her poem, *The Beggars*, inspired in Spain, could be a point of departure for discussing her pity for the poor and dispossessed.

*By lack and loss these beggars encroach*

*On spirits tenderer than theirs.*

*The beggars*

*Outlast their evilest star, wryly*

*And with a peridious verve*

*Baffle the dark, the pitying eye.*
Examples like these from her poetry, her Journal and her novel, The Bell Jar, showed that although Plath’s dominant overexcitabilities were intellectual and imaginational, the sympathy she showed for the suffering of others could have been used in therapy to encourage her to direct her creative talent to reach higher levels of integration, rather than focusing so obsessively on the importance of publication and public success.

Another approach towards inner psychic transformation might have been to stimulate the idea of auto-psychotherapy with the aim of reducing her excessive concentration on herself and her own achievements. For example, encourage her to examine why she was thrown into a state of near suicide because she was refused a place in a Harvard writers’ workshop. Why was rejection so hard to bear? Gently get her to become aware of other more positive ways of reacting to rejection and disappointment.

Plath could have been encouraged to use her enormous poetic and literary talent to create more self-awareness of such values as truth, beauty, justice, responsibility, caring for others and the world at large.

By acknowledging Plath’s high intelligence and her ability for logical analysis, a slow transition to the third level, that of multi-level disintegration, could be prepared to assist her in developing the germs of auto-psychotherapy and the education of the self. It would be essential to help her to realize that there are lower and higher levels of thinking, and that with her intellectual ability she would be capable of the kind of auto-education which would dispel many of her low-level anxieties.

Plath needed help in overcoming her unexamined ambition. Her drive to succeed at all costs was so intense that it produced many psychosomatic illnesses that plagued her throughout her life: recurrent depressions, anxiety, insomnia, stomach cramps, fever, repeated colds, etc.
The answer lay in persuading her gently to restructure and ennoble her ambition. Other interests could have been suggested at an earlier age, such as her love of drawing and her ability as an artist and illustrator. Her rather low psychomotor over excitability might have been used to encourage healthy outdoor activities and sports to counteract her almost exclusive intellectual and imaginational drives. Her emotional development could have been increased by persuading her to be friendlier and open to others by taking a genuine interest in their lives, instead of being so concerned with the impression she made on people. Studying the lives of exceptional women as role models, or working in third world countries between Smith and Cambridge, would help her to enlarge her vision of her place in the world.

Plath’s conventional upbringing and the strongly patriarchal attitude of the 1950’s and early sixties also played a strong role in inhibiting Plath’s authentic development. In an era when a Democratic presidential candidate, Adlai Stevenson, publicly declared that the brilliant Smith graduates could find true self-fulfillment only in marriage and motherhood, Plath, like many women, agonized how she could combine her creative ambition with being “just a housewife.” Her meeting at Cambridge University in England with Ted Hughes, later to become the British Poet Laureate, seemed to her the perfect answer. Tall, darkly handsome, rebellious and a brilliant poet, Plath saw Hughes almost as a trophy to be added to her already impressive list of achievements. If she had sought the advice of a wise friend or counselor, she would have realized how inconsistent she was being. Fragments from her poem Pursuit, written shortly after they met express her fear and ambivalence about him. It begins:

*There is a panther stalks me down:*
*One day I’ll have my death of him;*
*The hunt is on, and sprung the trap.*
“Phrases such as “One day I’ll have my death of him” could be interpreted as Plath’s premonition that the relationship could end in disaster; while “compels a total sacrifice” could be seen as a warning bell that at unilevel disintegration people can make decisions which are self-destructive. The Bluebeard ending of fleeing from her tormenter, “I shut my doors on that dark guilt, I bolt the door, each door I bolt...” points to Plath’s initial terror of involvement with Hughes. Yet at the same time the whole poem rings with a kind of masochistic excitement.

This remarkable poem, expresses the ambivalence, fear and recklessness typical of the Second Level of development. Dabrowski warns in Mental Growth that at this level (unilevel disintegration) a person is in a state of disequilibrium, ambivalence, and “rapidly changing states of joy and sadness, excitement and depression and a minimal degree of consciousness and self-consciousness and self-control.” In Developmental Psychotherapy, an unpublished work, he cautions that those at unilevel disintegration “should avoid excessively strong experiences of ultimate, unrepeatable and exclusive ties and loyalties.” Obviously Plath was not yet stable enough to contemplate marriage, particularly to a man like Hughes. Instead of leaping into the abyss and marrying a man whose fidelity and commitment might be questionable, she needed a wise therapist to counsel her. At this stage, more than any other, it was crucial to help Plath to embark on a process of inner psychic transformation that would lead her to the “third factor” and a state of autonomy and authentism. (Page 165 Mental Growth.)

Although their first two years of their six-year marriage were exciting and conducive to writing poetry of high quality, neither Plath nor Hughes had reached the third level where some form of inner psychic transformation could take place. Dabrowski mentions that individuals at the second level of development often exhibit rash behavior and recklessness. Plath’s obsession to succeed, combined with the current indoctrination that marriage was the only solution for
women, led to a dangerous state of mental conflict, typical of many creative and ambitious women in the 1950’s.

During the couple’s stay in America (1957-9), Plath attended a Robert Lowell poetry workshop in Boston. She was so devastated by having her poetry rejected for publication while another poet, Anne Sexton, succeeded, that she collapsed into a deep depression.

On October 13th, 1959, she wrote in her Journal:

“Very depressed today. Unable to write a thing. Menacing gods. I feel outcast on a cold star, unable to feel anything but an awful helpless numbness...I feel apart, enclosed in a wall of glass.”

Again, Plath needed to be made aware that rejection was part of life, and not allow herself to become devastated by it.

Hughes, who never compared himself to contemporary poets, always took rejections in his stride, and he found it impossible to console Plath. And so began the irritations and resentments which soon flared up into jealousy and possessiveness when Plath saw how popular Hughes was with his women students.

In June 1958, after teaching for a year at Smith College, Plath wrote:

“I have been, and am battling depression. It is as if my life were magically run by two electric currents: joyous positive and despairing negative – which ever is running at the moment dominates my life, floods it.”

A sense of panic pervades her, and panic will now become one of the main driving forces of her life.

“I lie awake at night, exhausted with that sense of razor-shaved nerves. I must be my own doctor. I must cure this very destructive paralysis and ruinous brooding and day dreaming.”

Plath decided that her mental state could only be improved if she became pregnant. Before she made this decision she needed counseling, but certainly not the kind she received
from the Freudian therapist in Boston who blamed Plath’s parents for her problems and told
Plath that it was legitimate to hate her mother. Contrary to this Freudian approach, Plath’s
turbulence and mental turmoil at unilevel disintegration would have warned a TPD therapist that
having a baby at this stage would be a stressful challenge that would conflict with her unfulfilled
ambition and obsessive creative drive. As Dabrowski points out in Developmental
Psychotherapy, too much challenge for those with delicate mental structures can lead to the
patient being overwhelmed by anxiety, anguish and panic. He advocated periods of regression,
“away from excessive concentration on the self.”

Back in London, in a small flat, Plath gave birth to a daughter, Frieda in 1960. Hughes
was helpful in taking care of their child but Plath began to have jealous premonitions about
Hughes’s infidelity. Shortly after their move to Court Green in Devonshire, a phone call from a
BBC woman producer to Hughes, and his meeting with her, produced such fear and anxiety in
Plath that she tore in shreds all his work in progress: plays, poems and ideas for novels.

During this period, Plath continued to send ecstatic reports to her mother, about her
wonderful marriage, although in her journals she conveys the opposite. Hughes was not
enthusiastic about having another child, and after the birth of her second baby, Nicholas,
combined with Plath’s insomnia and resentment against Hughes’s frequent publications and her
own rejections, their relationship began to fall apart. Here again, both Plath and Hughes should
have been aware of the dangers and together sought guidance. Neither of them exhibited realistic
judgment about their situation, and both lacked wisdom in dealing with the strains and
responsibilities of marriage. Plath was possessed by depressions, insomnia and thoughts of death.

In Insomniac she compares her obsession to: “A bonewhite light, like death behind all
things.” (May 1961.)
In *Last Words*, Plath envisions herself in her own coffin.

*I do not want a plain box, I want a sarcophagus  
With tigery stripes, and a face on it  
Round as the moon, to stare up.* (Oct. 1961.)

Despite the strains of their marriage, Plath and Hughes developed strong friendships with many other poets and intellectuals. Assia Wevill, and her husband, the poet David Wevill, visited the couple’s home, Court Green, in June, 1962. At first Plath admired Assia Wevill for her intelligence, flair and beauty, but she soon realized that Wevill was an imminent threat when Hughes precipitously fell in love with her.

In an uncontrollable rage after Assia tried to phone Hughes by assuming the voice of a man, Plath tore the phone from the wall, and in front of her mother she carted all Hughes’s papers from his study and burnt them in the garden in a kind of ritual funeral pyre.

Now Plath began to use her poetic genius to write poems expressing her distrust and sense of betrayal.

In *Words Heard by Accident Over the Phone* she exclaims: “*O mud, mud how fluid. Thick as foreign coffee, and with a sluggish pulse. Speak, speak! Who is it?*”

As Hughes’s affair with Assia Wevill continued to force the couple apart, Plath’s feelings of betrayal unshackled her into writing poetry which suggests a germinal sense of authenticity and the chance of freedom. One of her Bee Poems, *Stings* claims:

*Have a self to recover, a queen,  
Is she dead, is she sleeping?  
Where has she been,  
With her lion-red body, her wings of glass?*

In *The Applicant* she lambastes patriarchal marriage where a woman becomes like a doll.
“It can sew, it can cook.” Plath begins to cover up her heartbreak in angry caricature which, after her suicide, made her the icon of the burgeoning Woman’s Movement.

But it was the poems *Daddy* and *Lady Lazarus* which unleashed her anger against the patriarchal behavior of men. In *Daddy* Plath merges her frustration against both her father and Hughes, showing them as symbols of a Nazi type oppression of her female self. Although the behavior of both her father and Hughes were not remotely akin to the horrors of Nazism, this poem struck like a bolt of lightening into the consciousness of a generation of women. It raised their awareness of their subjugation and suppression in a world which told them that their only meaningful role in life was a domestic one.

Fragments from the notoriously famous poem, *Daddy*, shows a harshly authentic voice, with lines such as:

> “Daddy, I have had to kill you,” and “Every woman adores a Fascist, The boot in the face... Brute heart of a brute like you.....”

Her portrayal of Hughes as: “A man in black with a Meinkampf look...And a love of the rack and the screw” symbolize Plath’s feelings of subjugation.

One of Plath’s most famous poems, *Lady Lazarus*, written three months before her death, evokes again the horrific world of the Nazi concentration camp, calling to mind both her experience of electrocution, and attempted suicide, and also her hostility towards patriarchalism. She creates the atmosphere of a fairground for “the peanut crunching crowd” where she declares:

> “Dying is an art, like everything else. I do it exceptionally well. I do it so it feels like hell.”

It ends: “Beware, beware. Out of the ash I rise with my red hair, And I eat men like air.”
Tragically, Plath killed herself shortly before the tidal wave of the Women’s Liberation Movement could offer her the support of feminist writers like Germaine Greer (*The Female Eunuch*) and Betty Friedan (*The Feminine Mystique*). However, after her suicide, it was Plath herself who became the main icon of the Women’s Movement. Since her death her poetry, Journals and her novel, *The Bell Jar* have sold in millions of copies. Sadly, she only found the fame that she craved after her death, receiving the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry twenty years after her suicide.

Hughes’s neglect of Plath when she most needed him has often been blamed for her death. But, although his behavior appears to have been callous and devoid of empathy, it is doubtful that he was the main cause of her suicide. Both Plath and Hughes seesawed for months between the possibilities of reconciliation, separation and divorce.

Some critics blame the antidepressants Plath took on her return alone to her London flat, while others give a Freudian explanation by blaming Plath’s parents for her mental turmoil.

Although these opinions cannot be entirely disregarded, we must look to Dabrowski for a more adequate explanation. Sylvia Plath failed to undergo inner psychic transformation, involving critical reflection, introspection, retrospection and prospection. She was unable to benefit from the third factor, the dynamism of the autonomy of the individual, and to deal with the ups and downs of life in an authentic manner. As a victim of her forceful instinct to achieve at all costs, Plath was trapped by her refusal to accept failure of any kind, including the failure of her marriage.

Rather than taking her own life, Plath had many other options, including returning to the States with her children, or beginning a new life alone as a respected poet and writer in London.
Tragically, she never received the type of therapy that would have enabled her to think of alternatives beyond suicide. She was entrenched at the second level of development, that of unilevel disintegration, and never reached the third level of development at which inner psychic transformation and autonomy could take place. With wise counseling at crucial times of her life and an understanding therapist to guide her through the Scylla and Charybdis of her mental turmoil, there is a strong chance that Sylvia Plath could have attained the self-awareness and self-control that would have excluded suicide as an option.

Dabrowski emphasizes that highly creative people who are blocked at unilevel disintegration are vulnerable, fragile and breakable. This proved to be true in the case of Sylvia Plath who committed suicide on February 11th, 1963, leaving behind two motherless children.

One can only grieve at her loss, and the pain experienced by her loved ones. Those who love her poetry speculate sadly what great heights her poetic genius might have reached if only a Dabrowskian type of psychotherapy had been available to her at that time.

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[Handout for E. Robinson Presentation]

INFORMATION SHEET – SYLVIA PLATH

Parents: Otto Plath, Professor of Etymology, Aurelia Plath, High School Teacher. The death of her father when she was eight caused deep distress.
Won College Board award in summer of 1953 when she was 21. Worked as student editor on Mademoiselle magazine, New York. Disillusioned by the triviality of the experience, she fell into depression and emotional turmoil. Harvard’s rejection of her to its writing program led to further depression and panic about her future as a writer – reactions of doubt, anxiety, insomnia. Her autobiographical novel, The Bell Jar, published in 1963 just after her death, recalls Plath’s dilemma during her 1953 experience at Mademoiselle, and provides valuable insights into her mental state at the time of her first suicide attempt.
Plath’s mother arranged for electro convulsive shock treatment through their family doctor who hoped to alleviate Plath’s depression, but the treatment further increased her mental distress and depression. Plath attempted to commit suicide by overdosing on sleeping pills. After hospitalization and convalescence, she returned to Smith in 1954, and completed her degree with highest honors.
In 1955 she won a Fulbright Scholarship to Cambridge, England, where she met Ted Hughes, her future husband and future Poet-Laureate. During their honeymoon in Spain in
1965, differences in outlook and values emerged. Yet in the first two years of marriage, they established a remarkable creative relationship. Plath marketed Hughes’s now famous Hawk in the Rain and she wrote many poems which resulted in the publication of her collection, Colussus (which gained the Pulitzer prize for poetry after her death.)

In 1957 the couple sailed for America where Plath taught unhappily at Smith. Bouts of panic led to writers’ block and severe depression as her Journals reveal. Typical of many creative wives at that time, she took menial jobs to support the couple. She began to resent her husband’s poetic success, and his flirtation with other women.

Their daughter, Frieda was born in April 1960. Although Plath was a caring mother, she was overcome by the stress of combining child care and poetry. She became ill and suffered a miscarriage. Her second child, Nicholas, was born in January, 1962. Plath’s poetry, Journals and other writing express great ambivalence about trying to combine her poetic ambitions with the role of wife and mother. The couple’s move to an isolated old manor house, Court Green, in Devonshire, alienated Plath and led to further depression and anxiety, based on her thwarted ambition to achieve fame as a poet. In 1962, Hughes’s affair with Assia Wevill profoundly enraged and shocked Sylvia Plath. The “confessional” nature of her poetry at this time reveals her feelings of betrayal, loss and fury. Unable to forgive her husband she told him to leave Court Green. She moved alone to London with her two small children and rented a flat formally occupied by the poet, Yeats. Struggling against London’s coldest winter for two centuries, the illnesses of herself and her children, she rose daily at 4 a.m. and unleashed the intense and powerful poetry which would lead to fame after her death. On February 11th, 1963, Sylvia Plath committed suicide at the age of thirty.
Paper 5). Norbert Duda:

How Inter and Intra-Neurotic Levels of Psychoneurosis and Psychosis Reflect Developmental Levels and Developmental Potential.

How to use the list of diagnoses to show the patients where they may be in the process i.e., level of development of human development, according to the Theory of Positive Disintegration and how their diagnosis is defined and what over excitability they have available. As well a look at what addictions may be holding them back (seven capital drives) and what work lies ahead.
HOW INTER & INTER NEUROTIC LEVELS OF
PSYCHONEUROSIS AND PSYCHOSIS REFLECT
DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS AND DEVELOPMENTAL
POTENTIAL

NORBERT J. DUDA, PH.D.

THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE INSTITUTE FOR POSITIVE
DISINTEGRATION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:

JUNE 24-26, 2004

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA
The DSM-IV-TR (DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL
DISORDERS, FOURTH EDITION, TEXT REVISION) lists and categorizes mental illnesses. Dr. Dabrowski's great contribution to these lists, is that he helps us to see, which of these conditions stay the same, which ones are a passing phase on the stairway to mental health, and which ones are further along the road less traveled. I like to use the term developmental-psychopathology, to describe how he saw the potential for development when others saw sickness, hopelessness, and someone needing medication.

His theory allows us to see the developmental potential of each person we work with, and it allows us to reinterpret or redefine what is happening, as an old model of yourself is being transformed by you into a new version of yourself.

When we were very little we were programmed by two great forces over which we had no control at all. They were biological forces and environmental forces, nature and nurturing. And we all received that primary formation.

Some people accepted their primary formation and lived their whole life according to their primary formation. Some people were dominated by their biological urges and were dragged along following their impulses like a charioteer with 5 horses on a rampage. Other people lived their whole life doing what society told them to do, robots following orders, from the government, from their employers, from the church, from their family, from advertisers on the radio, television or the daily paper, and from their friends.
Other people were in conflict with these dictates coming from their bodily urges or from outside social pressures, and they were looking for something better. They were dissatisfied with themselves and their response to their condition and situation. This inner conflict was the beginning of their disintegration leading to a new, remodeled version of themselves.

This whole process of developmental potential, developmental levels and inter & intra neurotic levels of psychoneurosis and psychosis is what we will deal with today in this paper. We will learn how to use certain forms:

Beginning with INFORMATION FOR YOUR PHYSICIAN,
then how to use the list of INTER AND INTRA NEUROTIC LEVELS OF PSYCHONEUROSES AND PSYCHOSES to situate the level of their development; how to share with the client the definition of their diagnosis;
how to question the patient about FORMS AND EXPRESSIONS OF PSYCHIC OVEREXCITABILITY that reflect their own endowment.;
how to locate the patient on the flow chart THEORY OF POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION: A THEORETICAL PATTERN OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF DYNAMISMS AT EACH LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT so that they will know what to expect in their own process;
acquaint them with the THERAPY TASK CHECKLIST and their three time zones; Past, Present & the Future; their three factors: Heredity-nature, Environment learning, Choice-self-determination; homework assignments and the importance of writing their future script in the present tense, with only positive statements, & repeating it at least three times daily;
and their final task the OEQ: ITEMS OF THE OVEREXCITABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE.
And those of you who are psychiatrists or psychologists can use the *NEUROLOGICAL QUESTIONNAIRE, THE RORSCHACH TEST, WAIS-R III, THE LUSCHER COLOR TEST, AND PROJECTIVE DRAWINGS (MEDTS)*. Papers given at previous congresses explain some of these test applications.

Before I start to explain these attached papers, I would like to acknowledge the genius of Dr. Kazimierz Dabrowski in seeing the developmental nature of personality growth. He demonstrated that what others saw as a tragedy and illness, he saw as the disintegration of our primary formation and as a necessary step to reforming ourselves, shaping our own personality, in our own way, through our own choices and with our new values; to create anew and better version of ourselves, in order to know, to love and to serve each other in a healthier way. We are all in the act of defining ourselves right now, in the present moment, by coming to this conference. By making choices, the process of creation takes place. Your thoughts, your words & your deeds contribute to creating who you are.

Now to the handouts, unnumbered 8 pages:

1. INFORMATION FOR YOUR PHYSICIAN This is a form that I have been using for years. There are over a 100 questions. I have modified the form as needed. It will give you a good view of the elements that went into the primary formation stage,

2. INTER- AND INTEA- NEUROTIC LEVELS OF PSYCHONEUROSES AND PSYCHOSES. This list is taken from Professor Dabrowski's book, *Psychoneurosis is not an illness*. Not only does it rank these diagnosis, but it lets you know what stage of personality
development is reflected. Someone with a psychoneurosis is further along the path of development, than someone with a neurosis, and someone with a psychosis. Many patients know their diagnosis, and when they look at this chart and find out how they are placed they are relieved and understand what lies ahead.

3. & 4. DEFINITIONS OF PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSIS THAT REFLECT DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS.

5. FORMS AND EXPRESSIONS OF PSYCHIC OVEREXCITABILITY. Once this list is shown to the patient they are able to recognize themselves and they rapidly identify which of the 5 OEs they have, which is followed by a great sigh of relief and a soothing calm relaxed moment of restful understanding.

6. A THEORETICAL PATTERN OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF DYNAMISMS AT EACH LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO THE THEORY OF POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION. Once the patient is shown this flow chart and the dynamisms are explained, they know exactly where they are situated. And they know what lies ahead to attain their personality goals.

7. THERAPY TASK CHECKLIST. Each appropriate client is given this checklist on the first visit and some type of homework is assigned. Once it is reviewed with the client, the process continues. It is amazing how quickly people who were on medication can begin to work with their feelings and face their past, present and plan their future. I used this theory in the crises
intervention unit of a mental health center for over 13 years and the results were amazing, and we reduced hospitalizations about 90%. The key note with suicidal patients was that they were trying to kill their old self, their old programming, and now they could have hope to build their new self with new programming. Hypnosis is also a wonderful tool to free the person from past trauma and to help with embedding their own future program or script.

8. OEQ, ITEMS OF THE OVEREXCITABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE. This is a useful instrument to substantiate the presence of the OES and their level of intensity. This also will establish the developmental potential.

I hope by sharing this with other clinicians, we can help promote this wonderful theory in the world of clinical psychology just as it was spread through the world of the gifted.

Thank you.

[Please see the pdf file of the handouts: NDuda.pdf. This file contains 9 pages as in addition to the eight mentioned above, Norbert handed out a ninth page as well.]
Paper 6). Marjorie Battaglia:

A Journey Through Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms by Kazimierz Dabrowski

Intended as a sequel to Existential Thoughts and Aphorisms, (Cienin, 1972) Dabrowski wrote Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p. 12). From the depth of the collection, the reader can infer that Dabrowski spent many hours each day in meditation-accompanied writing. I intent to take the audience on a journey through this very precious, unpublished, almost unknown document.
Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms

Kazimierz Dabrowski (n.d. circa 1978)

A paper presented by Marjorie M. Battaglia, Ph.D.

While conducting my doctoral research, I came upon the unpublished manuscript, Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms, by Kazimierz Dabrowski in the Dabrowski file of the National Archives of Canada (MG30 B88). Bearing no date, the typewritten document, annotated with Dabrowski’s handwritten corrections, references Dabrowski’s published work, Existential Thoughts and Aphorisms (Cienin, 1972) (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p.12). It seems that Dabrowski wrote this manuscript in the last years of his life (circa 1978). My thought is that Dabrowski may have intended the one hundred thirty-one page Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms, to accompany and supplement Existential Thoughts and Aphorisms.

Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms is a very powerful and a very personal collection of fifty-three short essays, written in aphorism style. The reader has the opportunity to glimpse Dabrowski struggling with deep philosophical and spiritual concepts, core to the theory of positive disintegration. One gets the sense that Confessions of Faith, was written during the course of Dabrowski’s meditations. Using a dialectical approach, Dabrowski wrestles with the problems of essence vs. existence; a loving vs. an autocratic God; the intellectual vs. the emotive; to name but a few. The reader becomes privy to Dabrowski’s inner thoughts and reflections. Feelings and emotions expressed by Dabrowski, center about the themes of suffering, friendship, and love. The work is so sincerely expressed that I was moved to tears as I read it for the first time in the National Archives of Canada.
True to his use of the word “confession,” Dabrowski empties his soul with a message for the reader. He emphasizes the chaos, torture, and suffering which result when individuals fail to live together in harmony. In many references to Nazi and Stalin oppression, Dabrowski expresses how individuals can cease to be true human being, choosing rather to be inhumane to fellow inhabitants of the planet. Delving into the spiritual, Dabrowski explores his relationship with God in Confessions of Faith. Given the choice of an autocratic vs. a loving God, Dabrowski expresses his belief that God is a loving one. Central to his decision is Dabrowski’s conviction that God endows humankind with a free will. Man can use this lovingly dispensed freedom to work towards his/her own perfection while assuming responsibility for himself and for the welfare of others. Dabrowski sees the fulfillment of God’s love in Christ. “There is only one hope – Christ” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p.4). To Dabrowski, Christ is the actual, “experiential” personification of the “individualized love” of God (p.4). Dabrowski points to the fact that Christ is not simply an intellectual concept. He is the divine God taking upon Himself humanity, complete with all the emotions and sufferings inherent in the human condition. Dabrowski illustrates in Confessions, Christ’s close ties to other human beings – to “Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, John, and – even - to the thief on the cross” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p. 4). While in the world, humankind “longs for a renewal of our ties with Christ” (p.4). “We do not understand the benevolence of God – except for Christ” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p. 111).

As in other of his works, Dabrowski emphasizes the value and necessity of suffering. He sees it as expiation for wrongdoing. Dabrowski views crisis and suffering as essential to the developmental process. Without the “gift” of crisis, individuals lack the impetus to embrace development.
Perhaps frequent experiences of the dangers of death, illness, personal misfortune, could release something honest in man, and lessen the needs of psychic “squashing,” rendering others helpless, . . . scoffing at everything that is truly human and authentic” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p.23).

Three of the most beautiful and moving chapters in Confessions of Faith, are dedicated to the themes of friendship and love. Empathy takes center-stage, as Dabrowski heralds its prominence in the developmental process. Dabrowski underscores the deep value of loyal friendship. He devotes an entire chapter to the friendship theme, entitling it, “Loneliness is better than disloyal friendship” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, chapter LI, p.126).

“But one can rarely be entirely alone in life, for often in such circumstances man becomes inhuman . . . And perhaps that greatest loneliness of dying, of leaving, can be interrupted by the approach of somebody closest, of a friend in that moment . . . What sort of immortality would it be without love and without friendship” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, pp. 124, 125).

