

MENTAL HEALTH AS A FUNCTION OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

MICHAEL M. PIECHOWSKI

Department of Educational Psychology
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois

To appear in:
Mental Hygiene of Psychologically Healthy People
Warszawa = PWN (Science Publishing House)
1978

December 1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Question of Defining Mental Health	1
Psychological Health as an Ideal Norm and as a Value	5
A Study of Exemplars of Mental Health	7
A. Autonomy and Superior Perception of Reality	
B. Problem Centeredness	
C. Spontaneity	
D. Gemeinschaftsgefühl	
E. Interpersonal Relations	
F. The Imperfections of Self-Actualizing People	
G. Value Structure and Self-Actualization	
H. Resolution of Dichotomies	
The Case of Saint-Exupéry	15
Development Through Positive Disintegration	17
The Concept of the Developmental Potential	19
Five Dimensions of Mental Functioning	20
Psychomotor	
Sensual	
Imaginational	
Intellectual	
Emotional	
Levels of Development	25
Level I	
Level II	
Level III	
Level IV	
Level V	
Empirical Indicators of the Capacity for Psychological Health	34
The Empirical Basis of a Universal Ethic	35
References	39

The Question of Defining Mental Health

The question of what constitutes mental health continues to evade clear resolution. In 1958, Marie Jahoda presented a lucid review of this question. Subsequent attempts to deal with it did not move the matter much further toward a satisfactory empirical and theoretical definition of universally valid criteria of mental health (Offer and Sabshin, 1966; Whiteley, 1973). What is clearly lacking in all these attempts is a well-defined theoretical framework. It is the lesson of science that no significant questions can be answered unless the theories to deal with relevant phenomena are well developed (Kuhn, 1962; Suppe, 1974). The practical consequences of this lack of resolution are well demonstrated by Rosenhan's study entitled "On Being Sane in Insane Places."

In 1973, Rosenhan demonstrated that the staff of mental hospitals are not prepared to recognize normal behavior in a person who asks for admission. Rosenhan has sent 8 healthy volunteers to ask for admission to a psychiatric ward of several hospitals. The staff treated them as mentally ill and never recognized that there was nothing "crazy" or "sick" about their behavior. Unlike the staff, the regular patients with whom these volunteers were hospitalized, very quickly suspected the volunteers of being pseudopatients. This shows that the behavior associated with mental health and the behavior associated with mental illness can be distinguished by other people, even though, as in this case, they are patients. Rosenhan was not trying to demonstrate that patients are superior to staff in making this distinction, but that the setting of a mental hospital and a person's request to be admitted precluded the possibility that on closer examination, a person could be judged in good mental health.

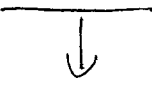
In another experiment, Rosenhan told the staff of a large mental hospital that during the next three months he will send one healthy subject (a pseudo-patient). The task of the staff was to identify this person. There were 193 admissions in that period. Of this number, 43 patients were judged to be healthy, with high confidence, by at least one staff member, while two staff members agreed on 19 to be healthy. Rosenhan, however, had not sent any pseudo-patients.

We would like to think that we have moved away from regarding mental health as the opposite of mental illness, but Rosenhan's study shows that in practice, the elements of contrast are not operating with sufficient strength to guarantee any degree of reliability. Judging by the result, the criteria of good mental health appear nonexistent. Equally, we would like to think that the view has been discarded that mental health and mental illness are poles of a continuum with various gradations in between. A number of writers, such as Allport, Maslow, Rogers, Barron or Dabrowski have proposed long ago that mental health must be considered as a positive quality definable in terms independent of mental illness. Thus conceived, mental health is not the absence of mental illness, nor is it its opposite; similarly, it is not simply a state of normality conceived in the terms of the average or most common forms of behavior; finally, mental health is not just a state of well-being since such states are transient and are also known to be prominent in psychopaths. We are thus compelled to seek understanding of human behavior in terms such that our definition of psychological health will encompass significant parameters of human behavior in general. The first step in that direction is to examine formulations of what constitutes mature or healthy psychological functioning. The next step is to seek a theory that would justify these formulations.

Concepts of maturity and mental health were given the most thorough review

by Maria Jahoda (1958). She identified six major categories of concepts of positive mental health. Although none of them are based on an empirically solid body of knowledge, nor are they the product of a comprehensive theory of human behavior, nevertheless, they are worth examining for possible research and theoretical implications. Here are the six categories with some updated references:

1. Attitudes of the individual toward his own self. The manner of perceiving oneself can give indication of higher or lower degree of psychological health (Allport, 1937; Dabrowski, 1947; Maslow, 1950).
2. The individual's degree of growth, development or self-actualization. Here, indicators of health are sought in processes of psychological transformation and in the fulfillment of one's growth potential (Allport, 1937; Dabrowski, 1948; Rogers, 1951; Maslow, 1955).
3. Integration - the quality of a central synthesizing psychological function, one that provides balance of psychic forces, gives a unifying philosophy of life, offers resilience in recovery from stress, or can provide emotional inoculation in anticipation of stress (Janis, 1958).
4. Autonomy - the ability to regulate one's behavior from within and the ability to be independent in one's judgment of the social milieu, to be self-guided and self-determined; in short, autonomy represents an internal frame of reference (Powers, 1973).
5. The adequacy of the individual's perception of reality assessed in terms of being free from need-distortion: "the mentally healthy person will test reality for its degree of correspondence to his wishes or fears. One lacking in mental health will assume such correspondence without testing" (Jahoda, 1953). But reality perception also involves the perception of other persons and thus, social sensitivity, or empathy, also becomes an



important indicator of a mentally healthy perception of reality (Hogan, 1973). Insensitivity to others, or clear misperception of other person's behavior and motives can hardly be compatible with mental health (Cleckley, 1964).

6. Environmental mastery - the degree to which an individual can meet situational requirements, to relate to others and to meet the tasks and the problems that life poses (Adler, 1931; White, 1959; Seligman, 1975).

It might, perhaps, be interesting to include here Allport's description of the mature personality - a counterpart and one of the sources for Jahoda's search for the traits of psychological health. The similarities are quite apparent. Allport (1961) proposes six criteria of maturity:

1. Extension of the sense of self - the welfare of another becomes identical with one's own - a sign of the capacity to be alterocentric. Together with this, Allport stresses the ability to participate rather than being merely active: the ability to become immersed in one's tasks.
2. Warm relating of self and others. This involves two kinds of relations: the relation of intimacy with persons who are close - the capacity for personal love and friendship, and compassion - the capacity to be respectful and appreciative of the human condition of others, to feel empathy and brotherhood with all persons.
3. Emotional security (self-acceptance), also called emotional poise. It is the ability "to live with one's emotional states in such a way that they do not betray the person to compulsive acts nor interfere with the well-being of others."
4. Realistic perception, skills, and assignments: "Maturity does not bend reality to fit one's needs and fantasies." This concept overlaps largely with Jahoda's fifth category and Maslow's problem-centeredness (see below).
5. Self-objectification: Insight and humor. To Allport, one cannot have an objective view of oneself without the capacity for corrected insight and for a sense of

humor which allows laughing at oneself. To take oneself too seriously is not to be truly mature or mentally healthy.

6. The unifying philosophy of life. In addition to humor and insight, there must be a clear comprehension of life's purpose in terms of a unifying philosophy of life. This encompasses a sense of direction in life and a personal sense of values, personal religion and a sense of responsibility.

The above descriptive categories add up to a general conception of positive mental health and mature psychological functioning in terms independent of mental illness. Yet none of them can claim supremacy or greater weight on which tests of mental health could be based. But they make it clear that any notion of mental health must rest on all of these categories taken together as a multiple set of criteria. This, however, leads straight to the question, how do they relate to each other? What conceptual framework can demonstrate that they necessarily belong together and in what way some of these characteristics are the products of other more basic ones? What theoretical approach can give us a method of analysis through which we can arrive at empirical indicators of psychological health?

Psychological Health as an Ideal Norm and as a Value

There is, of course, yet another problem. To establish a concept of mental health is to establish a norm of mental health. Some notion of "goodness" is always attached to it which makes such a state of mental health clearly desirable. As such, the norm becomes a value. If the norm can be shown to be empirical then also the value will be empirically based. Again, we must seek a theory that can resolve for us, in scientific fashion, the relationship between a conception of mental health and the values that are inextricably bound with it. But rather than seek a 'value-free' definition of mental health, which clearly

is not possible, we must examine the relationship that exists between the norm and the value.

In order to do this, we have to examine empirical and theoretical attempts to seek the description of mental health in terms of a fully functioning person. Although the term belongs to Carl Rogers (1963), it was Abraham Maslow who provided us with empirical knowledge of such persons.