In spite of the emptiness, agony and pain loneliness can impart, Dabrowski finds the presence of friendlessness superior to disloyal friendship. Perhaps because of Dabrowski’s personal experiences with friends who proved not to be loyal, he tended to keep to himself, being very careful and somewhat reticent about forming friendships (Battaglia, 2002).

The frequency with which the theme of friendship runs through Dabrowski’s works has impressed me. Whatever experiences Dabrowski experienced in the relationships with his friends, must have affected him deeply. I believe that we are witnessing Dabrowski in Erikson’s eighth stage of development. It seems Dabrowski is conducting a life review, and friendship plays a very significant role.
The final chapter of Confessions is entitled, “A Little Bit More About Love” (p. 130). Dabrowski begins by re-emphasizing the levels within the cognitive, emotive state of love - from that of physiological release, to permanence, responsibility, exclusivity, and authenticity. (p.130).

Dabrowski emphasizes it is our manifestation of love that defines our humanity. Human love (empathy) is the answer to Dabrowski’s lifelong question of what it is that renders an individual as a true human being. Dabrowski gives the cognitive, emotive state of human love (empathy) a spiritual dimension.

“There pushes its way here to the fore, an emotional memory of experiences lived through together and an actual, lasting, spiritual closeness. There acts here the ideal of uniqueness of the bond and the feeling of essence in the realm of this emotion” (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p. 131 (final paragraph of the work)).

Conclusion

Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms is a very precious gift left to us by Kazimierz Dabrowski. His deep meditations and reflections result in a work which possesses deep spiritual depth. As the body of scholars who studies and preserves Dabrowski’s work, we have a responsibility to see that this work is published. What a tragedy to condemn this beautiful, very precious, meaningful work to lie buried in an archive, all but forgotten. Confessions belongs on the shelf of each of our libraries. Its message deserves to be preserved and shared.

Love

“I don’t know anything,
I don’t see anything.
I’m waiting patiently,
I’m waiting from afar with sobs.
I’m going enduringly.
I’m going through my will.
I’m struggling with my thoughts,
But I’m not capable of finding my way.
I’m waiting, existing; unconscious longing,
Oblivious to life and death.”

Reference List


Paper 7). Marlene Rankel:

Children and Non-Gifted Parents, Educators and Therapists: The Sacrifice of True Genius to False Pride

This paper will share the writer’s perception of the damage we have done, and continue to do, to children entrusted to our care, whether we are parents, educators, or therapists. The effects on authenticity of “training” versus “education” will be at the heart of the matter and will be enlivened by the contribution of individuals the writer considers to be persons of true genius.
Children and Non-Gifted Parents, Educators and Therapists:
The Sacrifice of True Genius to False Pride

Dr. Marlene Rankel
Dabrowski Congress
Calgary, Alberta, 2004

This paper is dedicated to Adrian Boudreau, age 13, all of whose knowledge is heartfelt.
Abstract

An attempt will be made in this paper to share with the reader the writer’s perception of the damage we have done, and continue to do, to children entrusted to our care, whether we are parents, educators or therapists. The effects on authenticity of “training” versus “education” will be at the heart of the matter, and will be enlivened by the contribution of individuals the writer considers to be persons of true genius.
Forward

“In the long course of history having people who understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine.” (J. William Fulbright)

And why not? We all seek those with who we find accord, looking for those who validate us and condone the behavior arising from our thoughts. We love those who love us because they love us. We gather those to us who are like us, who look like us, who dress like us – they make our reality more real, i.e. Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, sports uniforms, army uniforms. There is confirmation in conformity. This makes our reality more visible to ourselves, and, we believe, to others - safety in numbers.

With growth comes tolerance for other points of view, a tolerance which “allows” the existence of different others, but often depends on how different. Failure to tolerate differences, i.e. to see that another’s understanding of ones point of view does not necessarily mean agreement with you can, and often does, lead to an end of communication and can, at its worst, lead to war – between individuals, groups and countries.

To cherish differences is to move outside of the framework with which one thinks, and into the framework of an other. Only in this dimension can conflict resolution have an opportunity to move a situation towards peace.

Dr. Dabrowski did not like the idea of attaching names and numbers to stages of development, as this development, unless it is seriously deficient or damaged, is in dynamic interaction with the world and can be appreciated fully only in action and not in a static form.

Sadly, in the past, the levels have been used, even by those of us deeply involved in Dr. Dabrowski’s theory, as weapons in communications bordering on warfare. It is almost as if some individuals interested in the theory are striving for a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for the Theory of Positive Disintegration, surely a shift off the path Dr. Dabrowski had in mind.
For myself, the Theory of Positive Disintegration has given me more answers to questions, and then more questions to answer than any other theory.

For this, I remain ever grateful.

**Children: And Non-Gifted Parents, Educators and Therapists:**

**The Sacrifice of True Genius to False Pride**

Children and Non-Gifted Parents, Educators and Therapists

“Too much self-consciousness interferes with the development of consciousness.”

(Author unknown)

What does this mean? In simple terms it can be experienced as the ease with which one can climb a ladder until someone says, “watch your step”, at which point he is likely to bang his shin on the next rung.

Or, to run down a hall with many doors on either side. At some point, someone steps out of a door and you are quite able to dodge this person and avoid a collision. However, if prior to your run, someone says, “watch out – someone is going to step out of one of these doors”, you will likely find yourself with far less speed and agility.

You may have observed a child’s development subverted (defined by Funk & Wagnalls, as: to overthrow or destroy; to undermine the morals of; to corrupt) by non-gifted parents who, when the child displays a talent, cheer and shout as if at the Olympics, thus re-focusing the child’s inner drive to a desire for external applause and approval.

Are we interfering with our children’s natural development by writing their agenda for life and not standing back a bit, learning about them, understanding them and letting them get on with their own agenda, their unfolding of innate talent?

The answer for that, in the Western world at least, would seem to be “yes.” And what about the “gifted” child – to what extent, by our excessive focus on IQ (Intellectual Quotient) as
the measure of “genius”, are we damaging true developmental potential? We seem to have the canaries not only in cages, but also in the coalmines of our own unconscious selves as parents and educators.

When a child is born, we are overwhelmed by the miracle of life – in a state of rapture as we marvel at something we cannot fully comprehend. We love our child and “memorize” the child as we gaze endlessly, trying to understand how this “being” has come to be.

In North America, it is not too long before the sense of wonder evaporates and the child is measured for his or her “doing” – for example, mother’s groups, where babies are paraded and compared for achievements such as, “Mine has a tooth.” “Mine can roll over.” “Mine can sit up.”

What happens here? I have always felt that when we “fall” in love – as we do with our own babies, that we “fall up” and then we frequently precipitate out. Not that we don’t love our children, but we now love them in a less splendid fashion.

The rapture, the sheer joy of the child’s “being” at birth reflects a multilevel appreciation of the “other”, but often with the everydayness of life, we fall back into a unilevel appreciation of the child.

And what does this mean for the child? The absolute “measure” (which is not a measure at all) is replaced by a “relative” measure in which the child is constantly evaluated in relation to others.

Thus, we force on the child a self-consciousness that interferes with his/her own developmental potential and confines growth to the limits of our viewfinders.

It is as if we take our children out to eat at the best restaurant we can find, with the healthiest foods, which are “good for them” and talk endlessly about how good it is for them,
failing to realize we have not ordered the food yet, and the children are eating the menus, unaware there could be more.

Then we wonder later where the rebellion comes from, in the form of refusal to attend school, withdrawal, anorexia, drugs and alcohol, suicide and even homicide.

One of the saddest losses, to me, is the subversion of today’s “gifted” children, defined as such by a scale that measures IQ. In the progression from unconsciousness to consciousness, the self-consciousness that accompanies such a measure is even more likely to trap the “gifted child”, thrusting on him or her such powerful external expectations that the EQ (emotional quotient) is in great danger of being buried. With that, follows a return to a lower developmental level (as per Dr. Dabrowski) where the IQ is in the service of the self. This self may initially be saving itself from well-intended parents and educators, but may end up stagnant and emotionally lifeless.

Another child may end up in the office of a gifted therapist and reclaim the self, releasing the energy for authentic development.

Children with accelerated developmental potential will most likely survive the unwitting help of not-so-helpful adults and continue on, with EQ constantly feeding and balancing IQ. This last option will be comparatively rare.

So, what do we think we are doing, and what are we doing? – and how can we change?

Authenticity (Dr. Dabrowski) and the “True Self” (Dr. Winnicott)

While Dr. Dabrowski views authenticity as acquired by the individual’s struggle toward personality ideal, Dr. Winnicott sees it as there from the beginning; and often altered, buried by lack of “good enough handling” (Grolnick, 1990).
Both agree on an important issue – that the growing individual benefits, even must experience “reality”, must not be pampered endlessly and must face the fact that actions have consequences. Dr. Dabrowski was clear about this belief that parents should not be punitive, but also should not help the child avoid the natural consequences of his/her actions. Dr. Winnicott focused on the re-establishment of the “true self” – with therapy a repeat of the earliest stage in life – the mothers’ handling of her baby. Once the child is secure, is his “true self”, he too must deal with the reality outside himself.

As per Dr. Winnicott, “good enough” handling leads to a “good enough” baby who is ready to take on life’s struggles, and continue in his “true self” now that he knows/feels what it is.

Dr. Dabrowski’s developmental theory sees the child as initially “whole, but unconscious”, a confident, even over-confident new citizen in the world. This over confidence, if not met with external constraints, can result in the arrest of development at the stage in which the dynamics of self-centeredness, use and abuse of others, an “I’m the centre of the world” attitude – while not unusual for an infant, may present in an adult as psychopathic tendencies. What was cute at 3 is not cute at 33.

The second stage, for Dr. Dabrowski, is the first stage of the disintegration that takes place when the child or adult realizes he is not the centre of the universe, that the earth rotates around the sun, and that he is the earth, not the sun. This is a big shock to the primitively (unconscious) integrated individual. Children can learn to deal with these shocks, as this is the introduction to the existence of others, and a beginning awareness that not only do we hurt, but we hurt others too, and must make amends. For adults too long in this phase, the shock of disintegration can produce an even more harmful person, one who is “lost”, confused and even
paranoid. Such persons, i.e. batterers whose wives have left, may simply have to be restored to their previous primitive (unconscious) state where there is less danger to family members. Organized crime, on the other hand, and war-mongers, whatever their country of origin, operate in this manner, but to a much greater degree and on a much larger scale, creating the brutal forces which attempt to destroy the more highly developed individuals on this earth. Where then, do these endangered (more sensitive) individuals come from? Dr. Dabrowski regards such individuals as neurotics and psychoneurotics.

Dr. Winnicott views the creative process as having those “nuisances we call neurotic symptoms and inhibitions” (Grolnick, 1990, p. 136) but adds, however, that he has “rarely treated a patient who has not had some developmental difficulty and some experience with the ‘unthinkable and annihilation anxieties’ that didn’t need tending to at some point in the therapy…” (p. 136).

For Dr. Dabrowski, neurotic and psychoneurotic processes, particularly the latter, refer to the second or middle stage of disintegration, in which the individual developing toward authenticity is full of anxiety, guilt and disquietude. This is the process through which the ever more conscious self (self as viewed by the self) is shifting with “fear and trembling” from an externally to an internally governed world. In simpler terms, discipline becomes self-discipline, because of and in spite of Dr. Winnicott’s “unthinkable and annihilation anxieties.”

In the shift from the third to the fourth stage of disintegration, the developing individual no longer needs a therapist except for booster shots, for this is the stage of auto psychotherapy, in which the patient becomes his/her own therapist. With the newly acquired ability to see the self as if another, and an other as if the self, disintegration fine-tunes what was tuned up in the second and third stages.
Now the individual begins to feel the strength and the peace of the approaching secondary integration, this one conscious.

From Dr. Dabrowski’s point of view, an unconscious but integrated individual moves through three stages of disintegration – from shock and after shock, through fear and trembling and then re-assembling, to a mature, conscious, caring, responsible, authentic individual, in short, to “more from less human.”

How does this come about, once again? Dr. Dabrowski says suffering is an opportunity for, but not a guarantee of growth.

In the Western hemisphere, where suffering is unhappiness and non-suffering is happiness, efforts to reduce pain are a high priority for many if not most of us. It is only the unstoppable pain that turns the self on the self, thus leading to a possibility of change.

Thus we move, either less or more consciously, through life.

And so, while Dr. Winnicott sees “good enough parenting as an ideal”, Dr. Dabrowski sees it as an unrealistic ideal, given that in his estimate, over half of the people on earth are unconscious, and primitively integrated; approximately one-third in a disintegrated state, some with a real possibility of dropping back; and the remainder are struggling through the more finely tuned stage of disintegration. Very few are at the final stage, that of secondary integration – conscious, authentic, responsible, the self-realized end product of “what ought to be” borne of the “what was in the beginning.”

Can we reconcile Dr. Dabrowski and Dr. Winnicott’s definitions of authenticity? For Dr. Dabrowski this is a lifetime achievement, pursued and attained by the increasingly conscious but suffering individual who transcends his biological and social influences by repeated acts in which his previously selfish will, now in collaboration with his ever more balanced and finely
tuned intellectual, imaginational and emotional capacities, is transformed into his personality ideal. This ideal is also ideal for the world, and Dr. Dabrowski suggests that communication between such individuals, who are more like one another than they are like their own peers (race, class, gender), are, can be, will be, the prophets of peace, and the peacemakers in this otherwise barbaric world. At no time have we needed the influence of such individuals as we do now, with the world teetering on the brink of darkness. Few see the danger of the good versus evil i.e. “if you’re not for us, you’re against us” solution that is rampant in every unilevel “civilization” today. That, plus the primitive belief that God is on the side of the “good” (perceived by each country to be themselves) promises the possibility of annihilation. In addition, just as the 20th century was the bloodiest, most horrific, war filled century to date, the 21st promises to be even more horrific.

So where are the peacemakers? Moreover, what are we doing, we who are concerned with Dr. Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration? Are we striving for peace amongst ourselves, so we can help keep the light from going out, or are we caught into, as a small group, unilevel, pointless, energy-wasting conflicts which make a lie of the values we claim we hold dear.

The future is not going to happen to us – we are the future.

Dr. Winnicott feels authenticity, which he calls the “true self”, is stripped from us by non-gifted parents from our infancy on. What emerges and marches into school is a fake self; a little tin soldier already trained for duty by egotistical parents who value the child’s accomplishment more than the child does. The child is simply the tool for the acquisition of parental awards.
I feel that the primitive or unilevel parent, living in a world in which all values are externally determined, unwittingly prepares his/her child for the same world. Unfortunately, this world is peopled with what Dr. Dabrowski calls, “so-called normal people.”

If you look around you will see children under five years of age who don’t have half an hour a day to be a child, a carefree, imaginative, playful, creative, genuine human being, as opposed to a human “doing” what another “so-called normal” human wants him to do. The highly structured time schedule of their lives – many team sports such as hockey start at 5:00 a.m. to get ice time, gymnastics, figure skating, tap dancing, cadets, martial arts, etc. etc. – all of which, if you look closely, add up not to education, but to training – repetitive acts which must occur in a certain sequence and which measure a child’s worth. The techniques are not unlike those used in animal training. What *are we doing* to our children?

In contrast, consider the comment of a four-year-old boy who was asked to describe what love is. He said, “When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth” (Edmonton Journal, 2004).

This boy is describing what it feels like to be perceived as a subject, and not an object, in the eyes of the beholder.

Children, en masse, who perceive themselves as objects, existing for exploitation of their natural resources – talents, abilities, skills, in short *their* gifts to the world – are so used to being treated as such, and who are schooled with other children in similar difficult situations, could be viewed as being jailed in the limited consciousness of their caretakers. It is surprising that such children can break out of such restraints, but some do.

Dr. Dabrowski suggested that a child with weak or fragile developmental potential and a strong negative (controlling) family and school environment would succumb to his biological
and social milieus. In contrast, a child with strong developmental potential and weak environmental influence may well succeed in his struggle toward authenticity, whereas another child, one with powerful (accelerated) developmental potential will be stopped by nothing external to his developing self although he/she may be at times emotionally exhausted, on the journey from “what is” to “what ought to be.”

Dr. Dabrowski was concerned with developmental outcomes for children who manifest, at an early age, behaviors that are viewed as negative and “treated” by erasure through force, blatant or subtle by parent and teachers, and or medication, should a third group of “helpers” need to be involved.

Dr. Dabrowski observed that one may discern signs of disintegration in children from one and a half to two and a half years of age, and again at puberty, regarding both these periods as opportunities for development if responded to appropriately by those in care of the children.

Further opportunities for human growth can occur in times of natural (childbirth, menopause in women) or unnatural disintegrative crises (illness, accident, marriage break-up, or loss of a loved one through death).

Dr. Dabrowski stated clearly that suffering is an opportunity for, but not necessarily a guarantee of growth. Suffering can be seen to range from a hanging to a hangnail, depending upon the developmental stage of the individual in psychic pain.

For Dr. Dabrowski, therapy is most likely required for primitive or psychopathic types, who are least likely to seek it; and if they do, then even less likely to benefit from it. Rather, those who live with or who are affected by the first type are most likely to obtain the therapy.
Moreover, where would little children run into, be influenced by, primitive or psychopathic types? First, in their homes, next in their schools, and third, in the office of some therapists, with their invisible chains of chemicals for the “difficult” ones.

This is what so troubled Dr. Dabrowski in his lifetime – the honouring by society of the psychopath (as witnessed by the public need for violent movies), whether he be imprisoned or running the country, with and the resulting degradation and destruction of the psychoneurotics, the only individuals healthy enough to resist adjustment to a sick society, and often at great risk to themselves, for example, possibly resulting in commitment to a mental institution by “caretakers” in the first category.

How do we recognize signs of developmental potential in children? How to aid rather than harm growth? How do we support authentic development? – these are the questions asked by Dr. Dabrowski.

Dr. Winnicott is equally concerned with supporting authenticity – the true self, as he calls it – from infancy on, and often referred to the “stultifying effects of pedantic teachers and their pedantic texts, how these created a lack of authenticity and served as the gravediggers of our creative sources. The same for teachy parents who sadly pontificate with their potentially open and creative offspring” (Grolnick, 1990, p. 10).

“Winnicott’s map of the mind was not just a bland schema of ego psychology, but a vivid, populated, liveable, emotionally authentic land that both a patient and a therapist must indwell to enable a therapy to occur that reaches the guts and the bones” (Grolnick, 1990, p.10).

His desire for his patients was “to free the True Self… from the tyranny of the dominating demands of the False Self…” (Grolnick, 1990, p. 12).
Winnicott himself was regarded by many as “basically a loner and sometimes difficult” (Grolnick, 1990, p. 12).

Winnicott’s own life, which one assumes involved considerable suffering, “sensitized him to psychosomatic aliveness or to deadness and its developmental origins, (italics mine) which relates to his concept of the true and false self” (Grolnick, 1990, p. 14).

Dr. Winnicott had an antipathy toward artificial diagnostic categories, as did Dr. Dabrowski. Furthermore, he felt it was child rearing and education that turned the original child into a rubber stamp copy. His belief was that parents cannot create development, but they can facilitate it by providing support and empathic frustration.

Dr. Dabrowski would no doubt have agreed with this position, as he felt we should not be excessively harsh with our children, but nor should we help them avoid the consequences of their acts. These consequences are a form of suffering which can lead to growth.

It would seem in our society today that we make two huge mistakes in general: 1) we fill our children’s needs before they themselves know what they are; and 2) out of over identification with our children (“our little selves out there”) we rescue them to the point that they no longer know how to save themselves. If life is a river, and we are swimmers, we interfere with, even destroy our child’s capacity to learn to swim - and then we, as parents, blame teachers, or peers, or alcohol or drugs, and haul the children off to therapists. Then we further pontificate about the behavior of adolescents being “what’s wrong with the world today.”

Dr. Winnicott’s developmental model, like Dr. Dabrowski’s, is not linear but spiral in nature. Within this model, he believes that progress is almost always followed by regression, a healthy, not a pathological reprieve after arduous work. This mirrors Dr. Dabrowski’s idea of positive regression and its developmental richness.
Like Dr. Dabrowski, Dr. Winnicott embraced being before doing for actions that feel authentic, that are not just “acting.” The reversal of that, i.e. the focus on the child’s doing, his accomplishments, results in the annihilation of the True Self by the False Self, an “as if” personality that is required for everyday living, and sadly, this “as if” personality often is the little creature who trots off to play school or kindergarten. What are we doing to our babies?

Dr. Winnicott says, “Life without creativity is not authentic” (Grolnick, p. 32), and adds that “play in childhood and throughout our life cycle helps to relieve the tension of living…” (p. 35).

This speaks to my own concerns about a childhood so time structured in both work and play that the True child within becomes the ghost of himself, shadowy and frightening to the False child, who now moves like a puppet in response to external demands and flees in terror from the spectre of his unlived life. This ghost will pursue him until he can no longer run, and hopefully, once exhausted and totally incapacitated he will fall into the hands of a gifted therapist.

What the baby needs, then, according to Dr. Winnicott, is a “good-enough” parent, one who grasps fully the following analogy:

For Dr. Winnicott each child is a unique orchestra, producing its own melodies with its own rhythmic and tonal variations. If the caretaker has a good enough ear, the infant’s music can be heard and responded to with empathy. The orchestra sets the tone, initially. The parent attunes her-himself to the tone, initially mirroring and eventually tuning, and sometimes mistuning, the infant. This is the point at which the false self may appear. The baby himself makes it clear when it is ready for mother-made rather than baby-made perceptions. The true self remains if the original music is not destroyed and replaced by the caretaker’s re-write of a major portion of the
score. The resulting relationship is one in which both parent and child are alive, in themselves and with each other.

Thus goes the early struggle for authenticity.

In his book Authentic Education, Dr. Dabrowski outlines a concept of true humanistic education, one that distinguishes the education of human beings from the training given animals.

While he credits American education for a number of values, i.e. personal liberty, religious liberty and openness to the learning that comes from experience, what concerns him is the resulting excess of certainty in Americans, and the lack of deep values which have resulted in the tendency to elect as leaders individuals who represent the population as it is rather than as it could, or should be. He states, “…they tend to overlook high moral and intellectual abilities… and instead search for similarities between the candidates and themselves” (Dabrowski, unpublished manuscript, p. 6).

We have witnessed this striving for mediocrity all too well in Canada, as time after time a leader of such lack of moral stature is elected and revered by the “average” citizen. I refer to this type of elected individual as a “negative hero”, one who acts out, for the primitive and unilevel voter, their unmet dreams of self-centred satisfaction accompanied by little or no guilt regarding the effects of such a stance on others. Currently our school system is in crisis both for teachers and children, but the government continues to sacrifice the lambs and make sure the wolves (children who have come to believe their high marks are the singularly most important value they can have in order to be loved and approved of by their significant others) keep the ratings of our school at the top of the lists. These ratings, by the way, have become an insidious force in our educational system over the last ten years, slowly eradicating all values other than intellectual supremacy.
The initial struggle, in which non-gifted parents measure their pre-school children for their doing and not their being, is reinforced to the extreme as these children slowly awaken to the realities of education as it is.

With education as it is in most of North America today, in spite of the noble attempts of overworked and externally immobilized teachers at the elementary school level, we see what appears to be a mass rebellion in our Junior High Schools in which the children act out against they know not what and the teachers burn out in their continued attempts to do the impossible. The “rebellion” presents as open outbursts of uncontrolled emotion, or more subtle messages in angry music.

Those who survive go on to High School where their False Selves learn to eat the nutritionally deficient “food”, pretend to digest it and suffer from educational anorexia and bulimia in private.

Once they have completed that – university is the reward – many more years of competition between False Selves, for intellectual glory.

Some, during this process, manage to get an education in spite of the one they’ve been given.

I think that, in general, the emotional rebellion of children is at its peak during Junior High School because of puberty, the natural crisis which allows for growth of developmental potential. The “rebellion” is the flailing around of beached mammals on the shore. Amazingly, even the helpers who come to rescue the creatures in trouble often fail to realize that it was the polluted environment in the ocean that caused their demise.

The danger for children today is that theory does not always lead to practice, and in this regard, Dr. Dabrowski’s ideas for a humanistic education suffer as well. The high moral values
he espouses cannot be translated easily to those who take a more aggressive, even primitive approach to the definition of success.

In the field of education, the ideas of Rudolf Steiner were well presented in a book by John Fentress Gardner, a remarkable individual in regards to his ability to put theory, especially theory as complex as Steiner’s into practice. The book, initially titled, *The Experience of Knowledge: Essays in American Education* (1975) was re-issued as *Education in Search of Spirit* in 1996.

John Gardner served as Facility Chairman of the Waldorf School in Garden City, New York, and formulated and directed Adelphi University’s Waldorf Institute for Liberal Education, which offers a unique Master’s program in teacher training. I heard him speak in Edmonton in the 70’s, and observed he has many qualities similar to Dr. Dabrowski, obvious in their impact on the listeners. Both revealed great strength and great peace.

Dr. Gardner’s position is that, “As human beings, we refer to this wide-awake consciousness and active will into a single point when the word ‘I’ is used. It is the basis of our freedom to choose and to control our behavior. It is the basis for moral responsibility and love. Our goal is to be fully present in awareness and wholly in control of our behavior. We may dream, as animals do, but we are not doomed to dream. Animal instincts may assert themselves in us; but we have at heart, little by little, the ability to purge ourselves of merely instinctive behavior. We would prefer at all times to know clearly what we are doing, and we would prefer to do only what we ourselves intend according to clear knowledge that will please us permanently as well as momentarily. We would like our lives from moment to moment to be known and authorized by that part of our being which is forever” (1996, p. 17).
John Gardner goes on to say that he believes that in the case of our being we are eternal spirit, and that the goal of Steiner’s educational approach is to activate this deepest centre of being in the children. The human being thinks, feels, and wills, and because these forces are not equally developed initially, they must eventually be yoked together according to the free choice of the student, and thus, “prepare the deed that the self will imprint upon the world” (1996, p. 18).

The problem in education in America this last century, as Gardner sees it is the instability of the educational method in which now thinking, now feeling and now will has been seen as the clue to a good education. These forces must all be brought along, rather than alternate between “traditional” methods which focus on the objective aspect of experience (thinking) and “progressive” methods which emphasize the subjective aspect (impulse and feeling).