Between 1945 and 1950 Maslow undertook a study of individuals judged to be representatives of particularly good psychological health (Lowry, 1973). Maslow reasoned essentially in biological terms and thus he thought that the most representative specimens of a species are not those who are crippled, ailing and diseased but those who are most fully developed and are above average in terms of strength, agility, fertility, etc. When we take the physical aspect of man, we look at athletes who have developed their bodies, their skills, their responses and their will far above average. They inspire sculptors and painters, they have a strong aesthetic appeal and at the same time appear to represent a desirable ideal of physical, and more than physical, development. Thus, from a theoretical point of view, it makes sense to seek the ideal norm. But note that we are speaking in terms of a structure, how well it is put together, how balanced in the relation and quality of its parts. Thus, an ideal norm is necessarily a structural norm. It is a matter of underlying organization. It has an overall plan which can be varied within limits imposed by the structure. The ideal norm is, of necessity, represented only by a minority in the population. Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1974) points out, for instance, that even if in the human population the number of diabetics amounted to over 80 percent, this still could not be taken as a normal condition. The reason that we can argue in this manner is that we have knowledge of carbohydrate metabolism and consequently know what in the metabolic machinery is defective.

Thus, if we are to establish an ideal norm of psychological health, we must be able to demonstrate what is defective in all other cases, even though these cases should constitute the greatest majority. In order to approach this question we take a brief look at Maslow's theory of motivation.

Maslow distinguished two kinds of motivation: deficiency motivation and growth motivation (Maslow, 1955). Deficiency motivation was the result of deficiency in the satisfaction of needs which are basic to human existence and sense of well-being; these are the needs of safety, belonging, love and esteem. Growth motivation results when the basic needs are either fulfilled to a large degree or transcended (Maslow, 1970). The growth needs are the so-called higher needs of beauty, perfection, knowledge and justice. It is usually reported that Maslow assumed that the satisfaction of basic needs automatically leads to the emergence of higher needs. The fact of the matter is that in his later writings Maslow (1970, 1971) emphasized that the emergence of higher needs is not automatic. He was in fact puzzled by this and stressed more and more the qualitative difference between lower and higher needs which constitute the lower and the higher values in human life. Maslow associated the notion of ordinary mental health with the fulfillment of lower needs, the notion of exemplary mental health with the fulfillment of higher needs.

A Study of Exemplars of Mental Health

The initial criteria for Maslow's selection of psychologically healthy people were: (a) full satisfaction of basic needs, (b) absence of concealed psychopathology, and (c) full realization of talents and capabilities (Maslow, 1950). In the course of the investigation, Maslow found that the first and second criterion could not be absolutely adhered to. Thus, absence of concealed pathology really meant absence of something more serious than just feelings of distress, anxiety or

dissatisfaction with oneself that are inescapable in the life of any thoughtful individual. This study is well known (or, at least, ought to be well known by the frequent reference to it) and it is the only study of an ideal norm group. Since it is based on a systematic investigation of actual subjects, this study provides the first empirical description of psychologically healthy people. Maslow (1954, 1970) identified a number of characteristics of these people whom he called self-actualizing. These characteristics are listed below in Table 1. The grouping of the characteristics follows Piechowski and Dabrowski (1977).

TABLE 1

- A. Autonomy and Superior Perception of Reality
 - 1. More Efficient Perception of Reality and More Comfortable Relations with It
 - 2. Acceptance (Self, Others, Nature)
 - 3. The Quality of Detachment; The Need for Privacy
 - 4. Autonomy; Independence of Culture and Environment; Will; Active Agents
 - 5. Resistance to Enculturation: Transcendence of Any Particular Culture
- B. Problem Centeredness
 - 6. Problem Centering
 - 7. Discrimination Between Means and Ends, Between Good and Evil
- C. Spontaneity
 - 8. Spontaneity; Simplicity; Naturalness
 - 9. Continued Freshness of Appreciation
 - 10. Creativeness
 - 11. The Mystic Experience; The Peak Experience
- D. Gemeinschaftsgefühl
 - 12. Gemeinschaftsgefühl
 - 13. The Democratic Character Structure
 - 14. Philosophical, Unhostile Sense of Humor
- E. Interpersonal Relations
- F. The Imperfections of Self-Actualizing People
- G. Value Structure and Self-Actualization
- H. The Resolution of Dichotomies

We shall now summarize the characteristics of each group of self-actualizing traits.

A. AUTONOMY AND SUPERIOR PERCEPTION OF REALITY

Self-actualizing people correctly and efficiently judge people, politics, public affairs, art, music, science, and ideas. They see concealed realities more readily than others; they are also more capable of penetrating confused realities. They are not susceptible to conceptual stereotypes because they are concerned with knowing how things really are; hence, they are less compelled to have questions settled. The resolution of problems is guided by a quest for knowledge and truth rather than by partiality and dependence on the outcome. In consequence, they tolerate tentativeness and ambiguity and are comfortable with suspension of the resolution. They are unthreatened by the unknown; rather, they are attracted to it.

Their most efficient perception of reality is related both to their acceptance of things as they are in the natural order (as contrasted with the social order) and to their detachment. Thus, Maslow saw a consistent relationship between the acceptance of nature, self, and others and a superior perception of reality.

This capacity for detached perspicuity operates also in relation to themselves and their own problems of whatever nature (cf. Problem Centeredness). Self-actualizing people are not ego-involved and anxious about what they perceive. Lack of ego-involvement means lack of defensiveness and need of disguise. One of its direct results is a distaste for artificialities, hypocrisy, etc. All these qualities taken together justify Maslow's statement that self-actualizing individuals are more objective "in all senses of the word."

The sources of satisfaction and reward for self-actualizing people lie in their own potentialities and resources and in their own development. They are

intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated and, for this reason, rather independent of the opinions and values of their environment. They are not bound by their own culture; they accept it, are immersed in it, and follow its conventions as long as these do not raise moral issues. They accept slowness of change and at the same time are capable of long-term work toward improving their culture from within rather than through revolutions. However, Maslow makes the point that they are not against fighting, rather that they are against ineffective fighting. Thus, self-actualizing people are autonomous and universalists at the same time; they are "ruled by the laws of their own character rather than by rules of society;" they transcend their own culture and perceive values universally shared with other cultures.

B. PROBLEM CENTEREDNESS

Self-actualizing individuals are strongly focused on problems outside themselves; they are problem-centered rather than ego-centered, which is directly related to the Quality of Detachment. This problem-centeredness is not ordinary problem-solving but stems from a sense of mission in life, having a task to fulfill. The sense of responsibility, duty, and obligation can be expressed as taking on tasks for the sake of others. The tasks are non-personal and unselfish. Furthermore, problem-centeredness means a concern with basic issues and eternal questions. Such issues and questions are seen in the "widest possible frame of reference," which in turn relates to the broader and more efficient perception of reality.

When the problems are internal to themselves, self-actualizing individuals look at themselves equally objectively and with that sharper vision which is more concerned with the truth of the matter than with extrinsic considerations.

Self-actualizing people are fixed on ends rather than on means, since they enjoy "the doing itself," the work they are engaged in, and the associated activity.

They are also capable of converting means into ends in themselves.

The discrimination between means and ends reflects a strong discrimination of values, a discrimination between good and evil. In Maslow's words: "I have found none of my subjects to be chronically unsure about the difference between right and wrong in his actual living...These individuals are strongly ethical, they have definite moral standards, they do right and do not do wrong. Needless to say, their notions of right and wrong and of good and evil are often not the conventional ones." Considering that this quality relates to a superior perception of reality, autonomy, detachment, objectivity, and is operating within the widest possible frame of reference, it has extremely powerful implications.

C. SPONTANEITY

According to Maslow, self-actualizing individuals are "relatively spontaneous in behavior, and far more spontaneous than that in their inner life, thought, impulses, etc." They lack artificiality and do not strain for effect. They are simple and natural in behavior rather than unconventional; they are conventional mostly for the sake of others, or simply because no basic issues are involved. Here Maslow returns to the theme of autonomy discussed in the preceding section. The self-actualizing individual follows an autonomous code of ethics, while "the ordinary ethical behavior of the average person is largely conventional behavior rather than truly ethical behavior, e.g., behavior based on fundamentally accepted principles (which are perceived to be true)."

Their superior perception of reality enters here again as heightened awareness of their own "impulses, desires, opinions, and subjective reactions in general." This intensification of awareness and experience is also observed in their ability "to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, and wonder, even ecstasy... They derive

ecstasy, inspiration, and strength from the basic experiences of life." It is, perhaps, this quality that predisposes them toward peak experiences and mystic experiences, which bestow the attendant conviction "that something extremely important and valuable has happened, so that the subject is to some extent transformed and strengthened even in his daily life." Maslow calls these experiences "life-validating," and we can see that the "freshness of appreciation" somehow links the sense of wonder in regard to the basic experiences of life with an openness toward overwhelming and extraordinary ecstasy, yet without losing one's head and becoming incoherent.

D. GEMEINSCHAFTSGEFÜHL

Here are included, Gemeinschaftsgefühl, the Democratic Character Structure and the Philosophical, Unhostile Sense of Humor, as all three qualities reflect an attitude of empathy, concern, and helpfulness toward others.