As an example of what can go wrong during adolescence, Gardner (1996) states: “It happens, therefore, that while the objective emphases in education should fulfill students by opening them to the wonders of the world, too often the opposite takes place. Students are bored, enervated, and depressed by what they learn. They feel their humanity slipping away from them. Consequently, many students either harden their hearts against their own humanity and decide to ‘make it’ in the cold, hard world; or they follow the beckoning of pseudo-idealism and are lead into the diversions of alcohol, drugs, and eroticism. Perhaps some will do both, while pursuing an ambition for power and status in the world; they will also seek their fill of private pleasure. In any case, the student who started in a school whose aim was objectivity feels, without changing schools, thoroughly imprisoned in subjectivity. Both in competitiveness and in self-indulgence, the student becomes the very image of self-seeking and self-concern” (p. 22). Furthermore, Gardner states that it also happens in reverse; that students exposed to a subjective influence in
education become equally bored and depressed. Their inner search for the wellsprings of
creativity is just whim, and not worth caring about. Paradoxically, their self-esteem is eroded in
the very school that plans and hopes to enhance it.

Gardner (1996) has this to say, “Indulgence and easy praise never give young people the
feeling of worth that comes from, on the one hand, a firm grounding in the realities of the outer
world and, on the other hand, obedience to the higher judgment in each soul that wants to
establish itself over against merely subjective impulses. It is not liberation of the animal within,
but rather ascendancy of the higher self over the animal that gives a human being the autonomy
and power of self-actualization” (italics added) (p. 23).

Gardner feels the present conflict between the subjective and objective approaches to
education is fruitless, and will be until these two approaches are no longer in opposition to one
another. “We must learn to find that which is objective in the very heart of the subject, and that
which is subjective in the very heart of the object. Only in this way can we convert a stalemate
into a creative process” (1996, p.23).

Gardner believes the scientific method of Rudolf Steiner (Austrian philosopher and
educator; 1861-1925) satisfies this requirement. “According to Steiner we must learn to be
warm toward the world rather than warm about ourselves, and cool about ourselves rather than
cool toward the world” (1996, p. 24).

Only in this way, by reversing usual attitudes, can a student achieve a creative response
to life without losing a firm hold on objective knowledge, skills and discipline.

However, Gardner (1996) adds a precautionary note: “We should be warm towards the
world not because it can supply our selfish needs but because in and of itself the world is beauty,

wonder, and revelation. Contemplation of nature in the right way takes us out of ourselves, a
thing for which we long; and self-forgetful love, in turn, fills our inner emptiness. To share cognitively and compassionately in the existing creation always charges the personal soul with new creative power” (p. 25).

Gardner (1996) concludes his thoughts in this area by saying, “There is no reason why the world, out of its deeper mysteries, cannot impart also to the heart what it craves, if only the heart will learn how to think” (p. 27) and “The world can think itself in us to whatever depth we offer for the purpose. In this way only does the world complete itself” (p. 27).

John Gardner sees genius as the goal of education, whereas what has happened he feels, is that because we assume all children have some talent and only a few genius, that the development of talent has been the goal.

Talent, he argues, tends towards one sidedness, whereas genius transforms a mixture of specialized abilities into a whole personality, adding, “It is genius that holds individuals striving to the common good” (1996, p. 116).

In American schools, Gardner feels, the talents (skills) that count above all others are, “verbal and mathematical facility, a retentive memory, and the power of logical analysis, as these are measured by I.Q. tests” (1996, p.116).

There is nothing in these schools, he says, to do with the love of humanity, the capacity to be grateful to life and enjoy it, or the will to contribute all of which require “courage, reverence, integrity or good will. All these are central qualities of moral health… that lie near to genius” (1996, p. 116).

Society accords elite standing to the students who use portions of the mind that are relatively unimportant for genius, expecting them to become leaders in higher education,
business, government, and the professions. Schools, he adds encourage and expect talent to take charge of civilization.

In fact “genius” is now regarded as “talent-in-the-highest degree” – an intense form of specialized ability. He goes on to say, “The child who at five can perform mental operations that are common place among ten-year-olds is accorded the standing of ‘genius’ but often such genius betokens simply that one is getting prematurely old, that one is suffering from hypertrophy of certain aspects of the brain. Plainly looked at, it may remind us of a sickness” (1996, p. 117).

When one looks at modern schools, from high school down to elementary school, one sees “students who are unsound, ill-balanced, perhaps even immoral, yet who show early brightness and are given preferential treatment – an ‘enriched’ curriculum…, – while the sometimes sounder but not so bright are gathered into second-, third-, and fourth-rate groups that are educated with less hope and less care” (1996, p. 117).

I must continue to quote John Gardner to do him full justice. “It is bad for possessors of a limited talent like academic brightness to think of themselves and be thought of, as humanly superior. It is wrong for them to be encouraged to accentuate even further a relatively technical ability that already thrives at the expense of their humanity as a whole.

And it is equally unfortunate that those who learn more slowly – because their very real, very important gifts are of heart and will rather than head – should think of themselves as unworthy and become habituated to the sense of failure.

Often they are simply not yet ready to perform academic tests. The response of most schools, however, is to drill unready children in just the intellectual capacities they do not yet possess, while aptitudes of greater moral and social significance that they often do possess, go
unrecognized and undeveloped. Frequently these hidden powers lie closer to the genius that teaches human beings how to be human than does intellectually; for while intellect that has overcome itself may be the glory of humankind, complacency about intellect as a talent is perhaps the greatest single obstacle in the modern age to the higher aspiration and guidance people need, and have the right to hope for, from their genius” (1996, p. 117-118, italics in original).

Dr. Dabrowski also emphasizes the need for the support of positive immaturity – the emotional and mental immaturity seen in children with distinct sensitivity and intelligence. For Dr. Dabrowski, such children, “Require more time to satisfy their rich emotional and intellectual needs and, thus, to become ready for future more serious experiences. They mature slowly or show persistent forms of immaturity and potential for further development” (1973, p. 154).

Dr. Dabrowski stated that, he believed the earlier one reaches “adulthood” the less opportunity there is for any further growth. He added that we can support the prolongation of this process to the benefit of all mankind. Once maturity is reached, the only opportunities that offer us a second chance are those that cause us pain and deepen our capacity to suffer, the very opportunities we flee from and, if unsuccessful in our flight, medicate into oblivion (personal conversation).

Gardner, on the other hand, is concerned with children being encouraged to use to exhaustion their specialized talents, i.e. for math, memory, etc, to the point that their resources are used up and the children become prematurely old. They are no longer interested in what they have learned or in anything else there is to learn, their love of true learning having been eradicated by their early school experiences.
The richness of Dr. Dabrowski’s view, for me, is in his awareness that excessive external stimulation, - i.e. the infant as a captive audience to endless bells and whistles attached to his crib, and his childhood that of being raised in a giant toy box – that such stimulation will diminish if not destroy the capacity for discoveries that even a young child can make if afforded some solitude.

Gardner (1996) looks back on the origin of the idea of genius, and how it is seen today, “Thus for ancient humanity, genius was an agency of the divine spirit that descended from above; while for modern humanity genius is not more than a name for earthly talent raised to its’ highest degree” (p. 119).

The ancient view was that genius was available to all “it hovered over all; when not near, then far, but always there” (p.120). “And genius was not ‘possessed’ by any person; rather it possessed the person. It had little to do… with intellect as such, but much to do with the heart and will. Its working depended more upon the character one might aspire to develop than the ability one was endowed with by birth. Indeed, it withdrew from those who were pleased with their own earthly endowment while it approached those who, while knowing how inadequate their own faculties were, continued with God-given compassion and valour to do what they could do for others” (p. 120-121).

Once pagan virtues became Christian grace, Christ was seen as the genius of geniuses, “Man’s health and greatness consist in his being a channel through which heaven flows to earth” (p. 121).

Gardner raises the questions as to whether it makes much difference what the source – inspiration from above, or some highly perfected constitutional ability – and answers that it would not, if the quality of education deriving from the two views were the same, but it is not the
same (italics mine). The two conceptions of genius make a radical difference – the outcomes of which, he claims, “are as far apart as reality and illusion, or as wholesome gladness and sick sorrow” (p. 121).

He states that “much that we associate with the traditions of liberal or humanistic education once had the goal of teaching students there is a heaven, that it can flow to earth through humanity, and that every individual should desire to establish this flow – as the first and last condition of human well-being; indeed, as one’s duty toward the rest of creation” (p. 121). “This form of education includes moral discipline. But the perfection of discipline lies in self-discipline. The Self is one’s genius” (p. 122).

Moral education requires self-disciplined teachers as models. Students today reject guidance from their elders because, in our materialistic education what could have been a challenge is now without life-giving meaning.

When our work and play become meaningless, with it comes the destruction of our capacity to rest. “Proper rest means chiefly sleep. But what is sleep, and what makes sleep refreshing? Ancient world conceptions agreed that in sleep the individual is released from particularity in order to be restored and inspired by the universal. But in modern times, sleep has been robbed of its high mystery. Nowadays, people lie down but cannot sleep; sleep, but are not restored. They are irritable and anxious, day after day. To meet the need of humankind, billions of tranquilizers for the day and sleeping pills for the night are brought forward. But the result of this is no influx of vital energy or uplift by creative imagination” (Gardner, 1996, p. 127-128).

One of Gardner’s major arguments, on behalf of Rudolf Steiner, is that the too early focus, in schools, on the intellect as it is, is what destroys the intellect as it could be.

“Pure intellect is the pure devil”, said Emerson (Gardner, 1996, p. 128).
It is Gardner’s opinion that behind all the obvious vices and mistakes that break our ties with our higher selves is egoism, and children are almost compelled to build upon egoism in this intensely competitive modern world. The higher self, should or could it develop, always hopes as much for others’ aims as for its own.

The lower self, however, constantly viewing itself in relation to others, must forever rearrange things to keep itself at the centre of value. The lower self is constantly seduced back into the world of competition, no matter what the issue.

Gardner concludes, “Children start out with a sense for the universal. To many parents, this fact is uncomfortable, for it gives the child a certain remoteness – from which he or she must be called back by stimulation – tickling and chucking under the chin. Teachers too, find the universality of children uncomfortable. To them it may appear as a baffling incomprehension of the importance of school success” (1996, p. 130 – 131).

Gardner views the child’s reluctance to join the competition as a positive trait, which shows that genius has not yet left the child. “Boredom, cynicism, and exhaustion await the culture whose schools prefer bright little old people to genuine children. Real children are often too full of action and feeling to score well in tests of intellect; their embracing sympathies may show up in the classroom as lack of attention; their imaginative flights may seem factual foolishness. Yet the real child is one of God’s fools. Teachers do well who seek in this folly the beginning of wisdom” (1996, p. 131).

Summing up his position, John Gardner feels that most schools nowadays train children in superficial alertness, but in a deeper unresponsiveness – they have been trained to have a remote attitude toward facts and thoughts. The world to them is like a movie toward which they have an indifferent attitude that ultimately is toward both themselves and others.
When what we learn is unreal to us, we too become unreal, more mirrors than human beings.

This, says Gardner reflects the original deception, in which students are trained to say, “I know” when they don’t know, and don’t even know they don’t know, and really know. This other-induced state of self-deception can lead, wittingly or unwittingly, to the deception of others. Plagiarism and cheating can become fairly unimportant, and can move on to misrepresentation and fraud as an adult, states Gardner.

Sadly, the children “have been taught to observe without feeling, and to arrive at externally suggested or compelled conclusions without the intuitive confirmation that should complete their experience. Thus they are without conscience (italics his) in their knowing” (Gardner, 1996, p.109).

“In the uttermost meaning of the words,” Emerson said, “thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep” (Gardner, 1996, p. 109).

However, Gardner says, of modern students, who follow their modern teachers, it would be said, “Surface calls to surface; the world process externally viewed calls to superficial powers of cognitions. The inner humanity remains inactive and asleep; such action makes our human relations somewhat unreal” (1996, p. 109).

John F. Gardner has, in his remarkable book, conveyed the thoughts of Rudolf Steiner, his theory of man, and his solution through education, for the current difficulties facing students and teachers in our emotionally and imaginatively deprived schools in North America.

Parenting, Education, Therapy

Not only did Dr. Dabrowski write a deeply meaningful book on psychotherapy (Developmental Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy based on the Theory of Positive Disintegration;
unpublished manuscript) he shared in considerable depth the measures he used to assess the developmental stages of his clients. His later book Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions (1996), brings to life and to light Dr. Dabrowski’s belief that we are all more or less human.

Rudolf Steiner, via John Gardner, states that because of the two fundamental mistakes of our Western civilization, exclusive worldliness and remoteness from nature, man has been dragged down into an increasingly subhuman condition. He says as follows: “By subhuman we do not mean the animal part, for animals have remained within the framework of their essential nature. They have not risen so high nor sunk so low as have many human beings. The subhuman is equally far from the spiritual and from nature; it is far from both humanity and animality. It is intelligence without feeling and spirit, speculation without intuition, an ego without spirituality…” (1996, p. 177).

Steiner has a problem with some “Third Force” psychologists, the humanistic framework approach to the nature of man. In particular, Steiner objects to Maslow’s view that in the case of man, a biological organism rises above itself yet remains self-identical.

Maslow (1971) states, “Transcendence… means to become divine or godlike, to go beyond the merely human. But one must be careful… not to make anything extra-human or supernatural of this kind of state” (p. 272) and adds, “Communion by the person with that which transcends him can be seen as a biological experience” (p. 334). “The so-called spiritual (or transcendent or axiological) life is clearly rooted in the biological nature of the species. It is a kind of ‘higher’ animality whose precondition is a healthy ‘lower’ animality” (p. 324).

The higher, or “metaneeds” are in the same category, for Maslow as “the need for Vitamin C or Calcium” (1971, p. 320).
He goes on to say, “From what we know of developments within individuals and within societies, a certain amount of spirituality is the extremely probable consequence of a satisfied materialism” (1971, p. 327).

Maslow’s position regarding the nature of man is clearly stated as follows: “…man has a higher nature which is just as instinctoid as his lower nature” (1971, p. 327).

The “self” in Maslow’s definition of self-actualization is not the “self” as defined by either Dabrowski or Steiner.

For example, Maslow (1968) states, “It appears to me that these values… are intrinsic in the structure of human nature itself, that they are biologically and genetically based, as well as culturally developed” (p. 186). “My thesis is then: that we can, in principle, have a descriptive, naturalistic science of human values; that the age old mutually exclusive contrast between ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be’ is in part a false one; that we can study the highest values or goals of human beings as we study the values of ants, or horses, or oak trees, or, for that matter, Martians” (p. 186).

Gardner (1996), on behalf of Steiner, objects vehemently, stating, “There is no doubt that human values can be studied, after people have made them their own…. If people move to take them for their own, that, is their affair… Such people will walk every step of the way by their own effort, not induced or compelled by conscience… Nothing will come of ethical ideas unless we persist by our own force in making them operative as values in our world. In that event, we shall realize that in every instance of moral choice we are creating, not merely discovering. We shall also know very well that by and through this uncompelled, original, creative choice and enactment, it is not only ethical values we are bringing in to existence, but ourselves. If we cannot be creative of our own values, we cannot really cause our own actions. But in so far as
human beings are not the absolute authors of their own behavior, their individualistics are cancelled. Strictly speaking, such people do not exist” (p. 187-188).

“The fact suggested by Maslow – that, all things being equal, the organisms of ethical people well prosper – has nothing to do with the intrinsic content of their ethical ideas nor with the moment when such people convert them to active values. Genuine scientists choose their ideas not because those ideas promise profit, but because they are true. Genuine artists choose beauty not for the sake of their own health but for beauty’s own sake. Genuinely moral people adopt ethical ideas not because it will favor them or their organisms, but because they find ethics and goodness inherently lovable” (Gardner, 1996, p. 188).

Dr. Dabrowski makes the same distinction between “what is” and “what ought to be” in the individual journey from “less to more human.”

Dr. Dabrowski was his richest, most alive and creative self in question and answer discussions, preferably small group discussions in which the listeners appeared as qualitatively different and not, because of numbers, quantitatively anonymous. Dr. Dabrowski was most animated, vigorous, authentic, in my opinion in this type of setting; the memories of which I value most deeply.

For that reason I have selected an in which Dr. Dabrowski was being interviewed in Warsaw, in 1979, by Zbigniew Biezanski (this article was later translated by Ewa Hyzy-Strzelecka) and published in the *Advanced Development Journal* (Volume 6, 1994).

Biezanski, who saw Dr. Dabrowski as psychiatrist, psychologist and social reformer, directed the discussion as follows:

Z.B.: As a reformer, you are fighting for a chance for the “oppressed”. Who are the oppressed you have in mind?
Dr. D.: They are the ones who are not shrewd, who are rather delicate, who aren’t able to fight for their own interests, who aren’t pushy or demanding, but who are industrious, have deep feelings, are often wise though unsophisticated. I think about those who don’t press their claims, who aren’t vulgar or aggressive, and who often suffer.

Z.B.: It’s said that values can’t be justified or “proved” but only chosen. From what reality can they be derived? From human nature?

Dr. D.: Yes, from human nature, but only from developing human nature… if we accept this idea… our choice must be that of both discovering and building values. This can be accomplished by hard, empirical work, observation, experiences, faults, conflicts, pain, self-analysis, growth of awareness of one’s own impulses, by autonomy and authenticity.”

Z.B.: So we can discover, or rather, create values?

Dr. D: We can do both. Creating new values is a fundamental part of development. …we create values by our self observation, by our thinking, and by putting our ideals into practice.”

Z.B.: Is a hierarchy of values necessary?

Dr. D.: Our World War II experience showed us how dangerous the lack of a hierarchy of values is…. People, depending on whether or not they have a hierarchy of values, behave in different ways, ranging from brutality to refined gentleness, from misunderstanding to understanding, from almost inhuman to truly human responses…. The hierarchy of values is indispensable.

Z.B.: Would you, please, at this point characterize modern civilization, and particularly modern industrial societies, from a psychiatrist’s and psychologist’s point of view?

Dr. D.: Camus said that after the First World War the stone of our culture, which individual Sisyphuses struggled to raise, fell down. Yet, still the effort was made to raise it again
– and it was raised. But after the Second World War, it fell so low that no effort could possibly budge it. After these terrible disasters, people decided to live according to the principle of carpe diem: to be wealthy, to have good cars, to travel, to eat well, to use others as tools, and to compete. It happened everywhere, excluding a few small groups. We forgot about the road to developing humanity. Today we are ruled by the self-protective instinct of sexual enjoyment, of jockeying for social position, power and wealth. If we don’t begin, even slowly, to bring humanistic changes to our lives, we will become like wild animals and think only about fulfilling our own instincts. Now, truly, people are at each other’s throats. Already they have each other under their thumbs.

Z.B.: And what about neuroses and psychoneuroses?

Dr. D.: The most common neuroses and psychoneuroses are anxiety, depression, and other kinds of nervous disorders, for example, overexcitability of the imagination, which may cause escape from reality and life into a fantasy world; over excitability of the emotions – current situations leading even to fatal functioning of emotionality. Emotionally excitable people often react with depression, become impetuous, or even attempt suicide. There is also overexcitability of intelligence, perhaps the healthiest form of overexcitability, which may cause a meandering among problems that can’t now or ever be solved. However, it is not these sensitive ones that become models for society, but rather the psychopaths and semi-psychopaths, because they are strong, they don’t consider others, and they don’t have any inhibitions. This is a broad sketch but probably true.

Z.B.: So?
Dr. D.: When we see that there is so much evil in the world, so much injustice, so many harmed and humiliated, we cannot wait any longer…. We can’t force reforms on the basis of any kind of rigid regulations. We should rather… educate people.

Z.B.: So what do you propose?

Dr. D.: First of all, the introduction to comprehensive education – from the family to colleges, and work places… this should be awakened in children and youth by using examples and demonstrations. For example, it shouldn’t be done like this: Because life is so awful, I will teach my child to be almost brutal, so as not to let life destroy him…. It ought to proceed this way: My child has to be strong enough to survive, but he should also be able to care for a weaker friend.

Z.B.: And finally, how should sensitive people behave in the company of those who are insensitive?

Dr. D.: They have to combine sensitivity with moral courage. They have to work out a way to combine their own sensitivity, their gentleness, sacrificial nature and empathy – with heroism!

The Use and Misuse of Medication in Therapy

The invisible use of chains for “the difficult ones” - neurotics and psychoneurotics – calls for a final discussion regarding the use and misuse of medications in therapy.

Dr. Dabrowski saw individuals who were striving to create multilevel values and who were experiencing extreme difficulty at times. Psychopathy – individuals with primitively integrated structures (Level 1) – do not seek therapy because, from their point-of-view whatever is wrong with them, if anything, is someone else’s fault. This definition includes the “so called normal person”, the one with the power in a personal, business or professional domain.
Individuals at higher levels of development, those of directed multilevel disintegration and secondary integration (Levels 4 and 5) are, with their capacity for subject-object, capable of auto psychotherapy.

This left those at unilevel disintegration (Level 2) and spontaneous multilevel disintegration (Level 3) as the majority of clients seeking support for their struggles.

Level 2 persons are as likely to drop back to Level 1 as to proceed, because the shift from Level 2 to Level 3 takes a huge amount of energy and effort, an amount not all can muster. This shift, from unilevel to multilevel disintegration is the major obstacle, comparable to the earth shifting on its axis. Level 3 patients, more likely to remain in therapy, are subject to spontaneous disintegration up to the mid-point between Level 3 and Level 4. In the earlier part of this stage dropping back is still a possibility, a desire to reintegrate where life without self-awareness is easier. This is an exceedingly difficult stage and one in which the therapist plays an essential role, as in, in extreme cases, the client may suicide. With the mid-point reached, sufficient disintegrative experiences can create a solid ground (through repetition of the experience) for continued growth. The individual is not likely to drop back, and may still “drop back to wanting to drop back”, but is stopped by well developed inhibitions.

Dr. Dabrowski, through an assessment in which he shared his theoretical ideas with the client, was able to impart strength and hope in previously oppressed human beings.

For the client to realize that being adjusted to a sick society is to be sick, is to open the door to understanding his or her life until that moment, and to appreciate that the values which others had denigrated were precisely those which Dr. Dabrowski regarded as their most precious gifts. He would talk to clients about the full meaning of “tragic gifts”, a concept they were well
able to embrace as they had already lived with the consequences of such gifts – sensitivity, anxiety, the capacity to love and worry, the lack of the self-preservation instinct.

Concerning medication, Dr. Dabrowski was humane in his approach to suffering, but this too, had its limitations. Suffering is suffering, whether it is physical or psychological, and Dr. Dabrowski was supportive of medication for and while the client was in crisis. However, said Dr. Dabrowski, a crisis is by definition self-limiting – it resolves itself, and you get better or you get worse. Medication continued too long makes the prognosis less clear. The client has issues to deal with – existential life enhancing or debilitating issues, and he or she must face these issues with a clear mind. The goal, after all, is awareness, of self and others, so that one may continue to bring one’s own values in to the real life of their existence.

Similar concerns regarding medication have been expressed recently by Dr. Elio Frattaroli, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in Pennsylvania, in his first book, entitled Healing the Soul in the Age of the Brain.

His concerns are that a model of the brain denies the existence of a soul, and fears that doctors today are treating symptoms rather than people. He feels there is no quick fix for the soul, certainly not one that Prozac can provide. He states we need “a science that acknowledges the existence of an inner self… one that views anxiety not merely as a clinical imbalance in the brain, but as a wake-up call for the soul” (2001, on Cover Flap).

Frattaroli believes that “mental illness cannot be just a chemical imbalance in the brain. Rather, it is a disharmony of body, brain, mind and spirit within the whole person: an inner conflict of the soul” (2001, p. 9).

Sadly, he notes, this is not the approach used today. “As reported in Newsweek on January 26, 1998, the concept of chemical imbalance is now being applied indiscriminately, not
only to cases of clear cut mental illness but to objectionable personality traits as well…. Any qualities we tend to dislike in ourselves – anything from shyness to ill-temperedness to scrupulosity to simple irresponsibility – we are now being taught to think of a subtle neurochemical malfunction that can and should be corrected with medication” (2001, p. 9).

Dr. Frattaroli (2001) speaks of a situation which offered an important learning experience for him. An eight-year-old autistic girl in his classroom in Bruno Bettelheim’s Orthogenic School had been disrupting the English lesson he was teaching. After many attempts to deal with the situation decently, he lost his temper and shouted at her: “Who do you think you are?” Meekly she replied, “Somebody else.”

Dr. Frattaroli goes on to say that may of us, far more fortunate than this child, are seeking the same solution through the overuse of medications. Furthermore, he believes this desire to be “somebody else” is “not something to be encouraged and pandered to, but something we should recognize for what it is: a sickness of the soul, a refusal or inability to accept ourselves as we really are that keeps us ultimately from becoming the person we have it in us to become” (2001, p. 11).

Medication, he feels, encourages and panders to the desire to take the path of least resistance.

Dr. Frattaroli states, “If we were to look without the blinders of materialism at the current craze for psychiatric drugs, we could see it easily enough as a symptom of a sick culture seeking to anaesthetize itself from the inherent pain of human existence any way it can…” (2001, p. 21).

He is particularly concerned with the increasing use of anti-depressants in children – noting that “…the Philadelphia Inquirer reported I 1998 that in the previous year 207,000 children between the ages of six and twelve had been prescribed anti-depressants – a 43 percent
increase from the year before. Also in 1998 a psychiatric journal reported that the prescription of selective serotonin inhibitor anti-depressants for children five years and younger has increased tenfold in four years” (p. 9).

Like the other concerned individuals referred to in this paper. Dr. Frattaroli’s concerns focus on the children, and what we are doing to children. He is no doubt having even greater concerns when he sees on T.V. in the last year, advertisements for anti-depressants. Canadian laws do not yet allow this, but it can’t prevent our children from seeing such ads as so many of our programs are from the United States. The danger is that children will grow up to think within, rather than about this framework of information on medication as presented in the media. The excessive use of medication, at all ages, will no doubt grow to be every bit as acceptable as is our penchant for violence. Rather than, Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” our children in North American will grow up expecting, as their basic rights, “life, liberty and happiness.”

What do the individuals, whose contributions to both therapy and practice have been briefly outlined in this paper, have in common? The common thread, as I see it, is a genuine love and concern for children, and desire to create an ideal world in which parenting, education, and therapy contribute to the development of healthy human beings.

The word authentic is used, but somewhat differently by Dr.’s Dabrowski and Winnicott. The word love is used by John Gardner and Dr. Frattaroli.