Maslow writes, "They have...a basic underlying kinship with all people, and "a genuine desire to help the human race." Complementary to this is their disregard or even unawareness of differences of class, education, religion, or race. Maslow warns not to confuse this with an indiscriminating equalizing which cannot tell one person from another. This would contradict their superior perspicuity. Kierkegaard expressed it like this: "Love believes all things, yet it is never deceived."

According to Maslow, their kind of humor is philosophical, "it is intrinsic to the situation rather than added to it," and it is rooted again in that larger frame of reference characteristic for self-actualizers' perception of reality; hence, what appears serious or troublesome in a narrow field of vision, in a larger context evokes benevolent merriment. "This attitude rubs off on professional work, which in a certain sense is also play, and which, though taken

seriously, is somehow also taken lightly."

E. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Self-actualizing people are capable of "more fusion, greater love, more perfect identification, more obliteration of the ego boundaries:" they tend to develop relations with other individuals, but "tend to be kind or at least patient to almost everyone... They have compassion for all mankind," which represents the Gemeinschaftsgefühl described earlier.

Maslow mentions here, as characteristic traits, deeper and more profound relations with rather few individuals, an especially tender love for children, compassion for all mankind, love with discrimination. When self-actualizing people show hostile reactions to others, these are either deserved or are for the good of that person or another.

F. THE IMPERFECTIONS OF SELF-ACTUALIZING PEOPLE

This section demonstrates perhaps better than any other that Maslow was describing characteristics of real subjects rather than those of a wishfully idealized image. Thus, we learn that self-actualizing people can have "silly, wasteful, or thoughtless habits. They can be boring, stubborn, irritating. They are by no means free from a rather superficial vanity, pride, partiality to their own productions, family, friends, and children. Temper outbursts are not rare."

Maslow points out that feelings of guilt, anxiety, sadness, self-castigation, internal strife and conflict are not incompatible with psychological health. The difference lies in the sources of these feelings. Maslow distinguishes "neurotic" and "nonneurotic" sources, and we can safely assume that the latter stands for "developmental." This is made clear when he talks about their guilt concerning

improvable shortcomings, stubborn remnants of psychological ill-health, habits, and shortcomings of the species.

G. VALUE STRUCTURE AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION

The value structure of self-actualizing people, according to Maslow, is universal and cross-cultural. It is "automatically furnished" by the source trait of acceptance and by the self-actualizer's (1) particularly comfortable relationship with reality, (2) his Gemeinschaftsgefühl, (3) his basically satisfied condition....., (4) his characteristically discriminating relations to means and ends." In Maslow's eyes, acceptance is the foundation which abolishes conflict, struggle, ambivalence and uncertainty; trivial problems vanish also, and otherwise difficult and serious problems cease to be so - they become part of the natural order of things.

H. THE RESOLUTION OF DICHOTOMIES

Maslow continues the theme of disappearance of conflicts and lists over 25 pairs of opposites, e.g., heart and head, reason and instinct, selfishness and unselfishness, spirituality and sensuality, duty and pleasure, etc. to show that in self-actualizing people they coalesce to form unities. This aspect of self-actualization needs, perhaps, no specific examples since it is inherent in all the traits.

The last two themes - values and resolution of dichotomies - provide us a bridge to the level IV structure in the theory of positive disintegration. This structure produces a value hierarchy with qualities corresponding exactly to those described by Maslow. This will be discussed later.

The above summaries do not bring out the wealth of detail of the original description but we have in it the essential features of an important phenomenon -

a form of behavior called self-actualization. The task of science is not to account for all phenomena but only those that are judged to be important. Guided by a description we must also be able to identify new occurrences of the phenomena and with further systematic study, either confirm or correct the original description.

The Case of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Although Maslow has listed names of historical figures representing self-actualization, he has not presented a single case in which the characteristics of self-actualization and their actual manifestations in a given person were juxtaposed. Such a study has been carried out recently. Biographical and autobiographical material of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was analyzed for traits of self-actualization (Piechowski and Dabrowski, 1977). This study, by means of detailed ^{content} analysis, demonstrates fully that Saint-Exupéry meets all the characteristics of self-actualization. But it is important to point out that the original analysis of the psychological structure of Saint-Exupéry had nothing to do with Maslow's study of self-actualization but with level IV in the theory of positive disintegration.