It appears to me that all the above would agree that what is required for the handling of infants and further care of young children, is authentic - not perfect, but genuine, sincere – parenting by good enough parents which will in turn give rise to the “true self” rather than the “false self” in a child – good enough children, and with this, hope for a more conflict resolving and peace loving world.
Afterword

“The world breaks everyone, and then some become stronger at the broken places.” (Author unknown)

Mark Twain who died in 1910, and Noam Chomsky, very much alive in 2001, speak in a similar frame of mind regarding individuals who uncritically accept war as a solution to violence, never accepting or understanding the absolute absurdity of such a solution (see Appendix 1 and 2).

Could this reflect back on how we parent our infants, how we educate our children and how we therapize our adults into so called normality?

For me, it is not a question of which version of authenticity we accept, Dr. Dabrowski or Dr. Winnicott’s, or which education plans, Dr. Dabrowski’s or John Gardner’s, or even which therapeutic perspective, because all lead to a greater awareness of self and other.

The consensus would appear to be that infants should be cared for by good enough parents with good enough love, children educated by teachers who are emotionally as well as intellectually alive, and adults therapized by therapists who prefer resuscitation to the pre-embalming of hearts and minds.

Little false selves grow into bigger false selves, and little puppets grow into big robots in the “adult” world, trapped in mindless occupations. The death trap seduces soldiers to take up arms against their fellow man in the belief that this way lies peace. They fire the guns whose triggers have been set by highly intelligent “higher ups” who do not dirty their hands with death.

As long ago as 2330 B.C. mankind was pondering life issues such as death, judgment and eternity. After death, “the jackal-headed god Anubis weighs the deceased's heart, site of the conscience, against the feather of maat [the Egyptian goddess of truth], or things as they should be [italics added]. Osiris, king of the underworld, and other gods watch as judges. If the heart is
too heavy or too light, a monster that is part lion, part crocodile, and part hippopotamus devours it, dooming the deceased to a perpetual coma (Williams, 2002, p. 20).

The hieroglyphic translation of inscriptions in the tomb of King Pepi who died in 2300 B.C., read as follows: “Oh my heart that I have had when on earth, don’t stand up against me as a witness, don’t make a case against me beside the great god” (Williams, 2002, p. 20).

And so, the measure of us, as we strive to move from “what is” to “what ought to be” in 2004 A.D. will hopefully return to a measure of the heart, the emotions, and allow us to rise above our warring selves and seek peace with our fellow humans. This effort needs to begin in the cradle, where we can erase the competition that initially leads to the use of intelligence solely in the service of the ego and eventually to the wars where killing on a daily basis has become so common that those of us in perpetual coma can watch it on TV and still sleep soundly at night.

Moreover, how do we measure this? Perhaps no one measures us better than does the four-year-old boy who said, “When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth.”
Appendix 1

“The man who knows with his heart knows himself to be a man, feels as himself, cannot be silenced. He is free, no matter here he lives…” (Archibald MacLeish) (Gardner, 1996, p. 223)

The War Papers (published in 1923), one of Mark Twain’s least known but most outstanding works was deliberately withheld until after his death (in 1910) because he feared it would be taken as sacrilege.

In it, he said, in the most poetic way imaginable or possible, so that it would be read before it was understood, (it hit the heart before the head could stop it) the following: (This entire section is paraphrased.)

“The war was on, and this excited everyone

The holy fire of patriotism burned in every breast

Drums beat, firecrackers crackled and flags waved from roofs and balconies

Volunteers marched gaily down small town main streets, with mothers fathers and sweethearts choked with pride and happiness as they marched by

Nightly, panting orators preached patriotism while tears ran down the cheeks of the listeners

In churches pastors preached devotion to flag and country, supporting the war in God’s name and seeking His support

It was a wonderful time, and the few dissidents who dared to disapprove of war were so sternly warned that, for their personal safety, they spoke their minds no more

On Sunday morning the church was full of young volunteers, eyes bright with dreams of the battle charge, the plight of the foe, the surrender; followed shortly by the return home from the war, welcomed and adored as heroes, bathed in glory

With them sat proud family, friends and neighbours, some of whom were envious because they had no sons to send forth to fight, to win, or if necessary to die such noble deaths
Morning prayers were filled with moving and beautiful language, and
appeals to a merciful Father to watch over the noble young soldiers; to
make them invincible, to help them crush the foe, to bring honor and
glory to their flag and country

Then:

An aged stranger entered the church, moving slowly and noiselessly up
the main isle, his body clothed in a long robe, his head bare, his long
white hair descending in a mist to his shoulders, his face pale to the
point of ghostliness

He reached the preacher’s side, where he stood quietly, while the
preacher, unaware of his presence uttered a last fervent appeal for
victory to God, Father and Protector of our land

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside, and took his
place. For several moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with
his deep and burning eyes; then he said:

‘I am here with a message from Almighty God’

A shock ran through the audience

‘He has heard your prayer and will grant it if you still desire it after I
have explained the importance of it fully to you
Like many prayers, it asks for more than you know
Is it one prayer? No it is two – one spoken, the other not. God hears
both prayers, the spoken and the unspoken
Beware if you ask a blessing for yourself; you may bring about a curse
on your neighbour at the same time
I am here to put into words the unspoken part of your prayer – God
grant it came from ignorance or thoughtlessness
You heard the words ‘Lord God, grant us victory’
In praying for victory, you have prayed for many unnamed results
which follow victory

‘O Lord, our Father, be with our young soldiers
Help them to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells
Help us to cover their fields with the bodies of their patriot dead
Help us to drown the noise of the guns with the shrieks of their
wounded, writhing in pain
Help us to lay waste their humble homes with a torrent of fire
Help us to wring the hearts of their innocent widows
Help us to turn them out of ravaged homes with their little children to
wander the wasteland of their county in rags and hunger and thirst,
broken in spirit; begging Thee for the refuge of the grave – and denied it -
For our sakes, who adore Thee, Lord
- blast their hopes
- ruin their lives
- lengthen their endless pilgrimage
- stain the snow with the blood of their wounded feet
We ask it in the spirit of love, of Him who is the Source of Love. Amen.

Pause:
You have prayed it; if you still desire it, speak!’

No one spoke

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.”
Appendix 2

“The courageous person is one who can stand fast in pursuit of a good in the midst of pain or the risk of pain. A coward is someone who cannot or does not act for the good because of pain or fear of pain... In fact, to a large extent I think that courage could be called the primary virtue in the moral life...” (Aristotle) (Hatab, 2000, p. 11)

In 2001, Noam Chomsky, whose efforts for greater democracy are celebrated by peace and justice movements would wide spoke in a most timely fashion in his one-day-to-be an equally important book 9-11, about war in the world today.

The interviews took place during the first month following the attacks of September 11, 2000 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Question posed to Noam Chomsky (2001) by interviewer Michael Alberta: “Do you believe that most Americans will, as conditions permit more detailed evaluation of options, accept that the solution to terror attacks on civilians here is for the U.S. to respond with terror attacks against civilians abroad, and that the solutions to fanaticism is surveillance and curtailed civil liberties?” (p. 69).

Chomsky’s response: “I hope not, but we should not underestimate the capacity of well-run propaganda systems to drive people to irrational, murderous, and suicidal behavior. Take an example that is remote enough so that we should be able to look at it with some dispassion: World War I. It can’t have been that both sides were engaged in a noble war for the highest objectives. But on both sides, the soldiers marched off to mutual slaughter with enormous exuberance, fortified by the cheers of the intellectual classes and those who they helped mobilize, across the political spectrum, from left to right, including the most powerful left political force in the world, in Germany. Exceptions are so few that we can practically list them, and some of the most prominent among them ended up in jail for questioning the nobility of the
enterprise: among them Rosa Luxembourg, Bertrand Russell and Eugene Debs. With the help of Wilson’s propaganda agencies and the enthusiastic support of liberal intellectuals, a pacifist country was turned in a few months into raving anti-German hysterics, ready to take revenge on those who had perpetrated savage crimes, many of them invented by the British Ministry of Information. But that’s by no means inevitable, and we should not underestimate the civilizing effects of the popular struggle of recent years. We need not stride resolutely towards catastrophe, merely because those are the marching orders”

(2001, p. 70)

Love him or hate him, no serious individual can ignore Chomsky, and masses of unthinking people cannot erase what he says by ignoring what he has to say.

Like Mark Twain, he stands to be tarred and feathered and run out of town, an old technique used to deal with “difficult individuals.”

We are now a global village, and “the town” is “our town”, so we must begin to transcend our opinions (held secretly as the facts, the truth) and have a good look at the playing field and our place on it.

This, however, is Chomsky’s warning in a nutshell – as I see it:

1. That we had better learn to transcend the gravity of our unilevel thinking (here in the Western hemisphere) or we are doomed, like our fellow humans, to live in war rather than peace.

2. We can be thankful we won’t live long enough to witness the suffering of our children if the only peace that concerns us is our own well-being.

3. The “gifts that keep on giving” will be horrific, psychologically and environmentally, worldwide.

4. There will be no escape from the consequences of our acts, or our failure to act.
Mark Twain and Noam Chomsky were surely multilevel passengers on the unilevel ship of life. How can we, those of us interested in what Dr. Dabrowski has to say, transcend good-bad, friend-foe, right-wrong thinking and keep Dr. Dabrowski’s message alive in our actions as well as our thoughts, so that we don’t deteriorate into warring passengers on a Ship of Fools, or even worse, the doomed Titanic.

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Edmonton Journal (March, 2004).


Paper 8). Rita Culross:

Developmental Potential Among Creative Scientists

Typical characterizations of creative scientists have focused on individuals in academia or in business and industry who worked in relative isolation. Their development has also been described typically in terms of academic milestones and cognitive abilities. The session will seek to go beyond this picture to examine the moral, personal, and social development of creative scientists within the wider and changing contexts in which they now work. Evidence will be discussed regarding the presence of intellectual, emotional, psychomotor, andimaginational overexcitabilities among such scientists, and the scientists’ development across Dabrowski’s stages will be elucidated.
Developmental Potential Among Creative Scientists*

Rita R. Culross, Ph.D.
Louisiana State University

The world of creative scientists is dramatically different in the 21st century than it was during previous centuries (Culross, 2004). Whether biologists, chemists, physicists, engineers, mathematicians, or computer scientists, the livelihood of research scientists is dependent on their abilities of creative expression. The view of a solitary researcher who functions independently and is somewhat asocial is outdated when one considers that scientists today are likely to work for large corporations, universities, or research organizations within teams or research groups (MacGrath, 2002). The reality that scientific research requires large amounts of funding also affects the research agendas of scientists today. The support of external funding agencies or corporate research and development groups has created a situation in which individual research goals are subordinated to the will of corporate managers or of peer-review panels (Sinderman, 2001). Scientific research today is often a group effort, combining the work of multiple members of research teams, some at different sites or with different institutions (Biagoli & Galison, 2002).

Given the current state of scientific research, what might be the internal experience of the creative scientist? What are the implications of Dabrowski’s theory for this select group of individuals?

Dabrowski (1970) characterized the gifted and creative as undergoing a process of “positive disintegration” in which inner conflict leads to the breakdown of psychological structures and a reintegration marked by a heightened sense of creativity. The result is not only higher levels of intellectual functioning, but also a strengthening of one’s value system, a deepening of the personality, and the development of broader avenues for expressing
compassion. Dabrowski also postulated the concept of “overexcitabilities.” According to Silverman (1993, p. 13), “overexcitabilities …represent expanded awareness and a heightened capacity to respond to stimuli of various types.”

Van Deur (n.d.) sought to profile high achieving adults who were featured in news accounts or documentaries and to link their behavior to Dabrowski’s overexcitabilities. While she succeeded in profiling high achieving adults in a number of the areas of the arts, she did not include mathematicians or scientists in her study.

The purpose of this paper is to document the existence of overexcitabilities in successful scientists and to chronicle how those scientists moved through Dabrowski’s developmental levels.

**Overexcitabilities in Scientists**

Scientists seem to be particularly strong in four of Dabrowski’s overexcitabilities: Intellectual, imaginational, psychomotor, and emotional. Root-Bernstein et al. (2004) found that creative scientists exhibited superior intelligence, were very much in touch with sensory experiences, and exhibited elaborate fantasies. Sensual OE seems less important, although present in some examples of creative adult scientists.

**Intellectual OE**

When one thinks of the creative physicist, chemist, or computer scientist, one invariably focuses on the intellectual skills of that individual. Individuals high in Intellectual OE are introspective, ask probing questions, do extensive reading and thinking, and focus on problem solving. Nobel prize winner James Watson, who with Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA, was rejected for inclusion in the Terman studies because he did not score high enough on the IQ tests given to prospective subjects in the study. When asked as an adult why he thought he
was bright, he replied that adults told him as a child that he asked interesting questions (Bass & Simon, 1968). According to Joseph Bates, well-known computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University, creative scientists need to be able to generate “crazy random ideas” if they are to be successful (Subotnik, 1993). Even aging scientists place themselves in a learning mode. They “purposely place themselves in the position of becoming novices again every five or ten years [and] become mentally young by starting over again [with] the courage to be ignorant again” (Root-Bernstein et al., 1993).

Imaginational OE

Visualization, dreaming, and an active fantasy life are also characteristic of successful scientists. The classic example of such a scientist is Friedrich Kekule, the chemist who discovered the structure of the benzene ring. While dreaming of atoms spinning in his head, he visualized the larger chains of atoms in the form of a snake. One of the snakes eventually grabbed its own tail, and Kekule awoke with new insight (Koestler, 1967).

More recent research has revealed that Nobel laureates in sciences are more likely to have avocations in the visual arts (Lindauer, 2003) as well as to be enamored of science fiction (Piirto, 2004). Borer (Subotnik, 1994) alluded to the beauty of science that through discovery one creates order and form for information that is useful to a field.

Psychomotor OE

Often overlooked in scientific studies about creative scientists is the role of psychomotor OE. Scientific work is characterized by a high level of energy, marked enthusiasm for a problem, and the capacity to work hard. Indeed, some (e.g. Reis, 1998) have argued that we do not stress enough to gifted young people that doing creative scientific work is hard work. Walberg & Stariha (1992) suggest that 70 hours of work per week for a decade may be needed to achieve
distinction. Lederberg (Subotnik, 1995) commented that a career as a scientific researcher is one of intense involvement, that is both fun and a consuming commitment. Ajzenberg-Selove (1994, p. 224) wrote in her memoir, “Science is not a dead cathedral; it is live and it is fun, and it is full of passion.” Although Dabrowski said that productivity, as a measure of genius, was an American concept (Piirto, 2004), Simonton (1988) found huge productivity to be characteristic of creative scientists. Edison, for example, held over 1000 patents.

Emotional OE

Emotional OE is defined as having intense feelings, whether they are of inferiority, fear, guilt, depression, or loneliness (Silverman, 1993). Cattell & Drevdahl (Piirto, 2004) found that creative scientists were very similar to creative artists with the exception that the former were more emotionally stable. Nevertheless, intense feelings can affect the research experience.

It was very frightening to feel truth dissolve. I remember sitting in a car in Ithaca or Cornell and starting to let go of Einstein and determinism and reality. I was disoriented, I was really disturbed. It was as if safety or security or stability were being dissolved. It really was a difficult time for me. It’s exciting to think about it now, but back then it was scary.

--Joseph Bates (Subotnik, 1993, pp. 319-320)

Other scientists seek not fame but truth. Maria Goeppart-Mayer (Dash, 1988) delayed publishing her Nobel Prize winning discovery several months, out of modesty.

Developmental Potential

These overexcitabilities play a major role in the developmental potential of the creative scientist across the life span. Henderson (2004) has written that technical ability, interpersonal ability, and hardiness play the major roles in the achievement of scientific productivity. To Dabrowski, the interaction between the innate tendencies of the individual and the external
environment result in the growth from the self-interested personality to one (ideally) of a personality that is both comfortable with oneself and with its responsibility toward others. In developing as researchers, successful scientists are able to draw upon their strengths and the traumas of their lives to transform ordinary lives into capable, self-actualized individuals. Follow up studies of Terman’s subjects (Piirto, 2004) found that as adults the “Termites” sought to make their lives whole, achieving success but also balance and peace. Jeffrey Borer, an internationally known research cardiologist, has said

I like to think that the ultimate goal for every child is to grow up to be a happy adult, and that the components of happiness for most people include far more than success in a single field of endeavor.

--Jeffrey Borer (Subotnik, 1994, p. 208)

Early on there is evidence of superior intellectual abilities, imaginational thinking, and a surplus of energy characteristic of psychomotor OE. The future scientist makes bottle rockets, reads Isaac Asimov novels voraciously, and builds a space ship of sheets and chairs in the living room. In school, however, he finds a less supportive environment; courses often cover material he has already mastered, and peers find him weird and bookish. Joshua Lederberg (Subotnik, 1995), Nobel Prize winning physiologist, spoke of the loneliness he experienced in elementary school. Bates (Subotnik, 1993) considered himself different from other students but found companionship through mentors and older students. This loneliness is common to extremely bright scientists and under girds their ability to push beyond the group values (and ideas) of Dabrowski’s second level. Because their self-concept is less dependent on the approval of others, they are more willing to take risks and to push on in their quest for truth. As Piirto (2004) put it, they can “cut one’s own jugular in order to tell the truth.” Borer describes presenting his
revolutionary idea of using imaging technology to study the heart during exercise to others at his institution.

“That is extraordinary! We’ll apply this method during exercise and revolutionize the way cardiology is practiced?” One of the two physicists turned around, looked at me strangely, and said, “That’s ridiculous. It’s technically impossible.” There followed two weeks of discussion and disagreement about the applicability of the imaging program. At the end of this period, I finally said, “You know, you can tell me that this won’t work from today until eternity but I’m never going to believe you because I know that I’m right. Rather than argue about it, why don’t you just let me try it? If it doesn’t work, then I won’t talk about it anymore.”

--Jeffrey Borer (Subotnik, 1994, p. 202)

The feelings of emptiness and lack of a social group drive the scientist’s thinking forward, allowing old structures to give away to new conceptualizations. In moving from the lowest levels through transformative growth, creative scientists have the courage to let go not only because of the confidence in their ideas but also because earlier trauma has prepared them to take high risks. Lederberg (Subotnik, 1995) feels the only worthwhile projects are those that focus on high risk, high stakes problems.

Within the creative process of the research scientist there is often an early disillusionment with current ways of conceptualizing the problem. Whitmore (1980) has argued that the gifted and talented have a super sensitivity that makes them acutely perceptive and sensitive, more analytical and critical, and more discriminating of the details of a problem. New theories originate when scientists begin to question the tenets of a particular theory, develop conceptual arguments against it, and perform experiments to disprove it.

For the individual scientist this process requires risk-taking, going against the established practice or theory in a field. One risks criticism from one’s colleagues and rejection of one’s ideas. Advancing one’s own theory requires not just the soundness of the intellectual idea but
also the emotional stamina to hold fast against the tide of current thinking. For a scientist highly dependent on others for research funding who often works in a research team, going against the grain of current thought can be a painful process. To do so, one must have what James (1902/1936) called “a temper of peace.” One must wrestle with the anxiety of insecurity, both in one’s own ideas and in one’s own status within the intellectual, research community.

The individual scientist must also learn not just the social skills of group process and collaboration but also the ability to function with compassion and without prejudice. When one’s ideas or experiments are attacked, perhaps unfairly, it is tempting to strike back. Yet, if development is to occur, both in the individual and in the field, an absence of ruthlessness is paramount.

A delicate balance must be achieved among the involved personalities if a scientific group is to function. In my own situation as a group leader, I must be constantly aware of the emotions as well as the ideas, of group members, adding a level of complexity beyond that resulting from the work itself. A leader must be sensitive and responsive to nuances of feeling, capacities, and talents to elicit maximal performance from coworkers while producing maximally him or herself in achieving jointly held goals. Of course, the tension to assert oneself and the need to be responsive to others will always exist…

--Jeffrey Borer (Subotnik, 1994, pp. 207-208)

Creative scientists who are able to follow this path exhibit a heightened sense of creativity. Free and at peace, their ideas flow from the unconscious to form new understanding. As Csikszentmihalyi (1997, p. 135) has written, “once we realize what our demons are, we need not fear them any longer. Instead of taking them seriously, we can smile with compassion at the arrogance of these fruits of our imagination.”

There are those (Henderson, 2003, 2004) who would say that scientists are in part able to be freer of outside opinion because their careers give them an ample income and financial
security lacking in many other fields. But Henderson also found that modern scientists exhibited "hardiness" in equal measure with their intellectual and interpersonal strengths. They no longer need the validation provided by publication in journals or participation in professional meetings. Gene Glass, a social science researcher, simply publishes his most recent work on his web site for others to read (Glass, 2004).

In the final analysis scientists are “human beings, not human doers” (Source unknown). In Dabrowski’s own words their “life is the creative product” (Dabrowski, 1970).

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Paper 9). Sal Mendaglio & Michael Pyryt:
The Role of Intelligence in the Theory of Positive Disintegration

Dabrowski’s theory is influential in the area of giftedness, particularly in the socioemotional domain. Intelligence continues to be a primary factor in the definition of giftedness. While many conceptions of giftedness abound, both educators and researchers tend to use superior intelligence as a defining criterion of giftedness. In research conducted on Dabrowski’s theory, particularly relating to overexcitabilities, participants tend to be identified as gifted by using an intelligence-based approach. This session explores the role of intelligence in TPD, with particular focus on Dabrowski’s conception of developmental potential.
The Role of Intelligence in TPD

Sal Mendaglio

Michael C. Pyryt

University of Calgary

The question of the role of intelligence in TPD arises from its popularity in the field of gifted education. In North America, TPD, thanks to the work largely by Michael Piechowski and Linda Silverman, has found a home in gifted education: there is virtually no evidence of the theory in other related fields. The purpose of this paper is to explore the role intelligence plays in advanced development.

Definition and Identification

Various definitions of giftedness with their associated methods of identifying gifted students are found in the field of gifted education. In Terman’s (e.g., Terman and Ogden 1925) seminal work giftedness was operationally defined as an IQ score of 140 and over on the Stanford-Binet test of intelligence. Conceptions of giftedness have expanded significantly since Terman’s days. The field has moved from what some call the “narrow” definition based solely on IQ to encompass other factors, including personality dimensions. The works of Marland and Renzulli in the 1970s were very influential in the movement to a multidimensional and trait approach to giftedness. In addition to superior intellectual potential, Marland’s (1972) conception recognizes children as gifted if they demonstrate high potential or production in specific academic areas. For example, a child demonstrating high ability in Mathematics may be identified gifted in that area but not in others Marland’s definition also recognizes creative thinking, leadership, the visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability as categories of
giftedness. For Renzulli (Renzulli, 1978), above average intellectual ability has to be coupled with task commitment and creativity.

While there are many other conceptions of gifted available (e.g., Gagné, 1993; Gardner, 1983; Silverman, 1997; Roeper, 1982) research and practice in gifted education reveals the continuing influence of both Terman’s and Marland’s approach to definition and identification. In research, a typical criterion for selection of participants is a well-above average score on a test of cognitive abilities. Often this consists of a score of 120 or higher which corresponds to the Superior Range of intelligence (i.e., 120 – 129) in the Wechsler scales (Wechsler). Some researches and school jurisdictions use the IQ 130 cut off for identification of gifted students, which corresponds to the Very Superior range (i.e., 130 and over) in Wechsler tests. Demonstration of high intellectual potential or production persists as a major criterion in the identification of gifted children. Regardless of the proliferation of the multidimensional approach to gifted found in the literature, it appears that intelligence persists as the critical criterion for defining and identifying giftedness.

The emphasis on intellectual potential is in stark contrast to the definitions formally adopted by jurisdiction in North America. The formal policies of these jurisdictions espouse an essentially Marlandian perspective (see, Stephens & Karnes, 2000) on definition driving the identification process for gifted education programs. While there are variations, some of the common elements include a focus on intellectual potential or ability and the addition of other specific areas. A case in point is the Province of Alberta’s definition. “Giftedness is exceptional potential and/or performance across a wide range of abilities in one or more of the following areas: general intellectual, specific academic, creative thinking, social, musical, artistic, and
kinesthetic” (Albert Learning, 2000, p.17). Alberta Learning’s definition is a combination of Marland’s categories and Gardner’s multiple intelligences.

TPD and Gifted Education

Thanks largely to the efforts of Michael Piechowski and Linda Silverman, TPD has found a home in the field of gifted education. In North America, there is virtually no evidence of Dabrowski’s theory in any other field. TPD is a major influence in the social-emotional dimensions of giftedness. For example, gifted individuals’ intense emotionality is explained using TPD; and, some gifted students’ behaviors are seen in the context of overexcitations. TPD is a ubiquitous feature of both published works and national/international conferences in gifted education. There are multitudes of references to Dabrowski’s theory and several conference presentations are evident in annual meetings such as the National Associate for Gifted Children.

In the field of gifted education, TPD is often referred to as a “Theory of Emotional Development” rather than Theory of Positive Disintegration. In our view, TPD is Dabrowski’s theory of personality development and psychotherapy analogous to Freud’s Psychoanalysis or Rogers’ Self Theory. Further, in the research on Dabrowski’s theory a majority of the focus has been on gifted individuals and overexcitations. The typical study in the gifted education literature is to compare a group of students identified as intellectually gifted based on IQ tests with a comparison group of students on the OverExcitabilities Questionnaire (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983). Although gifted students can be differentiated from comparison samples based on responses on the OEQ, the specific pattern of OEs that differentiate between groups varies from study to study. Ackerman (1997) conducted a secondary analysis, which combined data from various studies comparing gifted and comparison samples on the OEQ. The most
discriminating overexcitabilities were intellectual, imaginational, and psychomotor. The median correlation among intellectual, imaginational, and emotional overexcitabilities was .43. A discriminant function based on the pattern of overexcitabilities was able to correctly classify 80% of the non-gifted but only 53% of the gifted. It would appear intellectual overexcitability is indicative of a high IQ. On the other hand, a high IQ does not guarantee the presence of intellectual overexcitability.

As was noted above, research using gifted individuals tends to identify giftedness with high levels of intellectual potential. An assumption that is made in gifted education is that giftedness is equivalent to Dabrowski’s potential for advanced development. This leads one to the one conclusion that all gifted individuals identified through tests of cognitive ability have a similarly high level for advanced development in the Dabrowskian sense. A cursory survey of current and historical figures suggests that this cannot be the case. Ted Kaczynski, the Mathematics professor and infamous “Unabomber” who sent explosive devices by mail, would surely meet the intellectual potential criterion for giftedness but, with equal certainty, would not meet the criteria set out by Dabrowski for advanced development. History is replete with examples of dictators who were undoubtedly characterized by superior or even very superior intelligence (using the Wechsler categories) but were hard hardly exemplars of advanced human development.