In 1969-1972, Dr. Dabrowski carried out at the University of Alberta a program of research with the aim of developing methods of assessment of types and levels of development. In particular, the effort was directed toward finding representative instances of each level of development. From over 1500 subjects screened in preliminary testing, a total was collected of 950 sets of responses to Verbal Stimuli, 127 neurological examinations, and 81 autobiographies. From this collection, material was selected from six subjects to represent different types of development (Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1972; Piechowski, 1975). However, in the whole collection of 81 autobiographies there was none representing level IV. To fill this gap, Saint-Exupéry (1900-

1944) was selected as the best candidate to represent high level of development. A detailed analysis of 113 bio- and autobiographical fragments was carried out; 28 of them represent his childhood and adolescence, while the remaining 85 represent adulthood. Table 2 shows the distribution of the adult material across levels of development.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF LEVEL ASSIGNATIONS FOR SAINT-EXUPÉRY'S
ADULT MATERIAL

Level	Number of Excerpts	Percent of Total
III	8	9.4
III-IV	12	14.1
IV	50	58.9
IV-V	13	15.3
V	2	2.5
<hr/>		<hr/>
Total	85	100.1

Table 2 shows that three fourths of the analyzed material represented level IV or higher.

This analysis of the psychological structure of Saint-Exupéry was carried out independently of Maslow's earlier study and, it must be remembered, it was guided by completely different theoretical considerations, namely, research on the theory of positive disintegration. In fact, the similarities between Saint-Exupéry's personality profile and self-actualization were not noticed until late 1975, three years after the completion of the research at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

But now we have a very important result. By the vehicle of Saint-Exupéry's material, the empirical description of self-actualization was shown to correspond

to the theoretical structure of level IV in the theory of positive disintegration (Piechowski and Dabrowski, 1977). In this manner, two entirely independent approaches are shown to have perfect correspondence. What this does is that it gives an empirical basis and a theoretical structure to the definition of positive mental health. Level IV and its attribute, self-actualization, is thus shown to be an ideal norm of mental health. The description of traits of self-actualization provided by Maslow and the description of the dynamisms of level IV provided by Dabrowski (1970, 1974), gives us sufficiently defined parameters so that tests and assessment of mental health can be built on their basis.

Since level IV is an ideal norm, almost everyone will be found short of it. Consequently, it would be more fruitful to examine the developmental factors which favor growth toward level IV. In this way, we might more readily distinguish those developmental processes which favor mental health from those which hinder it. As a result of establishing what mental health is ideally, we can now move toward a conception of mental health as a capacity for development in the direction of the ideal norm, rather than in terms of the norm itself. This has important consequences, both theoretically and practically which we shall discuss later. But first, let us examine the elements of the theory of positive disintegration.

Development through Positive Disintegration

In Dabrowski's theory (1964, 1970, 1972) each level of development constitutes a different structure (Piechowski, 1975). It is important to keep this in mind because a structure is something different from a phase or a stage of development. A structure denotes an underlying organization of behavior. Elements of the structure shape experience and behavior. Knowing the structure means knowing the type of behavior that it can produce and the type of behavior that it cannot. For instance, at a high level of development, e.g. level IV, we encounter the dynamism

of responsibility. To establish that such a dynamism is strongly developed in a person is to establish that this person will be dedicated to service to others, will be ready to protect others from physical harm, moral evil, unnecessary pain and suffering, and will behave in a manner congruent with his or her personality ideal. This person will not be irresponsible, unpredictable, domineering, insensitive, negligent, or seeking his own advantage.

Behavior of such quality does not come ready made. It is preceded by much development and work of self-evaluation and self-improvement. Where does this start and what are the characteristics of development leading to such a result? To approach this question we must first discuss the conceptual structure of the theory of positive disintegration. The outline that follows is adapted from an earlier monograph (Piechowski, 1975).

The central concept in Dabrowski's theory is that of multilevelness of psychological functioning. This implies a new manner of approach to human behavior and its development. In consequence, it becomes less meaningful to consider, for instance, aggression, inferiority, empathy, or sexual behavior as unitary phenomena, but it becomes more meaningful to examine their different levels. Love and aggression at the lowest level of development differ less than the lowest and the highest level of love, or the highest and the lowest level of aggression; at the highest level of development, aggression is replaced by empathy (Dabrowski, 1974).

At the lowest level of development, the structure underlying different behaviors is fairly simple. With the progress of development toward higher levels, the process of differentiation becomes so extensive that the differences between levels are by far greater and far more significant than differences between particular behaviors. The concept of multilevelness is thus the starting point for the analysis of all forms of behavior and their development. In

the first volume of "Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions" Dabrowski describes nearly 50 kinds of behavior, each at the five levels of development.