TPD and Intelligence

Two themes emerge from contrasting historical figures who serve as exemplars of highly developed humans and those who exemplify evil. First illustrates a central theme of TPD: advanced development is reflected in an altruistic focus, lower level development, in a self-serving one. Intelligence used in the service of others is associated with advanced development.
Intelligence, including very high levels of it, in the service of gratification of one’s drives and instincts is associated with primitive integration. From a Dabrowskian perspective, the relationship between advanced development and intelligence cannot be of the linear type: potential for advanced development does not rise in direct proportion to increases in intellectual potential alone. Intellectual OE is not synonymous with intelligence. Other factors are needed for advanced development.

However, it is also clear from Dabrowskian concepts associated with advanced development that intelligence is implicated. For example, in our view, intelligence underlies dynamism. Self-awareness subject-object-within-oneself, inferiority with oneself all require among other things ability to reflect on and evaluate oneself. Further, autopsycotherapy and education of oneself suggest that a high level of intelligence is part of the factors needed for advanced development. We speculate that crucial Dabrowskian processes require a high level of cognitive processing ability. To quote Dabrowski (1972), “The main factors of personality development are multilevel dynamisms and conflicts, a more or less high degree of insight into oneself, an ability to control and reshape one’s psychical structure, and creative and perfective dynamisms. These factors taken together constitute the inner psychic milieu” (pp.204-205).

Conclusions

Our exploration of the role of intelligence in TPD lead us to the following conclusions: giftedness as defined in terms of superior intelligence is not synonymous with Dabrowski’s notion of advanced development; and that superior intelligence is a necessary but not sufficient factor necessary for advanced development.
Postscript

Since the presentation of this paper, Dr. Laurence Nixon has produced an article published in the Dabrowski newsletter in response to our presentation. In that article, he examined our conclusion that superior intelligence is a necessary but not sufficient condition, in light of Dabrowski’s writings. Dr. Nixon produced an array of quotations from Dabrowski to add further support to our view.

References


POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION AND IQ

At the end of a joint presentation with Michael Pyryt, at The Sixth International Congress of the Institute For Positive Disintegration in Human Development (June 24-26, 2004, Calgary, Alberta, Canada), Sal Mendaglio suggested that a high IQ was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for positive disintegration. Some agreed with Sal and some, including myself, disagreed. Subsequently I looked through Dabrowski’s writings to see what was his position on the matter. From what I have read, it seems clear that Dabrowski holds the position articulated by Sal, and that, furthermore, he provides data to support that view, i.e., that a certain IQ, is a necessary condition for positive disintegration.

There is no question that something Dabrowski refers to as a “high level of intelligence” is one among many factors that can help to loosen the structure of primary integration, thus facilitating the development of personality (for normal persons).

“Among normal primitively integrated people, different degrees of cohesion of psychic structure can be distinguished. The tendency to develop disintegration may be present in greater or lesser degree, but the elements of disintegration are much more feeble than the forces of integration. However, external stress, a high level of intelligence, and a capacity for introspection can help loosen the psychic structure and thus increase the potential for growth.” (1964:66-67)

And wherever Dabrowski refers to intelligence in a diagnosis of a client, high intelligence is found with other factors that indicate a good prognosis (in terms of developmental potential) and average or low intelligence is mentioned as being characteristic of persons without much developmental potential. For example of one patient he regarded as having a good prognosis he says,

“Outstanding affective and imaginative sensitivity, fairly well-developed ability for transposing psychic experience onto the autonomic nervous system. Strong preponderance of
higher levels of emotional life, considerable capacity for inner psychic transformation (when he came for treatment he was looking for help in changing himself, he understood that individual development requires universal attention to human values, and that it cannot be achieved alone). Inner psychic milieu distinctly in hierarchical order. Outstanding intelligence with more facility for the theoretical than the practical.
Some original traits in thinking. Multidirectional abilities. Reality function well developed at higher levels of mental life, and poorly developed at the lower, everyday level....” (1972:83)

But for a 38 year old woman, for whom the prognosis was “doubtful in the sense of positive development” (1972:88), Dabrowski, in his report on the psychiatric examination describes her as,

“Rather sure of herself, authoritarian, weak inhibition, marked ambivalence. Medium level of intelligence, more practical than theoretical. Intelligence in the service of strong basic drives, rigidity of thinking (stereotypy)....” (1972:86)

Thus for the person with good prospects for personality development his intelligence was said to be “outstanding;” but for the person whose prospects were doubtful, her intelligence was said to be merely “medium.” In addition, it was said that her intelligence was more practical than theoretical.

This distinction, made by Dabrowski, between “practical intelligence” and “theoretical (or creative or intuitive) intelligence” is one that is relevant to the question of developmental potential. The latter is what is required for development, the former may also be of value but only if combined with the latter. Ideally, they should both be present.

“If we find in a given individual the group of characteristics of accelerated development, a highly developed inner psychic milieu (which includes, for example, the third factor, the dynamism of inner psychic transformation, autonomy, authenticity, empathy, and the ideal of personality), with distinct creative intelligence and a fairly good practical intelligence, we will have a fairly objective picture of an individual in relation to whom we can clearly foresee his further development in the direction of a creative, empathic, and authentic personality.” (1973:185-186)

But if there is only theoretical intelligence, of a high enough level, it is sufficient.
Practical intelligence is not absolutely necessary. Case 6 in Psychoneurosis is not an illness is an
example. This is a young 23 year old man with a good prognosis for development. Of him Dabrowski says,

“Outstanding affective and imaginational sensitivity, fairly well-developed ability for transposing psychic experience onto the autonomic nervous system. Strong preponderance of higher levels of emotional life, considerable capacity for inner psychic transformation (when he came for treatment he was looking for help in changing himself, he understood that individual development requires universal attention to human values, and that it cannot be achieved alone). Inner psychic milieu distinctly in hierarchical order. Outstanding intelligence with more facility for the theoretical than the practical. Some original traits in thinking.” (1972:83)

A lower level of practical intelligence when combined with a higher level of theoretical intelligence is not a barrier to personality development. On the other hand the reverse situation does not hold out much promise for development. Of normal persons Dabrowski says,

“The most frequent and thus ‘normal’ traits express themselves in the following norms: practical rather than theoretical intelligence, predominantly egocentric rather than theoretical intelligence, predominantly egocentric rather than alterocentric attitudes toward society, and preponderance of the self-preservation, sexual, exploratory, and social instincts. These traits are commonly in compliance with group thinking and behavior and are often accompanied by minor, ‘safe’ dishonesty.” (1964:113)

So it seems that intelligence is a necessary condition for development, but the kind of intelligence required is what Dabrowski calls theoretical. There is another type of intelligence, practical, which is not undesirable, but its presence is not a necessary condition.

However to what does Dabrowski refer when he uses the word, “intelligence.” In some cases it would be reasonable to suspect he is referring not to the intelligence quotient but to intellectual overexcitability. In the following passage Dabrowski associates emotional immaturity (a sign of potential for development) with emotional overexcitability, imaginational overexcitability and intelligence (as well as other characteristics).

“...the most frequent instances of the so-called emotional immaturity occur in children, youths and adults with distinct sensitivity and intelligence; in children that show, at the same time,
excessive sincerity, impulsiveness, emotional and imaginational overexcitability, distinct creative potential and a below average capacity for social adjustment combined with tendencies toward adjustment to value of a higher level...they require more time to satisfy their rich emotional and intellectual needs and, thus, to become ready for future more serious experiences. They mature slowly or show persistent forms of immaturity and potential for further development.” (1973:154)

Dabrowski speaks of intelligence along with emotional and imaginational overexcitability, and further speaks of rich intellectual needs, a description that seems to hint at intellectual overexcitability rather than I.Q., thus making it seem reasonable to interpret the use of “intelligence” as being equivalent to intellectual overexcitability. However the association is merely suggestive of what Dabrowski means by the word intelligence, it is not solid evidence. More convincing is the following passage in which Dabrowski actually defines (in parentheses) the word intelligence as intellectual overexcitability.

“An increased psychic excitability encompasses enhanced excitability of affect, imagination, psychomotor and sensual reactions, and intelligence (intellectual excitability). From these develops a wider spectrum of feelings, an increased field of consciousness, and a greater and more complex pattern of excitation and inhibition. Psychic overexcitability is one of the recognizable components of the developmental potential.” (1972:65)

Therefore, now we know that, in Dabrowski’s written works, at least one meaning of the word intelligence is intellectual overexcitability and not intelligence quotient. Could it be, that when Dabrowski refers to intelligence as being necessary for personality development he is referring to intellectual overexcitability and not a high intelligence quotient?

The problem with such a position is that there are other passages in Dabrowski’s writings where he refers to both intelligence and to intellectual overexcitability as if they were two distinct qualities. In fact in many places he is deliberately distinguishes “intelligence” from intellectual overexcitability. One such passage is his description of intellectual overexcitability at primary integration.
“Intellectual activity consists mainly of skillful manipulation of data and information ("a brain like a computer"). Intelligence rather than intellectual overexcitability serves as an instrument subservient to the dictates of primitive drives.” (1996:78)

In this description, it is clear that intelligence can exist at level I (in the service of primitive drives) but it is some quality other than intellectual overexcitability. However, intelligence is not just neutral. True it can be in the service of lower impulses, but it can also serve a developmental function, as we can see from Dabrowski’s description of role of intelligence in one of his clients.

“In Example no. 6 intelligence is very much in the service of development and it is creative. It is enriched by imaginational and intellectual overexcitability. It strongly contributes to subject-object in oneself and to autopsychotherapy.” (1996:183)

Here intelligence combines with intellectual (and imaginational) overexcitability to facilitate the emergence of level IV dynamisms. So it seems that sometimes intelligence is used synonymously with intellectual overexcitability, but not always, and probably not usually. Thus in addition to intellectual overexcitability there is a quality referred to as intelligence which is also desirable from the perspective of the theory of positive disintegration. But is this quality the same thing as the intelligence quotient. If it is then it is clear that a high intelligence quotient is at least desirable.

Speculation on this matter is unnecessary, because in several instances Dabrowski explicitly refers to the importance of a high intelligence quotient for positive development. However, before we look at those passages, it would be useful to see more clearly how Dabrowski understands intellectual overexcitability and intelligence (in the sense of an intelligence quotient). By intellectual overexcitability, Dabrowski means, among other things, intellectual curiosity.
“For the purposes of our research intelligence was evaluated using the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale. In addition, the material contained in the Autobiography and the Verbal Stimuli was used for an evaluation of the role of intelligence in development. In this case we were looking at intellectual functioning in relation to emotional development. Here caution: intellectual overexcitability should not be confused with intellectual functioning and intelligence. Under the term intellectual overexcitability we put those forms of enhanced reactivity which are expressed in logical and causal cognition focused on finding answers to probing questions.” (1996:182)

In this passage Dabrowski is telling us that, in his research he was interested in both intelligence, as measured by the WAIS, and the role of intelligence in development, as measured by a content analysis of clients’ autobiographies and the Verbal Stimuli test, two methods used to determine the presence of the overexcitabilities, including intellectual overexcitability. In the quote above, Dabrowski is saying that intellectual overexcitability is the application of intelligence (or what is measured by the WAIS) to development. Intelligence and intellectual overexcitability work together, even though they can be distinguished one from the other. Intellectual overexcitability is the tendency to ask probing, or meaningful, questions. But what, in terms of the theory of positive disintegration, is intelligence as measured by the WAIS?

Dabrowski categorizes the intelligence quotient, as determined by the WAIS, as a general ability (or perhaps a set of general abilities—e.g., verbal, visual-spatial); and general abilities are distinguished by Dabrowski from what he calls special abilities.

“The term outstanding abilities denotes abilities (in any field of a man's life) which permit him to achieve results considerably surpassing the average standard accepted for individuals of the same age, education, and so forth. In our examinations we came into contact with two kinds of capabilities: general and special. Outstanding general abilities were noted in children from elementary schools who were able to attain higher than average results in general learning on tests (though in school they did not always attain these results). The I.Q. of this group (general ability) ranged from 120 to 146. General abilities were divided into humanistic, mathematical, and natural. Outstanding special abilities were possessed by children attending art schools. Manifestations of these abilities differentiated into theatrical, dancing, plastic art, and finally into musical abilities. All the examined children who possessed special abilities had an I.Q. rating of
between 110 and 155, that is to say they were, at the same time, generally intellectually capable.” (1967:251-252)

For Dabrowski developmental potential, or potential for positive disintegration and positive secondary integration, consists of psychic overexcitability (emotional, imaginational, intellectual, sensual and psychomotor), indicators of multilevelness, special interests, special abilities (or capabilities or talents) and general abilities (including a high intelligence quotient). While Dabrowski distinguishes between general and special abilities, he has observed they are often found together, and that they are in turn associated with indicators of multilevelness.

There are a number of descriptions of individual case studies in which Dabrowski provides the I.Q. of the individual under examination. And in all of these a high I.Q. is associated with qualities, from psychoneurosis to special abilities, that imply positive developmental potential, and frequently Dabrowski explicitly states that their prognosis for development is a good one. Here are three examples:

“During the preschool period Ella had been an obedient girl but from time to time emotionally overexcitable...She had always had a great deal of inhibition. At 4 1/2 she had begun to discuss with her parents the problems of loss, of death, and of life after death....Ella's I.Q. was 128. ....Ella was an introvert with rather schizothymic traits....and inclined to be emotionally overexcitable....she leaned toward moral and social concerns. She presented the type of emotional tension very closely related to psychic development....We see in this case a fairly early stage of positive disintegration with emotional overexcitability, ambivalences, and the initial formation of the psychic internal environment.” (1967:196-197)

“Below we give an example of a set of anxiety neurosis with neurasthenic and hypochondriacal components:

“An example of hysterical sets with psychic emotional overexcitability and anxiety follows:
Girl, aged 20, with good home background; 116 I.Q. Outstanding ability in all general subjects, and in dancing and acting.
As one may see from the above examples the psychoneurotic symptoms were often displayed by great tension which caused frequent conflicts with the environment. They often lead to a dissipation of the positive developmental qualities…” (1967:254-255)

In the three case studies cited above, there was a good prognosis, from the perspective of the theory of positive disintegration, and in all three the I.Q. was well above average.

Well even if it is the case that a high I.Q. is frequently found in persons with overexcitability, with special abilities, with highly developed interests, is it necessarily the case that those with a low I.Q. have little if any potential for positive development? This is, in fact, Dabrowski’s understanding, and his position is not based on pure speculation, but rather on research.

“The author's clinical experience and investigations demonstrated the existence of positive correlation between outstanding abilities and periods of psychic disequilibrium (especially psycho neuroses) and of negative correlation between mental deficiency and neurotic behavior. Clinical studies that support this conclusion can be summarized as follows:

(1) Psychiatric examinations of 170 normal children carried out in public schools, schools of fine arts, and the Academy of Physical Education, by the Institute of Mental Hygiene and the Children's Psychiatric Institute in Warsaw have shown that about 85% of the subjects with I.Q. from 120 to 150 have various symptoms of nervousness and slight neurosis, such as mild anxiety, depression, phobias, inhibitions, slight tics and various forms of overexcitability.

(2) The examination of about 75 mentally retarded children in Poland and in Canada has not revealed traits or syndromes which can be properly called psychoneurotic. The absence of psychoneurotic syndromes in mental retardation has been confirmed by many other studies and is generally accepted.” (1970:18-19)

Based on Dabrowski’s own research it can be said that Sal’s hypothesis is a reasonable one, namely that mentally retarded children show no signs of developmental potential and that many (85%), but not all, of those with a high I.Q. do possess some measure of developmental potential. In other words, a high I.Q. is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for personality development.
However, quite apart from the ongoing need for replicating research results, there remain some unanswered questions. The first is, what level of I.Q. is absolutely required for positive disintegration? Dabrowski reports that, for all the children he examined who had both general and special abilities, the lowest I.Q. score was 110. This would suggest that an I.Q. at or above 110 meets the level required for personality development. And if we take as our definition of mental retardation, or cognitive disability, an I.Q. of 70 or less, then an I.Q. at or below 70, according to Dabrowski’s research, is not sufficient for personality growth. So we know that the necessary I.Q. is somewhere between 70 and 110, but (if 15 points on the WAIS is one standard deviation) this range covers approximately 60% of the population. It would be helpful to have a more precise idea of what level of intelligence is absolutely required. Another question, actually a double question, is, to what extent is I.Q. a result of a stimulating and supportive environment, and correspondingly, to what extent is cognitive disability a result of a lack of a stimulating and supportive environment and of being socially marginalized as a result of being labeled “retarded?”

References


Laurence Nixon
Religion Department
Dawson College
Montreal
This presentation will demonstrate useful linkages between psychodynamic object relations theory and the theory of positive disintegration. A brief outline of some basic variants of object relations theory will be presented first and this will be followed by a theoretical section in which elements of the two theory “sets” will be integrated, or substituted one for another. Resulting from this integration, a broad developmental “sweep” that incorporates both theories will be presented. In addition, the relation of different forms of object relations units will be correlated with the vicissitudes of the OE’s. In this, I will be continuing the argument of previous papers that the OE profile is not only a result of genetic inheritance, but also a result of second and third factor variables.

Having established these theoretical linkages, I will present clinical cases that illustrate the application of this integrated model. These clinical cases will be drawn from a range of Dabrowskian levels with varied OE profiles. This variation in clinical cases should also demonstrate the “performance envelope” of the integrated ideas presented at the outset.

See accompanying file HazellHO.pdf
Paper 11). Susan Jackson:

Becoming a Person: A Dabrowskian Perspective

“Becoming a person combines the essential sameness and uniqueness of all human beings as we grow into who we are called to BE. The main thing, as I see it, is directed toward helping, completely, other people. In the great economy of being we need to be there for each other. Simply put, I do not have to like you but I do have to love you. I need to live my personhood in relation to that and to you, whatever you are like.” (notes from case file “T” (2004), 22 year old profoundly gifted male).

What is the nature of development for individuals imbued with great developmental potential? What is the nature of growth through positive disintegration? Rich evidence from case studies, extensive clinical materials and interview protocols reveal the awe, the agony and the grace of multilevel development.
Paper 12). Vicky Frankfourth Moyle:

DP meets DP: Multilevelness and the Crucial Role Of DP Identification in the Therapeutic Relationship

The presenter will emphasize the importance of a minimal level of personality development for any therapist attempting to use TPD as a conceptual foundation for therapy. Although Dabrowski advocated the idea of autopsychotherapy, the role of a practitioner to assist development and provide encouragement and comfort seems especially necessary in the environment of unilevel culture with a pathological worldview. Awareness of the state of consciousness of a client prior to disintegration, understanding of a multilevel vs. unilevel perception, and utilization of the developmental potential of the client is crucial for the practitioner in order to conduct any kind of meaningful therapeutic relationship with a high DP client in the throes of disintegration. The presenter will compare TPD with the work of several transpersonal theorists/practitioners. How to encourage the inclusion of TPD in the historical canon of psychological thought and the conceptual foundation of Transpersonal literature will also be discussed.
As Kazimierz Dabrowski said in his 1979 “Mental Health,” once in a while a child is born like no other; a child, whose presence enriches lives of those around him in unexpected ways. Although it is not always easy for others to define what exactly constitutes his gifts, they nevertheless feel privileged to be in his presence as he brings out the best in them; helps them see their lives in new, meaningful ways; and makes them marvel at the generosity of nature, or the mysterious workings of God.

Such a child was born on August 26, 1845 in a small Polish town of Igolomia. His name was Adam Bernard Chmielowski. Years later, he assumed a name of Brother Albert, and became known as the father of the poor and homeless, God’s servant, a saint.

This presentation will portray Adam Chmielowski’s developmental journey—a journey that vividly illustrates principles of growth through positive disintegration arising from high developmental potential. Chmielowski’s life exemplifies a textbook case of global and accelerated development. It provides a direct empirical confirmation of Dabrowski’s theoretical insights on the nature of human emotional and moral development, particularly on the interplay between the instincts of creativity and self-perfection. The presentation will be illustrated with pictures of Chmielowski’s paintings, which both heralded and chronicled transformations of his inner world.
Ecce Homo

Adam Chmielowski’s Journey through Positive Disintegration

By Elizabeth Mika

Presented at the Sixth International Congress on the Dabrowski’s
Theory of Positive Disintegration
June 2004, Calgary, Canada

I would like to thank Sister Krzysztof Maria Babraj from the Order of Sisters Albertines in Krakow for providing me with materials about Brother Albert’s life.

Theoretical Considerations

Studying biographies of eminent individuals and personality exemplars using the TPD-based conceptual framework allows us to describe developmental forces shaping their lives and map out certain developmental trends that may deepen our understanding of human psychological growth in its multilevel and multidimensional richness and variety.

The life of Adam Chmielowski, aka Brother Albert, an artist-turned-monk-turned-humanitarian, exemplifies a case of global and accelerated personality development through positive disintegration. As such, Chmielowski’s case is invaluable for students and researchers of TPD as
it provides an empirical validation of the theory’s basic tenets. Apart from its scientific value, however, Chmielowski’s life is even more an inspiring example of things developmentally possible for those of us engaged in a search for authentic existence. (Brother Albert is recognized as a Catholic saint -- his selfless work and religious devotion prompted efforts for his canonization, completed in November 1989.)

According to the Theory of Positive Disintegration, personality growth through positive disintegration is guided by the developmental instinct. As Dabrowski says, “The whole process of transformation of primitive drives and impulsive functions into more reflective and refined functions occurs under the influence of evolutionary dynamisms which we call the developmental instinct.” (Dabrowski et al., 1973, p.22). The instinct of development arises from and eventually transcends the instinct of self-preservation in individuals endowed with high developmental potential. It contains “separate nuclei of transformation; of possible disintegrative processes; of the inner psychic milieu, special interests and talents; and the nuclei of the fundamental essence of human existence – i.e. the most substantial individual human properties.” (ibid., p.23). The multilevel approach of TPD differentiates two distinct multilevel parts within the instinct of development: a lower creative instinct and a higher instinct of self-perfection.

The creative instinct encompasses and expresses various dynamisms characteristic of both UL and ML disintegration, while the instinct of self-perfection is associated with higher dynamisms expressive of organized multilevel disintegration, and is the dominant force in the later stage of development, the borderline between levels IV and V. Dabrowski considered the instinct of self-perfection “the highest instinct of a human being” (ibid., p. 32).
As Dabrowski says, “The creative instinct can operate at the stage of unilevel disintegration. The multilevel dynamisms and hierarchies are not as indispensable in its development as in the instinct of self-perfection. The creative instinct does not necessarily express universal, fully rounded development. Very often it is based on partial disintegration. In this instinct sensual and imaginational hyperexcitabilities play the greatest role. Inner psychic transformation, and especially the transgression of the psychological type and the biological life cycle do not show the necessary globality; they are partial only. The instinct of self-perfection does not usually embrace a narrow area, but the whole or at least the greater part of the personality of the individual. All its functions are shaped so as to “uplift” man. It is the expression of the necessary, self-determined “raising up” in a hierarchy of values toward the ideal of personality.” (ibid., p.30)

The interplay of these two developmental forces, which can act in concert and in opposition, is responsible for creating a rich inner milieu, full of contradicting desires and ripe for inner conflicts, which, in turn, lead to and guide disintegrative processes of both unilevel and multilevel kind. It can be argued that an assessment of the strength of both instincts (creative and self-perfection) would allow us to make predictions about the shape and direction of an individual’s development. Such predictions, however, by necessity would be crippled by uncertainty inherent in our judgment of the causes and results of complex human behavior.

In Adam Chmielowski’s case, we can follow the evolution of his developmental instinct throughout his life and observe the shaping of his personality through both the instinct of
creativity, dominating the first part of his life; and the instinct of self-perfection, which although present almost from the beginning of his life, gradually gained strength and became the primary developmental force in its later part, after a dramatic period of global positive disintegration. As his first biographer wrote, “His life was full of contradictions and surprises.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.7) Very early on, we can observe in Adam manifestations of high developmental potential: high intelligence, abundant forms of all five types of overexcitabilities, artistic and humanistic interests, and, already in childhood, precursors of multilevel dynamisms seen in his attitudes of responsibility, honesty, and a desire for authenticity and self-improvement. At the same time, the richness of his developmental potential set the conditions for inner conflicts and contradictions, among which the conflict between his creative instinct and emerging instinct of self-perfection took the center stage for many years of his life.

**Adam’s Childhood and Youth**

Adam Chmielowski was born on August 26, 1845 in a small Polish town of Igolomia. His parents belonged to impoverished Polish nobility. His father, Wojciech, was a customs administrator in Igolomia; his mother, Jozefa, a delicate and religious woman, with tact and a sense of humor ran their household. Adam was a beautiful child, whose intelligence, mature sensibility and physical beauty never failed to impress others. His own father wrote this about his 1-year-old son in a letter to his relatives:

“My son is a big man and I can count on him completely in so many respects; he is very sensible, understands everything, walks by himself, even though they try to hold his hand. A beautiful
child; I’m looking at him not through the father’s eyes, but (...) he is so lovely and admirable that all who see him always say they have never seen such a beautiful child.” (Kluz, 1981, p.14)

Little Adam was christened at 2, and as one story goes, his parents invited beggars congregating around the church to be his godparents and secure the blessing of the poor for their son.

(picture 1)

When Adam was 8, his father died of tuberculosis, leaving the widow with four young children and little money, since most of their finances were spent on Wojciech’s doctors and medications. Adam was sent to Petersburg where he could get free education as a child of a government employee. At 11, he was enrolled in a military school, where he excelled in studies and self-discipline. In spite of his admirable attitude toward his studies, he missed his family greatly and often cried at night. When he came home on vacation, his mother was terrified to find out that his already excellent – and growing -- mastery of the Russian language was threatening his ability to use Polish. She decided not to send him back to Petersburg, but enrolled him instead in a Polish gymnasium in Warsaw.

Mrs. Chmielowska, not even 40 yet, died in August 1858. The fate of the four Chmielowski children from now on would be decided by a family council consisting of relatives and friends of the family.
Adam’s next educational step was the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry in Pulawy, the only academic center open to Polish youth in the region. (picture 2)

In 1862, when Chmielowski began his studies there, the conflicts between Poles and occupying Russians grew to dangerous levels. On January 23, 1863, the tensions culminated in the January Uprising, one of the most heroic events in the history of the Polish fight for freedom. Chmielowski, along with almost all the students of the Institute, joined the uprising. He was 17 and ½. Adam’s participation in the Uprising was characterized as much by his personal courage, witnessed and reported by his comrades in arms, as by several unusual strokes of luck that helped him stay alive in very dire circumstances. He fought, he was arrested, escaped from prison, joined the resistance again, fought again, was seriously wounded in a battle of Melchow, and was captured by Russians, who, instead of killing him, as it was to be expected, treated his wounds. Unfortunately, part of this treatment involved amputating his left leg – without painkillers. The only means of easing the pain was a cigar, which Adam swallowed whole, still burning, in the agony of the amputation.

His friends from this period remembered him as a courageous and honest young man, liked by everyone, who “with his joyfulness and enthusiasm energized in the saddest moments the whole camp.” (Kluz, 1981, p.33)
Adam’s family was able to negotiate his release from the Russians, and, in order to protect him from possible reprisals for his involvement in the failed uprising, sent him to Paris in 1864, with very meager financial means, which were used partially to purchase an artificial leg for him.

From Paris, young Adam returned to Warsaw, where he wanted to enroll in an art school. His family council, however, did not approve of this choice, believing that art was not a suitable occupation choice for a young man. They sent him to Belgium to study engineering, borrowing money for his education. Adam did not like science and engineering did not interest him at all. He returned to Warsaw, and from there, after obtaining, seemingly in another stroke of luck, a generous stipend to study abroad, he set out to Munich to study art. (picture 3)

The Artist

In Munich, which at that time was home to the most prestigious Academy of Art in Europe, Adam, who was 25 then (1869), joined a group of Polish artists, who were among the Polish artistic elite – or on their way there. Jozef Brandt and Maksymilian Gierymski, two eminent Polish painters, became Chmielowski’s best friends. Adam studied hard, despite his very precarious financial standing with the academy. He worked with particular efforts on his drawing skills, which were his weakness. At that time his development intensified. His friends and acquaintances remarked on his severe self-criticism and demands from himself, and constant self-doubts, combined with a critical approach not only to his own creations, but also to art in general. He was particularly dismayed with what he saw as commercialization of art and its artifice that rendered it dishonest and superficial. To him, art was the means of expressing one’s
soul. His goal as an artist was to “minimize the gap between thought and its expression in a painting” (Kluz, 1981, p.45) With the goal in mind, he put particular efforts into perfecting his skills. He approached his work with the characteristic honesty and obsessive devotion. Many of his letters that survived from this period portray Chmielowski as much devoted to art as lamenting, often with a mocked desperation, over its demands on one’s life.

His first exhibited work, “An Italian Siesta,” (picture 6) was received with mixed reviews: Some appreciated its subtle and poetic harmony, the original use of color, and a mysterious subject that stimulated imagination; while others criticized it as unfinished and amateurish. Chmielowski was undaunted by the criticisms. He continued working and learning, searching, critically, for his own style:

“They say that style and the man are one and the same; I don’t know how true this is, but that a painting and the one who paints it are the same, of that I’m completely convinced. (…) However God made one, that’s how one will paint.” (Kluz, 1981, p.65)

His own style evolved through mythological inspirations, fairy tales, and influences of Greek and Italian cultures toward sad, mystical landscapes and religious scenes. He saw the essence of art to be an expression of the human soul. In his 1879 essay, “On the Essence of Art,” Chmielowski defined a work of art as “any honest and direct expression of human soul” in an artist’s works. Authenticity mattered more than acquired skills, according to Chmielowski. As his artistic work progressed, it became increasingly more connected to the contents of his inner milieu; it not only illustrated his current state of mind, but also heralded changes to come.
During his stay in Munich, Adam’s social contacts strengthened. He formed exclusive and enduring friendships with his Polish fellow artists, especially with Maks Gierymski, whose diaries preserved recollections of a very close, though at times conflictual relationship between the two men. The conflicts had largely to do, it seemed, with Adam’s growing religious fervor and seriousness toward life and their work. At that time, he became a sought out authority among his friends not only as an objective and wise critic of their work, but also as a great companion appreciated for his personal charm, kindness, loyalty and a great sense of humor, especially for his penchant for practical jokes (one of them involved putting his artificial leg under the wheels of an upcoming carriage).

At the same time, along with continuing self-doubts, other desires began to take shape in his feelings and thoughts. “Can one also serve God while serving art? Christ says that one cannot serve two masters. Though art is not money, it is not god either – rather an idol. I think that serving art always amounts to idolatry, unless one can, like Fra Angelico, use his art and talent and thoughts to devote to God’s glory and paint holy images; but one should, like him, purify oneself and sanctify and enter a monastery, because it is difficult to find such holy inspiration in the world-at-large. These questions are old things, no doubt; but when one grows older and starts gaining some wisdom, one would gladly learn which one is his path and what will matter in his life. It’s a very beautiful thing – the holy pictures; I would very much like to ask God to let me make them, but only from true inspiration and this is not given to just anyone. So much suffering and best blood goes into painting. If only there was some good use for it.” (Kluz, 1981, p.71).
Descriptions of Adam as a young man portray him as tall, well built, handsome (beautiful), with regular facial features, large expressive eyes, and a long beard (pictures 4 and 5). Helena Modrzejewska, a famous Polish actress and a very close friend and promoter of Chmielowski and other Polish artists of his generation, described Adam this way:

“Chmielowski has been a walking example of all Christian virtues and deep patriotism – almost without a physical body, breathing poetry, art and love of one’s neighbor, a nature so pure and free of egoism, whose motto should be: happiness for all, and glory to art and God!” (Kluz, 1981, p.89)

Another characterization, by a friend artist:

“Adam was a strong well built man, dark haired, with a straight nose and gentle blue eyes. His beard and mustache dark, closely cropped. His behavior was aristocratic. Sometimes a grimace showed on his lips. He was about thirty years old. (…) His stomach problems grew stronger due to his lack of physical activity and Adam was frequently upset. He was irritated by everything and displeased at those times. He only grew livelier in good company, because he was such a refined conversationalist. He spoke fluent German and French. In his good moments, he painted such impressions that they simply blew us away. Unfortunately, he destroyed almost all of them in his moments of depression. Of course, he never made any money and he did not care about it.(…) He was the smartest among us painters. Even though he could never finish anything and destroyed magnificent works. (…) His color sensitivity was so great (…) nothing made him
more upset than disharmony of colors. (…) When he noticed a false tone, he had a wry face, as if he bit a pepper seed, and his mood was spoiled for some time.” (Kluz, 1981, p. 85 and 86)

The Munich period ended for Chmielowski sadly with the death of his beloved friend, Maks Gierymski, in September 1874. Gierymski died in Chmielowski’s arms, and Adam was one of two people present at his funeral.

After Munich, Chmielowski traveled to Krakow and Warsaw, and spent time with friends, continuing his artistic work. Leon Wyczolkowski, a painter and Chmielowski’s friend and roommate in 1879 in Lwow, had this to say:

“Chmielowski was our teacher; a refined man, a deep mind (…) A sophisticated person, a passionate artist with lots of verve. He did a salto mortale in his life – not everyone can do it. (…) An interesting life. Never discussed his love life with me. Funny, humorous, an extraordinary story-teller.” (Kluz, 1981, p. 100)

Chmielowski’s love life is a mystery, but some accounts link him romantically to Lucyna Siemienska, daughter of his benefactor, Lucjan Siemienski. There are numerous letters and notes from Chmielowski to Lucyna, who looked favorably upon Adam’s interest, as her sister reported in her recollections of Chmielowski. Her father, however, unhappy with the idea of a struggling painter as a candidate for his son-in-law, married Lucyna off to a rich landowner. After that, Chmielowski never mentioned Lucyna’s name.
As Chmielowski continued his artistic career, he grew more dissatisfied with both his artistic endeavors and his life in general. “What can I write you about myself,” he said in a letter to Lucjan Siemienski, “only that I keep painting with passion. I am a rather crazy individual, it seems, because I do not feel too good in the real world, so I run away into trifles that I create in my imagination and I live there among them; it is a rather funny way to chase away worries, and given my inherent slackness, a practical one. But for how long?” (Nowaczynski, 1939, in Ryn, 1986, p.546). This self-assessment shows Chmielowski’s maladjustment to everyday reality, with the concurrent positive adjustment to higher level world of his ideals. The growing gap between the two, however, was taking an increasing toll on his physical and mental health: “I’ve lost my joy and my carefree attitude, and I’m afraid for myself because of my fancy tastes;” “I’m very nervous and somewhat unwell…, my mind gets sick sometimes; it’s a common malady among people, even though they do not admit it, and they only notice it when a patient has to be put away in a crazy house.” (Ryn, 1986, p.546)

The processes of disintegration, taking shape in his inner milieu, were noted by others who reported changes in his demeanor; and illustrated in his art, which began to grow darker in tone. Paintings such as “An Abandoned Church,” (picture 7) “A Grave of a Suicide Victim,” “A Funeral of a Suicide Victim,” (he destroyed both), “An Abandoned Horse” (picture 8), expressed his growing sadness, inner loneliness and awareness of his distance – from his true self and from God. It is characteristic that his landscapes painted during this period are suffused with the same mood of loneliness and desolation.
His treatment of human subjects is also interesting. When we look at Chmielowski’s portraits, we notice immediately that many of their subjects do not look directly at the viewer – they are either turned away or aside, or gaze longingly in the distance – too remote and withdrawn, too absorbed in their own inner lives to pay much attention to the outside world. Those faces that are in full view strike us with their overwhelming sadness that has almost a pleading quality to it (picture 9). No matter what the theme of his painting, people he painted, almost all of them, look like lost or abandoned children, isolated in their sadness from themselves and from the world.

Perhaps not surprisingly, portraits and photographs of Chmielowski, himself an orphan, express a similar emotional tone. They show an emotional and spiritual evolution of the man in a strikingly clear manner. We see him early on as a thoughtful, searching yet hopeful young man, whose life seems to him full of possibilities. As he grows older, the sadness hinted in his eyes grows, erasing the subtle signs of optimism and hope visible in his youthful portraits. The sadness takes on the tone of despair and turns into unbearable suffering, culminating in the period of Chmielowski’s mental crisis and expressed, in his art, by the hauntingly beautiful painting, “Ecce Homo.” (picture 11) Chmielowski’s picture taken right after his release from the mental hospital shows a man who appears lost to himself and the world, transformed – and emptied, but not broken -- by the agony of prolonged mental suffering (picture 12). This picture, it is important to note, appears to be taken when Chmielowski was still in the throes of depression which was to lift several months later. Sunken cheeks in a sickly, thin face; the same sad, deep eyes, which, although no longer hopeful, contain glimmers of resolve -- the severity of his suffering here is palpable.
Throughout his whole life Chmielowski created over 60 oil paintings, numerous watercolors, drawings and sketches. There is no reliable record of how many of his works he destroyed. This tendency to destroy one’s art is an expression of the partial death instinct and intensifying instinct of self-perfection, frequently observed in lives of individuals with high developmental potential in the periods of accelerated development. On the symbolic level, it can be interpreted as a need to destroy one’s old values and ways of thinking, even though the new ones are not yet formed, but barely intuited.

Chmielowski’s work in general received mixed critical reviews. He was universally praised for his innovative use of color and light, but some held against him his lack of strong drawing abilities and what they perceived to be a lack of substance and moodiness of his artwork. Ironically then, his one painting that received excellent reviews was one of two of early religious paintings, “A Vision of St. Margaret.” (picture 10) This particular painting, though critically acclaimed, appears to be imitative in nature and lack the authenticity that Chmielowski considered to be the essence of art.

About the same time when Chmielowski made “A Vision of St. Margaret,” he began painting “Ecce Homo,” (picture 11) his favorite painting, on which he worked for several years, took with him everywhere and never really finished. It was 1879.

“Ecce Homo” is a painting is like no other. It mesmerizes with the depth of feeling expressed in Jesus’ face and makes even a reluctant observer stop and ponder both the mystery of Christ’s life and suffering, as well as the artist’s skill in depicting it. It also makes one wonder what kind of
emotional work went into creating this painting, which is described as follows by Leon Wyczółkowski:

“The deepest expression of Christ Chmielowski showed in Ecce Homo. It’s a gray day, it’s raining. Christ tortured, his eyes sunk deeply inside. That’s what happened and what had to happen. Christ exhausted, mistreated, spat on, wrapped in a purple cloth, but his eyes are looking inward.” (Kluz, 1981, p.106)

Ecce Homo – Behold the man -- are words of Pontius Pilate presenting the tortured Christ to the public demanding his execution. These words have deeply symbolic meaning and it is no mistake that Chmielowski chose them as the title of his most important and most moving painting, the one which ushered a new, and very dramatic period of his life.

In September 1880, Chmielowski entered a Jesuit convent, to a great surprise of his relatives and friends. He did not confide his plans to anyone, but just before taking this step, he sent letters to his closest friends, in which he explained his decision as dictated by his serious concern over the state of his soul and the future, eternal life. In those letters, he exhorted his friends to abandon the “aesthetic silliness” of art for art’s sake, and devote their lives to God. He also expressed hope that his artwork from now on would be better and more prolific.

This is what he wrote to Helena Modrzejewska:
“I could no longer stand this bad life, with which the world is feeding us, I couldn’t bear the heavy chains any longer. The world like a thief steals every day and every hour all that is good in our hearts, steals our peace and happiness, steals God and heaven. For all this I’m entering the convent: if I lost my soul, what else would I have had left?”

(…) Even though I don’t know whether I have a talent or just a tiny gift, I know for certain that I’m on my way back from the banks of this sad river that has swallowed so many victims, and still keeps swallowing more! Art and only art, anything for her smile, or a shadow of her smile, for only one rose from the wreath of this goddess, because it brings fame and wealth and personal satisfaction – no matter the rest; one loses family, morality, one’s country, one’s relationship with God in this crazy race; one loses everything that’s good and holy, years are passing, physical body deteriorates, and with it the so-called talent – what remains is only despair or idiocy on the bottom of one’s skull; and beyond that – death; but even if only death and nothingness, but not even that, because the soul never dies.

(…) I’ve thought for a long time in my life about who is this queen art, and I’ve understood that it is only a figment of our imagination, or rather a horrific nightmare which prevents us from seeing the real God. Art is only an expression and nothing else, works of the so-called art are only physical manifestations of our soul, they are only our works – and it’s a good thing we make them, quite simply, for this is a natural way to communicate and understand each other. But if in those works we pay honors to ourselves and give everything away, then, even though it is called the cult of art, in reality it is only masked egoism; and to worship oneself is the stupidest and most abominable kind of idolatry.” (Kluz, 1981, p.112).
Though the letters offer a clear indictment of his previous lifestyle and his pursuit of artistic career, they are also very optimistic and express his joy from finally finding the right path for his life. (“In thoughts of God and future things I’ve finally found happiness and peace, which I sought in my life without success.” (…) “I’ve started novitiate, I feel very happy.” (…) “I’m sending you good and joyful news, joyful for me beyond all words, I’ve entered a convent.” Kluz, 1981, p. 113)

The Crisis

A truly authentic attitude has three methods of resolving intellectual and emotional tensions: mental illness, suicide, or struggling toward the absolute despite great difficulties and few results. (Dabrowski 1972, p.18)

Chmielowski took the habit on October 10, 1880. In April 1881, he was asked to leave the convent. The reason: mental illness. Doctors treating Chmielowski quoted the Jesuits’ opinion about him:

“They noted a gentle and well educated character, in general well developed and rich, with certain eccentricity of affects and imagination both in his ideas and religious asceticism. The illness occurred together with strong pangs of conscience, self-condemnation, terror of his own death and eternal damnation, and thoughts about his unworthiness of being a Jesuit.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.41)
On April 17, 1881, Chmielowski was placed in a mental hospital in Kulparkowo, near Lwow, where he stayed till January 22, 1882. He was diagnosed with “hypochondria, melancholy, religious insanity, anxiety, psychic oversensitivity” (Kluz, 1981, p.113) As reported by his doctors, he was able to logically present his symptoms of depression and anxiety, did not eat and had to be fed by force, did not sleep well or at all, and complained of stomach problems. He also stopped smoking at that time, and some speculated that this brought on the nervous attack.

When the hospital stay failed to improve his condition, Adam was released to his brother, Stanislaw, and stayed with his family in Kudrynce throughout the summer of 1882, still ill, silent, completely withdrawn, barely existing. His doctors as well as his friends considered his state hopeless. Jozef Chelmonski, a fellow artist, visited Adam in the hospital and wrote this to his wife:

“Adam Chmielowski went crazy in the Jesuit convent and now is in a mental hospital. I was upset by this, but now I will talk to him, he is like a dead man.” And, in a later letter:

“In Lwow, I saw Adam Chmielowski, who is with the crazies. He has awfully deteriorated, probably won’t survive.”(Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.43)

Those who saw him during that time recalled a man “deeply buried in sadness, who spent all his days in his room, silent, despondent, refusing food or drink, immersed in horrible inner suffering. How long it lasted, I don’t know, but any attempts to take him out of his apathy were futile; he did not dare to take holy sacraments, did not leave the house, nor dared to step over the threshold of a nearby church.” (Kluz, 1981, p.114)
A friend, quoted in Ryn, said:

“Adam withdrew completely from other people, even from contacts with the closest family; not only did not spend time with anyone, but fell silent, mute, as if he completely lost his hearing and ability to talk. Usually he sat in his room, where his food was brought, sometimes he walked like a shadow in the garden and then came back to his room, deep in his sadness, bitterness and utter abandonment, as if in the agony of soul. This state lasted weeks and months, maybe over half a year. Others around him in Kudrynce got used to it and left him alone, and practically stopped caring for him.” (Ryn, 1986, p.552)

Chmielowski himself, later in life, when asked about those experiences, stated: “I was conscious, did not lose my senses, but was undergoing horrible pain and suffering and the most awful scruples. I entered the Jesuit convent, but God wanted something different for me.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.44)

There are several theories on the origins and meaning of Chmielowki’s psychological crisis. Kaczmarzyk, for example, attributes it to a drastic lifestyle change required by the Jesuits: quitting smoking, limited physical activity, requirements of the severe ascetic life were too much to bear for a sensitive nature like Chmielowski. His doctors considered a possibility of the trauma of war and his handicap as conditions contributing to his breakdown. One cannot completely discount the role of his early traumas – deaths of his parents, his participation in the bloody uprising and the loss of a limb, as well as the recent death of his closest friend, Maks Gierymski. While any and all of these factors may have, and most likely did play a role in
bringing Chmielowski to the point of such a deep crisis, they certainly do not explain either the crisis itself nor its subsequent resolution.

This period of Chmielowski’s life is treated variously in materials available about his life. Some authors do not mention it at all, others talk about it very briefly, struggling with ways to understand and explain it. Some use the term “God’s trials,” others borrow St. John of the Cross’ phrase “the dark night of the soul.” There is an aura of mystery and at times slight embarrassment surrounding the mentions of Chmielowski’s illness in his biographies. One notable exception is Z. Ryn’s article devoted specifically to Chmielowski’s psychological make-up and psychiatric problems. But even Ryn makes a puzzling remark that Chmielowski’s diagnosis was ‘thankfully’ changed in years after his death – from schizophrenia to depression. Thankfully, because this change made possible the process of his beatification.

For those familiar with the Theory of Positive Disintegration, Chmielowski’s crisis appears to be a period of global and accelerated growth through positive disintegration. It was a painful and often frightening process, but one that was developmentally necessary for Adam as it set the stage for his work at the next developmental level – of organized multilevel disintegration. It is not difficult to see in Chmielowski’s symptoms an acute intensification of dynamisms of spontaneous ML disintegration: feelings of guilt, dissatisfaction with himself, augmented by a desire for self-mortification by refusal to eat, intense inner conflict, and moral scruples signaling work of the “active conscience,” which is how Dabrowski called the dynamism of third factor.
The end of Chmielowski’s illness, or the period of accelerated spontaneous disintegration, was as mysterious and sudden as was its beginning. Dabrowski calls such a dramatic realization that affects permanent developmental changes in behavior “sudden dynamic insight.” (Dabrowski, 1998, p.69).

In August 1882, almost a year and a half after the onset of his illness, Adam underwent a striking and unexpected transformation in his behavior. As the story goes, he overheard a conversation that his brother had with a priest. Afterwards, as a family friend recalled, “When a servant entered his room with food, Adam unexpectedly spoke to him, asked him to prepare a horse-driven cart, because he had to leave. The stunned boy could not believe his ears hearing Adam speak. In the meantime, Adam got into the cart and galloped beyond the Russian border toward Kamieniec Podolski, to a very decent priest, with whom he confessed his sins and took Holy Communion. And he returned to Kudrynce changed beyond recognition. Happiness and joy and deep peace emanated from his face, love and affectation of gratitude, goodness and strange compassion toward people.” (Lewandowski, in Ryn, 1986, p.554)

His family was amazed by his transformation, “seeing him constantly happy, sharing, simple, beaming with joy, though still needing solitude.” (Ryn, p.554)

A priest who met Chmielowski after the crisis, had this to say about him:

“A tall well built man, his facial features appeared taken from some ancient painting. Closely cropped beard and mustache seemed to add severity to him, but this impression immediately
disappeared when you looked into his peaceful eyes, gentle and blue like the sky. His behavior was simply captivating, full of unusual sweetness and charming simplicity. (...) He had a heart of gold and because of that was able to feel all human misery with astounding subtlety.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.47)

The transformation was permanent. From now on, Adam would never again experience depressions or inner doubts. As Ryn stresses, the inner transformation took place through his illness, “but in full consciousness and in accordance with his natural character disposition.” (Ryn, p.554) His behavior was full of simplicity and free of any unusual traits or strange tendencies. The nature of this transformation, according to Ryn, was not accidental, but was prepared by long years of studying and searching, and inspired by works of St. Francis and St. John of the Cross, whose temperaments and ideas were close to his own spiritual make-up.

**Brother Albert – The Atrophy of Egoism**

*Only after the majority of our aims and goals are reduced to ashes, do some remain to light the way toward love without self-satisfaction. (Dabrowski, 1972, p. 19)*

Adam felt a renewed enthusiasm for painting, but also for social action and deepening religious devotion. He joined a Franciscan order and traveled spreading the teachings of St. Francis among the people of Podole. He painted a lot – created about 10 oil paintings and 13 watercolors at that time. But his missionary activity raised suspicions among the Russian government officials, and in order to avoid an arrest, Chmielowski had to flee to Krakow.
Chmielowski arrived in Krakow in the fall of 1884. He rented an apartment on Basztowa Street where he had a art studio, which he transformed for some time into a small convent. He continued painting, but now mainly to earn money, which he could later share with the poor and homeless. It is worth noting that his art at that time focused mainly on landscapes and portraits of family members. It had no traces of the previous sadness and moodiness, and lost the intensity of expression characteristic of his pre-crisis work.

Quite by accident, Adam stumbled upon a place that was to change his life forever. After a ball, in a company of two aristocratic friends, Chmielowski went to visit a shelter for the homeless in Kazimierz. The shelter was in a post-military hut run by the city of Krakow, where the homeless and poor could find a place to sleep during winter months. What Chmielowski saw there shook his conscience. The scenes in the shelter reminded him of a Dante’s hell, according to one of his friends who recalled Adam’s impressions. Witnessing drunken orgies, violence – physical and sexual, dirt and mind-boggling poverty of the place made Chmielowski leave with a strong desire to help the shelter’s inhabitants. He made a heroic decision – he took on a Franciscan habit, took on a new name – Brother Albert – and eventually moved into the shelter with the homeless. He did not yet abandon art, but as his work on behalf of the homeless intensified, he had less and less time to devote to it. The city of Krakow, or rather the city council, was quite pleased with Brother Albert’s decision to take care of its homeless and poor. The council members even prepared a contract for him, in which they gladly gave him the whole responsibility for running the shelters while retaining full control over his actions. They also gave him a little money, asking that he give back anything left over (!). Brother Albert was not
paid for any of his work. His decision inspired others who wanted to help. And so he started gathering friendly souls around him, willing to share his duties. This was the very beginning of the Brothers of the Third Order of Saint Francis, Servants to the Poor, later called the Albertines, or the Gray Brothers. Under Brother Albert’s guidance, they organized shelters, soup kitchens, workshops where they could learn job skills, and other institutions for the poor and needy. They depended completely on charity. A community of Albertine sisters was established some time later.

The work of mercy started by Brother Albert spread thanks to his tireless efforts and undying faith in their necessity. He oversaw each new endeavor, provided moral and spiritual guidance to brothers and sisters Albertines, and continued endless actions directed toward bettering the fate of the poor. Those included writing letters to city officials, writing press articles describing the dire situation of the poorest members of the society, occasionally participating in charity balls and art auctions, and as always, asking and if necessary, begging for money. The Albertines took vows of poverty and literally possessed nothing. Brother Albert was very adamant about this particular vow and reacted strongly whenever he felt that a brother or sister violated it. His love of poverty was radical indeed, as was his total devotion to the poorest, wretched and humiliated. He wrote much on the subject:

“Even if I discovered mountains of gold and silver, I would not be as happy as I am with this priceless treasure of total poverty.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.85) When offered a piece of land for either a convent or a shelter, he refused, saying, “We will not accept as a possession any building or place, or any other thing.” “It is better if the buildings burned down at once rather than the
brothers would possess them." (ibid.) Among his last dying words was the brief admonition: “Above all remain poor.” When seeing unnecessary luxuries, Brother Albert would become angry. He himself had practically nothing and never asked for anything for himself, nor accepted any preferential treatment for himself, even when he was sick and infirm. His love and devotion is expressed in those now famous words:

“One should be as good as bread. One should be like bread, which is laid for all on the table, from which anyone can cut a piece for himself and eat, whenever he is hungry.”"(ibid. p.87)

Brother Albert never refused help to anyone, no matter the circumstances, and instructed his brothers and sisters to do the same. He trusted completely in God’s mercy and indeed there were numerous instances when help materialized seemingly from nowhere at times of hopelessness and despair.

As word of his work spread, he became a popular figure, respected and loved by all. He did have occasional detractors and armchair critics, who were eager to find fault in his work, but he dealt with criticisms with kind patience on one hand, and a strong belief in the primacy of God’s will on the other. When dealing with one aggressive campaign of lies about one of his shelters, he wrote a calming letter to Sister Bernardyna: “I have thought all this through, there is nothing to worry about, only surrender everything to God. These or similar things are everyday matters in the shelters.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p.74)
This period of Brother Albert’s life is well known and described in numerous books devoted to him and his work. The limited scope of this presentation will not allow us to spend as much time on discussing Brother Albert’s accomplishments as they deserve. Kaczmarzyk’s biography, “Trudna Milosc,” (1990), is a compelling recollection of this time in his life. I would like to focus on his emotional development, which we can glimpse from his notebooks, letters and observations of others.