Before describing some general characteristics of the five levels of development, we shall examine another key concept in the theory of positive disintegration, and that is the concept of the developmental potential.

The Concept of the Developmental Potential (DP)

Developmental potential is the original endowment which determines what level of development a person may reach if the physical and environmental conditions are optimal (Dabrowski, 1970). Developmental potential has certain defining characteristics which allow us to detect its presence and measure its strength.

The defining characteristics of DP are forms of overexcitability and developmental dynamisms. Dynamisms are intra-psycho processes of positive disintegration which shape development and the expression of behavior. Each level of development has a different set of dynamisms. This is shown in Table 3 and in Figure 1. Forms of overexcitability are modes, or dimensions, of mental functioning. Developmental potential is the sum of the strength of dynamisms and forms of overexcitability detectable in a given individual.

Table 3 is an attempt to show how these concepts are related. The upper part is labeled "Development" to refer to all those characteristics which are observed or inferred in the process of development. The lower part is labeled "DP" to refer to the components of the developmental potential, namely, dynamisms and forms of overexcitability.

The forms of overexcitability can be observed and measured independently of the context of development. In this lies their value and significance as measurable developmental properties which do not enter into the description of development (the dynamisms do). When a given phenomenon can be accounted for in terms of factors which are not part of its description but whose operation can be measured quantitatively, then we are on the way to explaining the phenomenon. Thus, for example, we explain eye color in terms of pigments and genes necessary to make the organism capable of producing those pigments. Neither the genes nor the pigments enter into the description of eye color.

Five Dimensions of Mental Functioning

The five forms of psychic overexcitability were discovered by Dabrowski prior to the formulation of his theory. In his 1938 paper are described "types of increased psychic overexcitability." Dabrowski noticed that many children, adolescents, and also adults, consistently overreact to external and internal (i.e. intra-psychic) stimuli. The important aspect of his observation was that while the stimuli were different, the overreacting appeared limited to certain dimensions. Dabrowski called this consistent tendency to overreact overexcitability distinguishing five different forms: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional.

The characteristic of overexcitability is that a wide range of stimuli is converted to the dimension in which the individual is most reactive. For example, an individual with highly excitable imagination responds to emotional or intellectual stimuli at first with images, fantasies or dreams. This imaginal process may be converted into an emotional or intellectual response. An individual with high psychomotor overexcitability will respond to the same stimuli by acting out his emotional tension, or by immediately setting out to solve an intellectual problem by trial and error.

In the extreme case of hypothetical individuals endowed with only one form of overexcitability their only mode of experiencing would be limited to this one form. A psychomotor individual would only know how to be active, a sensual one only how to seek sensory pleasure, an imaginative one only how to live in a world of dreams, an intellectual one only how to apply logic, and an emotional one only how to love and worry. This illustration serves to show that the forms of overexcitability correspond to certain modes, or dimensions, of mental functioning.

The forms of overexcitability may be likened to channels through which information is flowing. The five forms function as selective channels, or color filters, through which the various external and internal stimuli reach the individual. Such channels determine to what stimuli and in what way he is capable of responding.

As modes of functioning, or experiencing, the five forms of overexcitability are present in rudimentary form in every individual. If they are regarded as channels conducting information, obviously the amount of information depends on the aperture of the channel. If more than one, or all five channels have fairly wide apertures then the abundance and diversity of information (i.e. simultaneous experiencing in different modes) will inevitably lead to dissonance, conflict and tension. Dissonance, conflict and tension are the substrates of the developmental process of positive disintegration (Dabrowski, 1972). In short, experiencing can be regarded as a kind of information processing.

The development of an individual advances and accelerates toward extensive psychological transformation as a function of the strength of these five modes of experiencing. For instance, all five forms are very strong in Saint-Exupéry (Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1972; Piechowski and Dabrowski, 1977).

The particular interpretation given to these five dimensions requires a closer definition. The following vignettes of the five forms are based on the original description by Dabrowski (1959) and on the autobiographical material analyzed by

Piechowski (1972).

Psychomotor

Psychomotor overexcitability appears to be a function of an organic excess of energy, or simply of an excessive excitability of the neuromuscular system. It manifests itself, for example, in rapid talk, violent games, intense athletic activities, pressure for action (typical, for instance, of delinquent behavior). Enhanced neuromuscular excitability facilitates transfer of emotional tension to psychomotor forms of expression. Emotional excitement or distress is converted into gesticulation, pacing, throwing objects, wanderlust, rapid talk, chain smoking.