All who came in contact with Brother Albert during the last period of his life remarked on his warmth, his genuine interest in the welfare of others, and on his religious devotion. His own letters show a man who is unquestioningly devoted to his search for God and servitude to the poor. His loving, and also lovingly demanding, attitude toward his brothers and sisters was demonstrated in his teachings, advice and admonitions. He was authentic and direct, did not mince words when necessary to convey his message; and was uncompromising in his insistence that his brothers and sisters strictly observed the Albertines’ rules. But his admonitions, even though seemingly harsh at times, were always balanced by love and genuine concern for those toward whom they were directed.

Brother Albert developed a particularly close relationship with Sister Bernardyna, who joined the convent at 16, and later became the Mother Superior of the Albertine Sisters. He was her spiritual guide, and his letters to her are document the strong bond between them. Suffused with curious sentimentality, his language there is full of diminutives, and he often refers to himself as her “daddy.” The contents of the letters suggest that he indeed adopted a fatherly attitude toward Sister Bernardyna, counseling her, consoling, and supporting, admonishing and praising,
reminding her to take care of her health when needed, and constantly telling her to abandon her doubts and worries and surrender to God’s will. Reading these letters one is struck by the depth of his feelings for her and his overwhelming concern for her spiritual development. His advice is always practical and no-nonsense, and permeated by faith in God’s love.

His few notebooks show a slightly different aspect of his growing personality. They are the voice of his conscience and record his continuing inner struggles with sin, work at self-perfection and longing for God. His motto at this period of his life was: “If I learn that something is more perfect, I’ll do it.” His struggles focus on battling sins of laziness, gluttony, and procrastination. He chastises himself for wasting time on such activities as reading newspapers, smoking, talking about inconsequential matters; not concentrating hard enough on prayers and his search for God, not persevering in his program of self-perfection. This program of spiritual development was based on imitation of Christ’s love:

“The habitual desire to imitate Jesus – to meditate on his life so that in every situation I can behave as he would.

If something pleasurable to the senses appears, but it does not directly lead to glory and love of God, one should abandon it for the love of Jesus. (…) A radical medicine, and the source of virtues and good deeds is mortification and pacification of four natural desires: Joy, hope, fear and pain; from their harmonization and pacification there arises all good. That’s why one should strive to deprive senses of all satisfaction, leave them as if in the vacuum and
darkness, then one will see progress in virtue. Examples – that’s where the soul should be
directed:
Not to what is tasteful, but to what’s distasteful.
Not to what one likes, but to what one dislikes.
Not to what brings one consolation, but to what brings despair.
Not to rest, but to work.
Not to demand more, but demand less.
Not what’s more refined and expensive, but what’s lower and more despised.
Not to wanting something, but to not wanting anything.
Not to look for the better in each thing, but to demand what’s worse for the love of Jesus, a
complete nakedness, perfect spiritual poverty and absolute renouncing of all that’s of this world.
Through wise and careful efforts one will find in this unspeakable joys and great sweetness. This
is enough to enter the night of the senses.” (Kaczmarzyk, 1990, p. 157)

As we see in the above, Brother Albert’s attempts at self-perfection were aimed at purifying the
senses and achieving an inner emptiness – a state of purification deepened by humility --- which
would be filled by God’s will and love. This was the soul’s path from the natural to supernatural,
a path guided by grace, and devoted to serving others.

“Virtue is a practical knowledge of God and oneself. (…) One should ask for permission to
completely surrender to spiritual pursuits because of oneself and one’s brothers and temptations,
to strive for perfection and nothing else. Read, pray, learn. Love of oneself and one’s will are
obstacles to perfection. One should perform one’s spiritual duties constantly, devotedly, completely.” (ibid., p. 159)

“One should act energetically generously and high-mindedly, constantly.” (ibid., p. 158)

“Great efforts, attempts to complete ordinary tasks. Conditions: pure intent, devotion, time. Methods: depending on the author. Daily order, examination after each task. To undertake each task as if it were the last one in life.” (ibid., p. 159)

Not incidentally, many of his notebook entries focus on his inner fight with effects of his sensual and psychomotor OE – tendencies to dissipation, procrastination and wasting time; a lack of concentration; indulging in little sensual pleasures such as admiring some image of beauty not associated with God, or idle conversations. “Lack of concentration. Without concentration no one can achieve perfection. God’s presence – methods: if possible, to remain immobile, observe silence, avoid activities, which bring dissipation, frequently perform acts of love and faith.” (ibid., p. 159) Judging by the contents of his diaries, his inner work and self-examination at that time took on somewhat obsessive character, guided by his acutely sensitive conscience.

Can we say that Brother Albert achieved the level of personality? His development, although radically advanced, was not completed at the time of his death in December 1916. His notebooks from the last period of his life present a picture of inner struggles focused increasingly on realizing his plan of spiritual development and achieving perfection -- not for the sake of
perfection itself, but for the chance of achieving unity with God. It appears that he came as close
to this goal as it is humanly possible.

Dabrowski describes the borderline of level 4 and 5 as free of inner conflict, full of harmony,
governed by the dynamisms of responsibility, authentism, autonomy, empathy, self-perfection
and personality ideal. Although little is known about what one’s everyday life looks like on level
5, we can only speculate that, human mind being prone to dissipation, the efforts at self-
perfection do not and cannot stop and must continue. But their developmental context changes,
most notably in that it is free of inner conflict characteristic of earlier levels of development.
Dabrowski says, “Secondary integration – this is where the greatest harmony appears on the way
to personality and its ideal – and then perhaps new disruptions and perhaps new sensitivity, but
not anymore to voices and whispers of transcendence but to its distinct reality.” (Dabrowski,
1972, p.27)

Brother Albert’s last years of life provide evidence that indeed he achieved the highest level of
development. Quite clearly, his life embodies Dabrowski’s ideals of the highest level of
sainthood, described in “Fragments from the Diary of a Madman:”

“There is a third holiness – according to me the highest one – which consists of involving oneself
in the lives of people and their struggles; it is a serious and relentless plan for the improvement
of people’s lives, and it is without prize, reward or compensation. It is a tragic road of heroism
and an uncompromising attitude. This road does not look for support in quietist and detached
experiences. The way is through atrophy of egoism. It is an enthusiastic though painful ascent to
bring as much goodness and love as is possible to those who are suffering, hurt and humiliated.”

(Dabrowski, p.49)

References:


All translations from the Polish were done by E. Mika. Reproductions of Chmielowski’s paintings and photographs are taken from Kaczmarzyk and Kluz’ biographies.

[NOTE: The jpg pictures that accompany this article are in the folder named “Mika pictures”]
Paper 14). Jean Valdes-Fauli Duda:

Divorce and The Disintegrative Process

This article will explore the impact of divorce, and the disintegrative process in light of the Theory of Positive Disintegration. Furthermore, it will describe the various ways in which the theory is applied and used clinically as a psychotherapist, and as Director of the Divorce Recovery Programs in the Archdiocese of Miami, Florida. Moreover, the presentation will address the developmental potential, and ways to recognize it in a major life transition.

Specific areas for concentration and discussion will be in using a Therapy Task Check-list to help in evaluating developmental potential, exploring the O/E’s and looking at the range of possibilities that come about as a result of the disintegration process.

Finally, the discovery that out of the ashes of despair can come endless possibilities, validities and gives hope for the human dilemma, and the ongoing cycle of life and death.
Divorce and the Disintegrative Process

Jean Valdes-Fauli Duda

Calgary, Alberta Canada

June 26, 2004

“Seldom or never does a marriage develop into an individual relationship smoothly and without crisis. There is no “birth” of consciousness without pain” (C.J.Jung).

“The criterion for whether or not to divorce should not be sought in the degree of difficulty or pathology in the marriage, but rather should clearly depend on whether or not the marriage represents for both partners a pathway to salvation” (Adolf Guggenbuhl Craig).

There are developmental stages and life transitions throughout the life span. Some transitions follow developmental stages, others are brought about by significant life events. What we are looking at today involves the impact of divorce on the life cycle thus allowing the potential for psychic growth to occur.

Divorce breaks down the individual and the family structure. It has far reaching effects on the divorcing persons, their children, extended family, friends, and society as a whole. There is a grieving process that takes place when one is experiencing divorce. It is not unlike the grief
that is experienced when someone dies. The loss is multi-dimensional and can include the loss of self, and others, simultaneously. Everything is turned upside down, feels chaotic and is unfamiliar. The roles that comprise one’s life break down and no longer exist in their existing form. Roles such as those of male/female, husband/wife, mother/father, worker/friend, have to be redefined in the context of being single again.

Moreover, there is the feeling of being uprooted, and displaced. The divorcing person’s old life is disintegrating, and there seems to be nothing to take it’s place. This is a very painful, and confusing time. Many conflicting feelings occur such as feelings of going crazy, not feeling normal, feeling lost, alone, without a home. According to Dabrowski,(1972) this can be a good sign. Moreover, it can also be the catalyst for spontaneous multi-level disintegration to ensue.

To put it succinctly, grief, loss, and instability can create a time of flux like it or not. Any transitional period can be unsettling at the very least, and concurrently pose an occasion for the evolution of one’s personality. You may have heard the scriptural quote “Death to the old man; Allow the new man to be born”. There are beginnings and endings in all of our lives, at different times in our lives, and a time and a season for everything. Herein lies the developmental potential, and the occasion to do soul work, or to evolve to a higher level of psychic functioning.

Something to consider when examining the marriage/divorce phenomena is that statistically over 50% of first marriages end in divorce in the United States. A Second marriage increases the statistic for failure to over 70%. Is this insanity? The reality is that people are going into marriage in an unconscious state. They are making decisions based on old programming which consists of attitudes and expectations that are not their own but rather come from somewhere else. Where does this old programming come from? According to the Theory of Positive Disintegration it comes from family of origin, society, and church. In other words, this
first programming consists of two factors, heredity and the environment. As children we internalize all of the information, and store it in the unconscious. This stage or level could be defined as primary integration, or primary formation. People often seek psychotherapy at this level.

So here enters the client having divorced, or going through the experience of divorce. He/She is often sad, and or angry. The anger can be inner or outer directed. During this time there can be an authentic seeking out of one’s inner truth, as well as a striving to make sense out of ashes of life as it was. There is also a movement toward putting one’s life back together again after the great fall, kind of like “Humpty Dumpty” “All the king’s men, and all the king’s horses couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again. He had to do it for himself.

Not everyone is able to evolve from a gut wrenching experience where everything falls apart, (Dabrowski, 1972). However, some of us can even grow stronger as a result of the upheaval. This is where the third factor, self-determination comes in to play. With the third factor we can move from our primary integration to a multi level spontaneous disintegration like “Humpty Dumpty before he put himself back together again, or a multi level directed disintegration as Humpty Dumpty takes charge, and begins to put himself back together again. Others of us can stabilize after a partial primary disintegration, make some changes, and go on. There will also be some that will regroup and go back to who they were before with no change, (primary integration). Others will have a negative outcome so that they are worse off then they were before (primary negative integration).

Where do we go with all this “stuff”? What do we do? What do we learn from the past? How can we gain insight and meaning from what was? And, most importantly, how can we use this time of transition to foster growth and healing? This is a time for self-examination. It is looking at the
disintegration of the old way of being in order to make way for the integration of a new way of living life. This transitional period allows for a rebuilding to take place, and with newly discovered building blocks (the dynamisms and overexcitabilities) we can enter into a new life with a depth of knowledge about ourselves that will give strength to the foundation of the new evolving personality.

There are factors to observe when working with people who are developing their personalities. Dabrowski states that this development can be ongoing throughout life, and peaks with possibility during times of crisis. Seeking out psychotherapy during such a time of crisis can be a determinant for growth and positive formation.

One way to work with clients developmentally that I have found very helpful is to use a Therapy Task Check-list (Duda), which follows a time line of past -present- and future. We also use an Over excitability (O/E) evaluation, and verbal stimuli to assess developmental potential. This is also included in the Task Therapy Check List, which follows the principles of the “The Theory of Positive Disintegration”.

The process of restructuring after a break-down includes but is not limited to the following therapeutic interventions: For example, I begin by asking the client that I’m working with, or a group that I’m facilitating to follow these steps:

1. Study their personal history. If they do not study their history, they may be condemned to repeat it. (I begin the first session by going over family of origin and psychosocial information when I work with clients individually. We discuss the presenting problem as part of their personal history that is the (first and second factor). I give them homework to help get in touch with where they come from. (See task checklist columns under past and present). When I work with groups and one on one I ask that they:
2. Write their life story. I give the suggestion to write it in the third person. In this way it gives
distance to their story, it is like looking in the window at oneself. (Subject/object in oneself).

3. I ask them to focus on life transitions, and developmental stages as they write their
autobiography, and to take note of the times they have grown because of transitional periods,
even though the experiences may have been difficult or painful. I also ask my clients or trainees
to pay attention to life events where the outcome was disappointing, or stagnating. These periods
of feeling stuck can give good information to the client. Sometimes they need to enter into their
feeling of being stuck to see what it is telling them.

4. From this point I ask each person to do a Self inventory by getting rid of what is no longer of
service to them, or keeping them stuck, (kind of like cleaning out a closet, and getting rid of the
clutter. Then I suggest that after the cleaning there is room to move, or to begin to rearrange
one’s life according to their wants, (projecting into the future). This process of rearranging
includes writing goals that come from doing their self-inventory. This sorting through ritual
helps them to determine what is important to them as they work on a new script for themselves.

In addition, there are both internal and external goals to develop I explain that internal
goals include examining one’s inner value system or belief system. For example, How does the
client want to be ideally? It is having him/her confront, examine and sort through the different
roles that make up who he/she is. These roles include how the client wants to be ideally as a
human being, as a male/female, husband/wife, worker, friend, and mother/father. Remember all
of these facets of self have broken down because of divorce. The exercise allows the client to
revisit their beliefs, and begin to discard those beliefs that come from the first or second factor if
they are not compatible with the third factor, and who they want to be. Reviewing one’s inner
values can then lead to clarity of vision that can form a self-chosen path. These choices begin to
incorporate a new life script that will be authentically the client’s rather than coming from somewhere else.

External goals include looking at where the person wants to be in six months, one year, five years, or ten years. Doing this exercise helps articulate dreams and aspirations. All of these exercises are included in the *therapy task checklist*. The time line of past, present, and future leads to a plan of action where the client is taking charge of his/her life, in a self-directed way.

Choosing, and writing a new script can be taken a step further. The process can include how each person wants to be in a relationship. After examining their attitudes and expectations about marriage (past history) and the roles that each of them played in the marriage (first factor and second factor), than they are each ready to take responsibility for their part in the broken relationship. They can then choose the values that they want to include in their newly developing script (third factor-Self Determination). Holding the conviction that self-knowledge and informed choice can make a difference, and will form a foundation that will be solid, durable, and ultimately transforming. Sad to say but if the client does not work on himself/herself they probably will choose the same type of person to be in relationship with and repeat the same dysfunctional pattern. There is a saying that states that you become one parent and marry the other. If that works for you than all is well and good, but often times the relationship is based on unconscious motives and illusion. Thus, the reason for a 70% divorce rate for people entering into second marriages. The statistic is even higher for third and subsequent marriages.

The extent to which one is able to evolve to a higher level of development according to Dabrowski is dependent on the presence or absence of the five over excitabilities. This is explained and evaluated in therapy. The developmental potential is predetermined at conception. Everyone is created equal in spirit, in the eyes of God; however, our physical manifestations are
not equal. We all have different gifts and talents. Some of us have more, and others of us have less. It is taking time to take stock of the gifts and talents that each one of us has available.

Moreover, our inner resources are not enough. There needs to be an inner drive, or self-motivation to make life changes. Some people choose to do nothing, to go backward not because they do not have what it takes but either because they choose to remain unconscious and in denial, or because they choose a more primitive set of values that become their gods. The norm is easier than standing by one’s personal conviction. When adopting the lesser traveled road the terrain is rocky but the gift of discovery is around every bend.

As you can see I use the Theory of Positive Disintegration in private practice but it is more than just a theory, it is a philosophy of life, and it permeates everything that I do professionally and personally.

One example of how the Theory is alive and well is in the work that I do with the divorce recovery programs. As a therapist not only do I work with men and women one on one as they sort through the fragments of their lives, but also as I oversee the ministry for Divorce Recovery in the Catholic Archdiocese of Miami Florida. One such program is Wellspring, a live-in weekend for those who want to deal with unresolved feelings of loss. The weekend provides an avenue for healing. People come when they are down and out because of loss through either a divorce, or death of a loved one. The leaders for the weekend are individuals who have sustained their own wounds, and have made a Wellspring weekend themselves. They are now volunteering their time, and are reaching out to others in need. They have become, “the wounded healers”. They have been trained to be facilitators to help lead small groups. They are also encouraged to write their life stories to share with others to use within the context of the weekend structure.

The weekend structure incorporates issues, and teachings that have to do with the
grieving process. Participants who sign up for the Wellspring weekend are seeking refuge, support, and understanding as they grieve. They are also looking inward to discover their own inner truth. Often times they are also seeking a spiritual connection that has been absent or dormant in their lives. The leaders share their life journey on the weekend in order to be of service to the participant. No one knows better the pain of divorce than those who have been there themselves. The steps includes acknowledging the death of the marriage, grieving it, having a funeral so to speak, and at the end recognizing the hope in being able to reclaim one’s life by letting go of the old, and finding hope in what is, and what is yet to come. For some it is a belief in the death and resurrection, on a symbolic or religious level. It is a very empowering experience.

Certainly, in my opinion this experience is an outward sign of an evolving spirit for both the team, and the participants. I feel honored to walk with many of the people as they emotionally strip to the bone in order to find meaning in their life, and in relationships. An authenticity and genuine response flow from the participants to the team as they reflect, and dialogue on feelings, and issues that are common, as well as unique to the experience of loss. There is validation of each one’s personhood, and the pain that they uniquely carry as their own. There is also the common human experience. It is evident that individuals come to the weekend carrying their pain in every fiber of their body. On Sunday, there is undeniable, visible change in their demeanor, as well as self-determination to reclaim their life and live it in a self-directed manor.

The Theory of Positive Disintegration has given me a healthy framework in which to work, and respond to those who are suffering loss. My life experience has also proven invaluable to me as a therapist, and in my position as Director of the Divorce Recovery Programs.
In addition to the Wellspring weekend we have Divorce Recovery support groups throughout the Archdiocese that span three counties. These groups provide a safe place for people to express their pain, and to feel heard, and understood. Moreover, they can take refuge, as they begin to gain strength in knowing that they are not alone, as they walk through the devastating experience of divorce.

It is hard to lead someone if you have not been there yourself. The support group leaders are giving back what they received when their lives were turned upside down. They are there to do triage as necessary, and to walk with others as they little by little begin to feel alive again. Both the leaders and the participants grow because of their encounter with one another.

We all have opportunities. It is what we do with them that counts. Through adversity in all of it’s various life dimensions is hope eternal, and the endless possibility of humans to be all that they can be. The work that I do brings me in touch with many testimonies of the sacredness of life in suffering. Out of the cocoon comes the butterfly, in all of its splendid glory. I have the privilege to witness this metamorphosis on a daily basis, and for this opportunity, I am truly blessed. Thank you!

References

Paper 15). Dexter Amend:

Developmental Potential from an Experiential Point of View
Traumatic Disintegration and Zeigarnik’s Effect As a Creative Force

This paper applies Dabrowski’s conceptualization to common manifestations seen in post psychotraumatic conditions (especially such as PTSD) of recurrent thoughts and images which have been experienced in a repetitive-compulsive manner. The paper postulates that reproduction of the accident related experiences be viewed as resulting, on one hand, from disintegration of the defenses underlying the sense of reality and of the person’s confidence in manageability of the life situation that, on the other hand, is contrasted with a need to recapture some sense of “normalcy”. A theoretical model is offered that outlines the post-traumatic disintegration process and interprets the repetitive compulsive manifestations in the context of Zeigarnik’s effect. This refers to a phenomenon that the material from the unfinished tasks is remembered better than from completed tasks. In reference to psychotrauma, recurrent images represent a cognitive and emotional challenge that forces people’s minds to address various important life issues in creative ways; in the end, it should lead to a new integration that embraces psychotrauma, pre-traumatic personality and a sense of reality. In the process of solving the task, even poorly educated and simple-minded people display surprising insights referring to philosophical, moral, cognitive and emotional issues that have been debated for centuries. A model for recovery, along with clinical examples are presented.

Malgorzata Tatala

Department of Developmental Psychology

Catholic University of Lublin

al. Raclawickie 14,

20-950 Lublin

E-mail: maltat@kul.lublin.pl
The Symbolical Context in Kazimierz Dabrowski’s Positive Disintegration Theory

Abstract

The article touches upon issues concerning the relationships entering into symbols and Prof. Kazimierz Dabrowski’s positive disintegration theory. It is an attempt to demonstrate changes in the process of perceiving symbols on five developmental levels indicated by researchers. Each level has its own characteristics allowing for the identification of certain indications of symbolical meaning receptors. It is implied that, along with going into higher levels of development, a transformation of lower automatic and rigid forms of symbol reception gives to a more perfect, creative autonomous and authentic form.

Introduction

Positive disintegration as a characteristic process in personality development is treated not only in categories of positive but also negative experiences. Negative experiences are expressed, among others, in feeling disoriented, broken, and lost, in doubt and suffering, in other words – disintegration. The awareness of change taking place, despite the tangible experience of this state by the individual, can be the reason for later integration on a higher level. According to K. Dabrowski, development understood in such a way includes directing changes in quantity and quality, and means going from simple structures and functions to those more complex and directed towards higher values on an emotional, social and moral basis (Cekiera 2002; Tatala 2002).

In the following paper, it is inferred that appropriate development on each of the five levels indicated by Dabrowski lead to a greater and fuller grasp of the meanings contained in symbols. The work does not aim to give an exhaustive study on the subject, but serves only to give an introductory understanding, pointing to new research possibilities.
The issue concerning symbols[^1] is a subject of interest in many areas of human life. A symbol can be a key to a deeper understanding of the nature of man, sometimes described as an “animal symbolicum.” Man, living in a world of symbols and signs, builds a type of “net symbol” centered about its own experiences, which, along with his or her development become stronger and more subtle; it exists not only in the physical world, but also in the symbolical world, based upon certain factors, such as: language, myth, art, religion and others (comp. Woods: 1983; O’Rourke: 1986; Majewski 1992).

Symbols most often take on the form of pictures, objects, gestures, stories, phrases, and also sometimes forms of specific rituals or behavior, which apart from a clear, directly given meaning have hidden meanings, revealed only when interpreted more thoroughly. In order for a symbol to exist, three elements are necessary: a visual object, the invisible reality and the relationship meaning the bond between the visible and the invisible reality. The symbolical object or act awakens in the recipient a certain picture or thought of another object, and this object is often not empirically perceived, it is found outside the direct, temporal and spatial grasp. The reception of a symbol has two phases. First, one grasps the defined whole in symbolical characteristics (shape, event, situation, object) in the structure of the presented world. Second, one grasps the encoded meanings, including various possible interpretations and methods of understanding the symbol.

M. Saller (in: Majewski 1992) believes that “a symbol creates a deeper level in each experience of the world (…). That’s why it is such an important thing to put an effort into trying to discover the full meaning of a symbol, which expresses the unfathomable mystery.” A symbol conveys deep contents, which are difficult to express in spoken or written form. As a pedagogical means, it broadens the cognitive, emotional and spiritual perspective of man. It forms a bridge between that, which is conscious and unconscious, known and unknown, acknowledged and questioned. At the same time it aids in the increase of awareness, maturity in the emotional sphere and is geared towards that, which is not accessible to direct knowledge –

[^1]: The idea of symbol comes from the Greek word “symballein” which means “to join as a whole.” This term can also mean “stain,” “blend together,” or “intermash, to add or put into.” In antiquity, a piece of bone or other object for playing games, whose edges matched the edges of the remaining piece in such a way that it could be joined together was called a symbol. The etymology of this word does not singularly define its original meaning (see Lentzen-Dies 1997; Kulpaczynski 2002).
mystery and the transcendental. M. Eliade states that: “Pictures, symbols, rituals and so-called symbolical thinking belong to human nature (…). It is the natural human way to perceive reality, which can not be replaced in any other way and which is at the same time justifiable and necessary, since such realities exist which man can only reach through symbols.” (in: Majewski 1992).

The development of symbolical processes not only leads to a change in the sphere of thinking and acting, but also allows reality to be viewed from another perspective, it upholds motivation when undertaking decisions and awakens relationships with others, which fosters the obtaining of participation tendencies.

The Reception of Symbolical Meanings at Particular Developmental Levels

Based on his acquired experience and many years’ psychiatric practice, K. Dabrowski has worked out a theory of development based on positive disintegration. It is comprised of a new way of looking at the developmental process in man, but it can sometimes bring out opposition when defining the well-received key term “positive disintegration.” Disintegration means a breakdown, a scattering, an inability to adapt to the external environment, when internal conflicts are heightened and in essence they cannot be considered a positive process. Nevertheless, in Dabrowski’s understanding, the constructive elements do not exist in the actual disintegration, but change into a creatively integrative process\(^2\)\(^2\) (Dabrowski 1979b; Rogowski, Tatala 2002). At the same time, it is accepted that the developmental element, the impulses to reach higher levels of psychic life are dynamics that scale, harmonize and integrate.

Dabrowski (1989) distinguishes five levels in the developmental process: (1) primary integration; (2) unilevel disintegration; (3) spontaneous multilevel disintegration; (4) organized multilevel disintegration and (5) secondary integration. They will be discussed in relation to symbol.

\(^2\)\(^2\) It is worth noting that Dabrowski clearly distinguishes positive disintegration from negative disintegration. The first, positive disintegration is primarily characterized by symptoms of disintegration: “serious chronic or psychic and physical weaknesses, psychoses leading to illness.” The second, negative disintegration, concerns “a relaxing or ‘breaking down’ of psychic structures and lower, primitive human functions as they stive to form higher ones in a person’s development” (Dabrowski 1979b, 9).
Level I – Primary Integration

Individuals who find themselves on the level of initial integration have characteristic “strong, driving and emotional primitive structures” (Dabrowski 1979b, 14). Psychopaths are usually found in this state. They do not have an internal psychic environment in which “all the developmental phenomena arise (…), such as enthusiasm, depression, suicidal tendencies, creative tendencies, neurosis and psychoneurosis” (Dabrowski 1989, 42). On the whole, they do not experience internal conflicts and unrest, but on the other hand, often enter into conflicts externally. They do not have greater reservations, acting in a stiff and not easy going way, are aggressive and explosive, however, in certain situations give the impression that they can be dependable. There is a lack of empathy, responsibility and feeling of guilt in them. They are egocentric, quickly changing their feelings and have an egoistic attitude towards life; they quickly make decisions and do not have great scruples (Dabrowski 1979b).

The level of initial integration does not create the foundation for the formation of a broader interest in symbol. Such an undertaking is adequate, direct, and synonymous but in essence superfluous. A person at this stage of development can obtain only universal, standard and not individualized levels of symbolical meaning. They are not able to reflect deeply and contemplate on the meaning of a symbol.

Level II - Unilevel Disintegration

This level is characterized by an insignificant ability to mature. A disintegration of previously integrated psychic structures occurs, symptoms of self-astonishment form as well as a gradual increase in contemplation and analysis. Single-level disintegration is accompanied by ambivalence (changing moods and primarily sadness and depression), multi-tendencies (conflicting actions) and multi-phrases (changing opinions). Such contrasts in experience breed unrest, conflicts, and sometimes lead to a poor disposition, a pessimistic attitude and escape from life (Dabrowski 1979a).

On this level, there is a gradual increase in interest on the subject of symbol. Understanding symbol does not yet fully correspond to human life. Elements of disintegration, which appear to cause alarm, unrest, and at the same time help cause a partial acceptance and rejection of the message that a symbol contains. Constant wavering, awakening, reservations,
emotional-cognitive dissonance accompany the process of symbol perception, but on the other hand, new structures are formed which are not so coherent and unified as the original structures. At this level, the individual does not extract a significant layer of the symbol’s meaning, but strives to overcome the arising contradictions.

**Level III – Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration**

Multi-level disintegration, spontaneous and inadequately organized, is tied in with the appearance of two levels in opposition to each other: the higher and the lower (Dabrowski 1979a). The individual experiences intense changes and internal conversion. It is a time of physical and psychic breakdown. People on this level are able to understand and experience multi-level internal conflicts indispensable for development (Dabrowski 1989).

A key step is taken on this level towards the psychic development of a person, since a move is made: internal unconscious conflicts are bought to consciousness (Dabrowski 1979b). Dabrowski gives emphasis to the necessity of developing the actual internal environment in a person. In his opinion, the development of a person is not only fostered by biological and social factors, but also by a third element (spiritual, autonomous), which expresses the individual’s self-awareness, the positive and negative attitudes towards one’s personal characteristics and processes and some of the surrounding influences.

At this level the individual searches for new meanings and discovers the richness of a symbol. Symbols are put into a hierarchy, which is done freely, by a conscious interiorization of values. Making unconscious internal conflicts in the conscious plays a significant role in the construction of symbolical meanings. The third factor, partially tolerating the internal psychic stress, protects the individual from negative disintegration and, during development, becomes an element that integrates on a higher level. It gives the conditions for a more conscious reception of a symbol.

**Level IV – Organized and Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration**

This level is characterized by the fact that the developmental dynamics from the previous phase are more conscious, organized and systematic, a “step is made from autonomous and authentic acts, meaning ones that are primarily independent of primitive biological factors”
(Dabrowski 1989, 55). At the same time, contemplation increases in the individual, and less spontaneous activities appear.

People who are at this level experience a more subtle and worked out disintegration, but one also controlled by cooperation between an increasing hierarchy of values and goals. Thanks to this, individuals can attain a high level of empathy, self-awareness, self-discipline and auto-psychotherapy (Dabrowski 1979a).

In the realm of grasping a symbol, the individual undertakes reflection with the tendency to aggregately understand it and place it in a hierarchy. Working on this level, the dynamics of self-awareness and self-control deepen the understanding of a symbol, allowing for the perception of its multi-functionality and actual effect on the life of a person.

**Level V – Intricate, Harmonious Secondary Integration**

A new harmony in personality occurs on the level of second integration, which is possible only for individuals who are outstanding, mature and holy. At this level, the highest level of self-awareness and empathy is crystallized. A new ideal of personality is formed. It is encompassed by an awareness of the needs of others, the ability to form lasting emotional bonds, love and friendship, conscious identification with oneself and one’s personal history of development (Dabrowski 1975; Dabrowski 1989).

On the level of second integration, Dabrowski (1975) distinguishes two essences\(^3\) of personality: individual and social (or universal). The first essence concerns the image of oneself; it encompasses the ability to achieve lasting loving and amicable relationships, a feeling of self-identity as well as acceptance of one’s life history. The second essence entails a high level of social awareness and responsibility, expressed in the tendency to help others, to empathize, sacrifice and love.

At this level, the person undertakes an effort, which strives to discover the full and deepest meaning of a symbol’s richness. Sensitivity to a symbol is present, penetrating its

\(^3\) Dabrowski uses neosymanticisms, that is, he gives existing words new meanings. He understands the term “essence” to mean “the most realistic contents or highest element” (Banko 2000, 386). Its meaning depends on the context: (1) the person’s interests, abilities, feelings of identity – “individual essence” or as (2) responsibility, empathy, generosity – “social essence” (Dabrowski 1986, 70). Such linguistic practices, as well as using mental abbreviations make it additionally difficult for the average reader to thoroughly understand the presented issues.
meaning and effective potential. A person is able to not only discover the deepest meaning of a symbol, but also treat it as an impulse and a challenge to change their way of life. Grasping a symbol occurs not only in the sphere of cognition, but also in its aesthetical aspect; a fascination with symbol occurs and there is a desire to pass its beauty on to other people. Deep contact with a symbol can sometimes be the cause of it being the factor that changes a person’s life, manifested in the springing between life and a symbol, thanks to which a man is able to achieve the transplanting of a symbol into the realities of life.

Conclusion

Man is constantly undertaking the process of self-perfection, striving to achieve an ever-greater level of functioning. In such endeavors, the achievement of moral, social and religious values is helpful. Moments of positive stimulus are not the only incentives to develop. Barriers to maturing are also necessary, which, when overcome, significantly help a person in their individual developmental constructing. The theory of development through disintegration worked out by K. Dabrowski points to the positive significance of conflicts as constructive elements in psychic development (Tatala 2002).

The aim of development is to achieve a mature personality (which undoubtedly is related to obtaining higher values and feelings), able to grasp symbolical meanings. On the one hand, in the process of reaching higher levels in the cycle of development, a symbol helps to relax and break up psychic structures organized on lower levels and integrate them on higher levels. On the other hand, elements of disintegration comprise an indispensable condition for development and foster an ever-fuller comprehension of symbolical meanings.

Bibliography:


Kulpaczynski S. (2002). *Symbole w odbiorze katechizowanych dzieci. (Symbols as Received by Catechized Children).* Lublin-Kielce: Jednosc.


The Sixth International Congress of the Institute
For Positive Disintegration in Human Development
June 24-26, 2004
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Developmental Potential – From Theory to Practice:

Educational and Therapeutic Perspectives.
SCHEDULE – 2004 DABROWSKI CONGRESS:

Thursday, June 24, 2004:

A reception will be held at the Best Western Village Park Inn from 1800 to 2100.

Friday June 25, 2004:

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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>0800-0830</td>
<td><strong>Bill Tillier</strong></td>
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<td><em>Opening remarks and Introduction</em></td>
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<td>An overview of developmental potential will be presented and several discussion points will be raised.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0830-0930</td>
<td><strong>Andrew Kawczak: Keynote Speaker</strong></td>
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<td>Development Potential &amp; Authentic Mental Development</td>
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<td>The concept of developmental potential is related to how Dabrowski understands mental growth. In the theory of positive disintegration it is the transformation of mental functions and structures towards higher levels, towards increased awareness and critical reflection, empathy, autonomy and authenticity.</td>
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<td>By autonomy Dabrowski means the ability to transcend the dictates of instincts and environmental pressures, the ability to choose and make decisions, guided and inspired by gradually developed higher complex emotions, understanding and empathic identification. The autonomous individual becomes “his own person”, directed and controlled by his own forces, no more a plaything of blind instinctive drives, social conformity and indoctrination. Human autonomy, as understood by Dabrowski, implies a profound sense of responsibility for further development and creative fulfillment of oneself and others.</td>
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<td>The transformation of mental functions and structures in the direction of autonomy Dabrowski called authentic mental development. The paper will deal with the questions: What kind of potential is needed for this kind of development? What innate qualities, sensitivities and inclinations foster this development? What are the forces and approaches which promote it? What practices and methods of education and psychotherapy really advance an authentic mental development?</td>
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| Friday 0945-1030 | **Laurie Nixon:**  
* A Dabrowskian Analysis of the Ten Oxherding Pictures  
I will begin by presenting a series of the twelfth-century Chinese images, known as The Ten Oxherding Pictures, along with their prose and verse commentaries. These ten images symbolize ten stages in the progress toward Buddhist enlightenment of a Zen Buddhist meditator. Next I will look at the commentaries on these images by several twentieth-century Zen masters. And finally I will compare the remarks made in the commentaries of the Zen masters with the process of personality development described by Kazimierz Dabrowski. I will suggest that although the two models emphasize different dimensions of development, they can be seen as complementary, or mutually enriching. |
| Friday 1030-1115 | **Elizabeth Robinson:**  
* Could the Application of TDP Psychotherapy Have prevented the Suicide of Sylvia Plath?  
This paper will examine the psychotherapeutic problems related to the American poet Sylvia Plath. Her suicide at the age of 30 confirms Dabrowski's claims regarding the dangers of a protracted stage of unilevel disintegration. Reference to Plath's one-sided development during her early years, and her love relationship and marriage with the British poet-laureate Ted Hughes, will illustrate how the lack of developmental dynamisms can mar human relationships. A study of Plath's life and writing reveals that her mental turmoil stemmed from her inability to experience inner psychic transformation and a rise to higher levels of development. The paper will attempt to answer the question: Could TPD counselling have helped her to avoid suicide? |
| Friday 1115-1200 | **Norbert Duda:**  
* How Inter and Intra-Neurotic Levels of Psychoneurosis and Psychosis Reflect Developmental Levels and Developmental Potential.  
How to use the list of diagnoses to show the patients where they may be in the process i.e., level of development of human development, according to the Theory of Positive Disintegration and how their diagnosis is defined and what over excitability they have available. As well a look at what addictions may be holding them back (seven capital drives) and what work lies ahead. |
<p>| 1200-1315    | <strong>Lunch</strong>                                                             |</p>
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| Friday 1315-1400 | **Marjorie Battaglia:**  
* A Journey Through Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms by Kazimierz Dabrowski  
Intended as a sequel to Existential Thoughts and Aphorisms, (Cienin, 1972) Dabrowski wrote Confessions of Faith in Thoughts and Aphorisms (Dabrowski, circa 1978, p. 12). From the depth of the collection, the reader can infer that Dabrowski spent many hours each day in meditation-accompanied writing. I intent to take the audience on a journey through this very precious, unpublished, almost unknown document. |
| Friday 1400-1445 | **Marlene Rankel:**  
* Children and Non-Gifted Parents, Educators and Therapists: The Sacrifice of True Genius to False Pride  
This paper will share the writer’s perception of the damage we have done, and continue to do, to children entrusted to our care, whether we are parents, educators, or therapists. The effects on authenticity of “training” versus “education” will be at the heart of the matter and will be enlivened by the contribution of individuals the writer considers to be persons of true genius. |
| 1445-1500 | **Rita Culross:**  
* Developmental Potential Among Creative Scientists  
Typical characterizations of creative scientists have focused on individuals in academia or in business and industry who worked in relative isolation. Their development has also been described typically in terms of academic milestones and cognitive abilities. The session will seek to go beyond this picture to examine the moral, personal, and social development of creative scientists within the wider and changing contexts in which they now work. Evidence will be discussed regarding the presence of intellectual, emotional, psychomotor, and imaginational overexcitabilities among such scientists, and the scientists’ development across Dabrowski’s stages will be elucidated. |
Q & A and Discussion Panel

On your own (A film of Dabrowski will be shown in the main meeting room)

**Saturday June 26, 2004:**

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| Saturday 0800-0845 | **Sal Mendaglio & Michael Pyryt:**  
  *The Role of Intelligence in the Theory of Positive Disintegration*  
  Dabrowski’s theory is influential in the area of giftedness, particularly in the socioemotional domain. Intelligence continues to be a primary factor in the definition of giftedness. While many conceptions of giftedness abound, both educators and researchers tend to use superior intelligence as a defining criterion of giftedness. In research conducted on Dabrowski’s theory, particularly relating to overexcitabilities, participants tend to be identified as gifted by using an intelligence-based approach. This session explores the role of intelligence in TPD, with particular focus on Dabrowski’s conception of developmental potential. |
| Saturday 0845-0930 | **Clive Hazell:**  
This presentation will demonstrate useful linkages between psychodynamic object relations theory and the theory of positive disintegration. A brief outline of some basic variants of object relations theory will be presented first and this will be followed by a theoretical section in which elements of the two theory “sets” will be integrated, or substituted one for another. Resulting from this integration, a broad developmental “sweep” that incorporates both theories will be presented. In addition, the relation of different forms of object relations units will be correlated with the vicissitudes of the OE’s. In this, I will be continuing the argument of previous papers that the OE profile is not only a result of genetic inheritance, but also a result of second and third factor variables. Having established these theoretical linkages, I will present clinical cases that illustrate the application of this integrated model. These clinical cases will be drawn from a range of Dabrowskian levels with varied OE profiles. This variation in clinical cases should also demonstrate the “performance envelope” of the integrated ideas presented at the outset. |
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| Saturday 0945-1030 | **Susan Jackson:**  
*Becoming a Person: A Dabrowskian Perspective*  
“Becoming a person combines the essential sameness and uniqueness of all human beings as we grow into who we are called to BE. The main thing, as I see it, is directed toward helping, completely, other people. In the great economy of being we need to be there for each other. Simply put, I do not have to like you but I do have to love you. I need to live my personhood in relation to that and to you, whatever you are like.” (notes from case file “T” (2004), 22 year old profoundly gifted male).  
What is the nature of development for individuals imbued with great developmental potential? What is the nature of growth through positive disintegration? Rich evidence from case studies, extensive clinical materials and interview protocols reveal the awe, the agony and the grace of multilevel development. |
Saturday
1030-1115

**Vicky Frankfourth Moyle:**
*DP meets DP: Multilevelness and the Crucial Role Of DP Identification in the Therapeutic Relationship*

The presenter will emphasize the importance of a minimal level of personality development for any therapist attempting to use TPD as a conceptual foundation for therapy. Although Dabrowski advocated the idea of autopsychotherapy, the role of a practitioner to assist development and provide encouragement and comfort seems especially necessary in the environment of unilevel culture with a pathological worldview. Awareness of the state of consciousness of a client prior to disintegration, understanding of a multilevel vs. unilevel perception, and utilization of the developmental potential of the client is crucial for the practitioner in order to conduct any kind of meaningful therapeutic relationship with a high DP client in the throes of disintegration. The presenter will compare TPD with the work of several transpersonal theorists/practitioners. How to encourage the inclusion of TPD in the historical canon of psychological thought and the conceptual foundation of Transpersonal literature will also be discussed.
Elizabeth Mika:
Ecce Homo: Adam Chmielowski’s Growth Through Positive Disintegration

As Kazimierz Dabrowski said in his 1979 “Mental Health,” once in a while a child is born like no other; a child, whose presence enriches lives of those around him in unexpected ways. Although it is not always easy for others to define what exactly constitutes his gifts, they nevertheless feel privileged to be in his presence as he brings out the best in them; helps them see their lives in new, meaningful ways; and makes them marvel at the generosity of nature, or the mysterious workings of God.

Such a child was born on August 26, 1845 in a small Polish town of Igolomia. His name was Adam Bernard Chmielowski. Years later, he assumed a name of Brother Albert, and became known as the father of the poor and homeless, God’s servant, a saint.

This presentation will portray Adam Chmielowski’s developmental journey—a journey that vividly illustrates principles of growth through positive disintegration arising from high developmental potential. Chmielowski’s life exemplifies a textbook case of global and accelerated development. It provides a direct empirical confirmation of Dabrowski’s theoretical insights on the nature of human emotional and moral development, particularly on the interplay between the instincts of creativity and self-perfection. The presentation will be illustrated with pictures of Chmielowski’s paintings, which both heralded and chronicled transformations of his inner world.

Lunch
| Saturday 1315-1400 | **Jean Valdes-Fauli Duda:**  
*Divorce and The Disintegrative Process*  
This article will explore the impact of divorce, and the disintegrative process in light of the Theory of Positive Disintegration. Furthermore, it will describe the various ways in which the theory is applied and used clinically as a psychotherapist, and as Director of the Divorce Recovery Programs in the Archdiocese of Miami, Florida. Moreover, the presentation will address the developmental potential, and ways to recognize it in a major life transition.  
Specific areas for concentration and discussion will be in using a Therapy Task Check-list to help in evaluating developmental potential, exploring the O/E’s and looking at the range of possibilities that come about as a result of the disintegration process.  
Finally, the discovery that out of the ashes of despair can come endless possibilities, validities and gives hope for the human dilemma, and the ongoing cycle of life and death. |
| Saturday 1400-1445 | **Dexter Amend:**  
*Developmental Potential from an Experiential Point of View*  
Break |
| 1445-1500 | **Break** |
Marek Celinski:
Traumatic Disintegration and Zeigarnik’s Effect As a Creative Force

This paper applies Dabrowski’s conceptualization to common manifestations seen in post psychotraumatic conditions (especially such as PTSD) of recurrent thoughts and images which have been experienced in a repetitive-compulsive manner. The paper postulates that reproduction of the accident related experiences be viewed as resulting, on one hand, from disintegration of the defenses underlying the sense of reality and of the person’s confidence in manageability of the life situation that, on the other hand, is contrasted with a need to recapture some sense of “normalcy”. A theoretical model is offered that outlines the post-traumatic disintegration process and interprets the repetitive compulsive manifestations in the context of Zeigarnik’s effect. This refers to a phenomenon that the material from the unfinished tasks is remembered better than from completed tasks. In reference to psychotrauma, recurrent images represent a cognitive and emotional challenge that forces people’s minds to address various important life issues in creative ways; in the end, it should lead to a new integration that embraces psychotrauma, pre-traumatic personality and a sense of reality. In the process of solving the task, even poorly educated and simple-minded people display surprising insights referring to philosophical, moral, cognitive and emotional issues that have been debated for centuries. A model for recovery, along with clinical examples are presented.

Saturday 1500-1545

General forum on the Institute For Positive Disintegration in Human Development and discussion on the 2006 Congress.

Saturday 1800 - BANQUET: Cocktails and socializing followed by food.
(Closing remarks by Sal Mendaglio and Michael Pyryt)

Sunday, June 27, 2004:
No formal sessions planned. The morning is open for informal discussions over breakfast.
1N4
THE CONGRESS COMMITTEE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OFFERED TO THE CONGRESS BY:

Centre for Gifted Education

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY EDUCATION

FOSTER STOCK
FAMILY LAW LAWYERS
Congress Handouts:

HANDOUT 1). CD reproduction of Dabrowski's major English books.

Contents of the CD (as of Summer 2004):

Two Types of Files are presented:
Two types of files are presented for each book, a pdf image file of each page and a WORD 2000 file presenting paraphrased text (OCR text).

- Photos:
Three photos of Dr. Dabrowski are included in jpg format.

- English Books by Dr. Dabrowski:


Dabrowski, K. (1964). Positive disintegration. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. [This hardcover edition had a different cover than the American one and therefore I have provided pdf files of the cover, cover flap and title page.]


Dabrowski, K. (1979, March). Nothing can be changed here. (E. Mazurkiewicz, Trans.), Peter Rolland (Ed.). (No WORD file provided)


- Published Papers: Several papers published by Dr. Dabrowski are included here in a separate folder (English). Also, several Dabrowski related papers are included.

Dabrowski's Published Works (Copied from the EDI paper collection)


Other Published Materials Included:


Conference Papers or Proceedings Included on the CD:


Various other information on Conferences is included on the CD.
HANDOUT 2). CD reproduction of ten of Dabrowski's major Polish books.

Material included on this disk as pdf image files of each page:


poszukiwaniu zdrowia psychicznego. [In search of mental health.] Warszawa: Panstwowe
Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
HANDOUT 3). RELEVANT WEB PAGES

Bill’s Dabrowski webpage:

http://members.shaw.ca/positivedisintegration/

Bill’s Opening Presentation:

http://members.shaw.ca/sandratillier/2004DP.htm

University of Calgary:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/

Centre for Gifted Education (co-sponsor)

http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gifteduc/

Foster Stock (co-sponsor)

http://www.fosterstock.com/
## List of Congress Attendees.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Dexter R. Amend (II)</td>
<td>12324 East Kronquist Rd, P.O. Box 327, MEAD WA, U. S. A. 99021</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dextera@spokanefalls.edu">dextera@spokanefalls.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjorie Battaglia</td>
<td>1007 Jeff Ryan Drive, Herndon, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:battagliamaj@aol.com">battagliamaj@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marek J. Celinski</td>
<td>27 Roncesvalles Avenue, Suite #508, Toronto ON Canada M6R 3B2</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marekcelinski1@rogers.com">marekcelinski1@rogers.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita R. Culross</td>
<td>LSU College of Education, 221 Peabody Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803</td>
<td><a href="mailto:acrita@lsu.edu">acrita@lsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Joanna Dabrowski</td>
<td>Psychologist, Edmonton Remend Centre, 9660 - 104 Ave, Edmonton AB Canada T5H 4B5</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Joanna.Dabrowski@gov.ab.ca">Joanna.Dabrowski@gov.ab.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norbert &amp; Jean Duda</td>
<td>7376 N.W. 5th Street, Plantation, Fl 33317-1605</td>
<td><a href="mailto:norbduda@cs.com">norbduda@cs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Greenwood</td>
<td>Center for Gifted education, 846 Education Tower, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary AB Canada T2N 1N4</td>
<td><a href="mailto:agreenwo@ucalgary.ca">agreenwo@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clive Hazell (Congress Speaker)</td>
<td>3658 North St. Louis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:CLVCHZ@aol.com">CLVCHZ@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Jackson (Congress Speaker)</td>
<td>2853 168th Street</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sue.jackson@shaw.ca">sue.jackson@shaw.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. A. Kawczak (Congress Keynote Speaker)</td>
<td>575 Chemin Real</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lizandrobinson@aol.com">lizandrobinson@aol.com</a></td>
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<td>Dr. S. Mendaglio (Congress Speaker,</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mendagli@ucalgary.ca">mendagli@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress Committee)</td>
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<td>Ms. Elizabeth Mika (Congress Speaker)</td>
<td>1662 Vineyard Drive</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elamika@yahoo.com">elamika@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Gurnee, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicky Moyle (Congress Speaker)</td>
<td>1680 Hall Ave</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vmoyle@hotmail.com">vmoyle@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Junction, CO.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurence Nixon (Congress Speaker)</td>
<td>3694 Park Avenue</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nixon3694@yahoo.com">nixon3694@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Montreal, Quebec H2X 2J1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Michael Pyryt</td>
<td>Congress Speaker, Congress Committee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mpyryt@ucalgary.ca">mpyryt@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marlene Rankel</td>
<td>Congress Speaker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:allisonathome@shaw.ca">allisonathome@shaw.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5105 - 43 Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beaumont, AB T4X 1J4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Robinson</td>
<td>Congress Speaker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lizandrobinson@aol.com">lizandrobinson@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>575 Chemin Real</td>
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<td>Apt # 416</td>
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<td>Sutton, Quebec</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Dorothy Sisk</td>
<td>Congress Speaker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:conn_chair@hal.lamar.edu">conn_chair@hal.lamar.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Director of Gifted Center</td>
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<td>and Programs</td>
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<td>Lamar University</td>
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<td>P.O. Box 10034</td>
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<td>Beaumont, TX – 77710</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Tillier</td>
<td>Congress Speaker, Congress Committee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:btillier@shaw.ca">btillier@shaw.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170 Hamptons Cir NW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calgary AB Canada T3A 5G5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gavin Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:gavinhall@telus.net">gavinhall@telus.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylwester Krzaniak</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:sylwester.krzaniak@rogers.com">sylwester.krzaniak@rogers.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kit Roberts</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:krobertsper@shaw.ca">krobertsper@shaw.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Swassing</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:swassing.1@osu.edu">swassing.1@osu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Blair</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:bblair@ballonstoll.com">bblair@ballonstoll.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diann Tansem</td>
<td><a href="mailto:diny_63@hotmail.com">diny_63@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Boudreau</td>
<td><a href="mailto:allray@telusplanet.net">allray@telusplanet.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Luczak</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mluczak@ualberta.ca">mluczak@ualberta.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Aldred</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jennyjean@personinternet.com">jennyjean@personinternet.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carole Porter</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cmporter@cbe.ab.ca">cmporter@cbe.ab.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Quenneville</td>
<td><a href="mailto:quennevillej@hotmail.com">quennevillej@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim Hunter</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hunterk@shaw.ca">hunterk@shaw.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Meuse</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kdmeuse@cbe.ab.ca">kdmeuse@cbe.ab.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Dudley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dudley@ucalgary.ca">dudley@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janneke Frank</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jmafrank@ucalgary.ca">jmafrank@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah Skaret</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dskaret@shaw.ca">dskaret@shaw.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Dobbs</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jdobbs@mtroyal.ca">jdobbs@mtroyal.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hal Curties</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hscurities@cbe.ab.ca">hscurities@cbe.ab.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malgorzata (Margarette) Tatala (submitted a paper but could not attend).</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maltat@kul.lublin.pl">maltat@kul.lublin.pl</a></td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constance Feltz (could not attend at the last minute)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:v89xcl@aol.com">v89xcl@aol.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Bromhead</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bvbrromhead@cbe.ab.ca">bvbrromhead@cbe.ab.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Brydges</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brydges@ucalgary.ca">brydges@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Kroening</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kroening@tpg.com.au">kroening@tpg.com.au</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Madill</td>
<td><a href="mailto:madillaw@telusplanet.net">madillaw@telusplanet.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Vandermeer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kathyvan@telus.net">kathyvan@telus.net</a></td>
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</tbody>
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