Sensual

Sensual overexcitability appears to be a function of heightened experiencing of sensory pleasure, which may be manifested as a need for comfort, luxury, stereotyped or refined beauty, fashions, variety of sexual experiences, numerous but superficial relationships with others. Overeating or excessive sexual stimulation are the most common examples of transfer of emotional tension to sensual forms of expression.

Imaginational

Imaginational overexcitability in its "pure" form manifests itself through rich association of images and impressions, inventiveness, use of image and metaphor in verbal expression, strong and sharp visualization. In its less pure form, emotional tension is transferred to dreams, nightmares, mixing of truth and fiction, fears of the unknown, or vividly visualized emissaries of fear.

Intellectual

Intellectual overexcitability is manifested in the persistence to ask probing questions, avidity for knowledge, analysis, theoretical thinking, reverence for logic, preoccupation with theoretical problems. Intellectual overexcitability, in contrast to the first three forms, does not manifest the transfer of emotional tension to intellectual activity under distinct forms. When intellectual and emotional process of high intensity occur together, it always seems possible to separate the intellectual from the emotional component.

Emotional

Emotional overexcitability is a function of experiencing emotional relationships. The relationships can manifest as strong attachment to persons, living things, or places. From the point of view presented here, intensity of feelings and display of emotions alone are not developmentally significant unless the experiential aspect of relationship is present. This distinction is very important. For example, when a child is refused candy he may throw a temper tantrum to show his anger. Or, he may go away sad thinking he is not loved. In the first case we have only a display of emotion, in the second a relationship. The manifestations of emotional overexcitability include inhibition (timidity and shyness), excitation (enthusiasm), strong affective memory, concern with death, fears, anxieties, depressions, feelings of loneliness, need for security, concern for others, exclusive relationships, difficulties of adjustment to new environments. Relationships of friendship and love are developed usually with very few persons, and in extreme cases with only one. For an "emotional" person, as defined here, such exclusive relationships may be the only source of meaning, in life.

Developmental potential is strongest if all, or almost all, forms of overexcitability are present. The three forms, intellectual, imaginational and emotional, are essential if a high level of development is to result (Dabrowski, 1972). The highest level of development is possible only if the emotional form is the strongest, or at least no less strong than the other forms. Great strength of the psychomotor and the sensual forms limits development to the lowest levels only.

Differences in the strength, quality and balance of different assortments of overexcitabilities account for forms of development which appear flamboyant and abundantly creative (e.g. some painters, actors, film makers) but which sometimes do not extend beyond level II. In such cases overexcitability may appear abundant and rich, yet it may lack the particular emotional and cognitive components which are necessary for the profound transformation that opens toward a multilevel phase of development. Here, a closer analysis should eventually reveal those expressions which are crucial for development to proceed beyond unilevel disintegration.

The five forms of overexcitability undergo extensive differentiation in the course of development. As shown in Table 3, the three forms, imaginational, intellectual, and emotional are essential for the formation of autonomous developmental processes. The autonomous processes are represented by multilevel dynamisms. These are the processes in which the individual begins consciously to participate in and direct his own development. These processes depend on the presence, early in development, of the three essential forms of overexcitability.

The forms of overexcitability and the dynamisms are regarded as the moving forces of development; overexcitability being the original equipment and dynamisms the propellent derivatives. If the forms of overexcitability and the dynamisms actually are the only significant forces of development then the

assessment of their strength should yield an assessment of the strength of the developmental potential. This has been shown to be true (Piechowski, 1975).

Levels of Development

The levels of development through positive disintegration are structural conceptualizations serving to identify the types of processes involved: integration and unilevel or multilevel disintegration. The concept of level means here a characteristic constellation of intra-psychic dynamisms as already mentioned and described in detail elsewhere (Dabrowski, 1974; Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1969; Piechowski and Gage, in preparation).

A level is a distinct identifiable developmental structure, unlike a stage which may be merely a segment in a temporal sequence. Thus when we use the expression, "a level is attained," it means that the structure of a lower level is replaced by the structure of a higher one.

Here again, the use of the expression, "transition from one level to another," is colloquially convenient but inaccurate. In the process of development the structures of two or even three contiguous levels may exist side by side, although it must be understood that they exist in conflict. The conflict is resolved and the "transition" accomplished when one of the structures is either eliminated, or comes under complete control of the structure of another level.

Development does not occur at an even pace. There are periods of great intensity and disequilibrium (psychoneuroses, depression, creative process), and there are periods of equilibrium. Development achieves a plateau, and this may occur at any level or "between" levels, when the dynamisms are active in controlling behavior but do not carry on further transformation and restructuring. This may denote partial integration. But the more development is advanced,

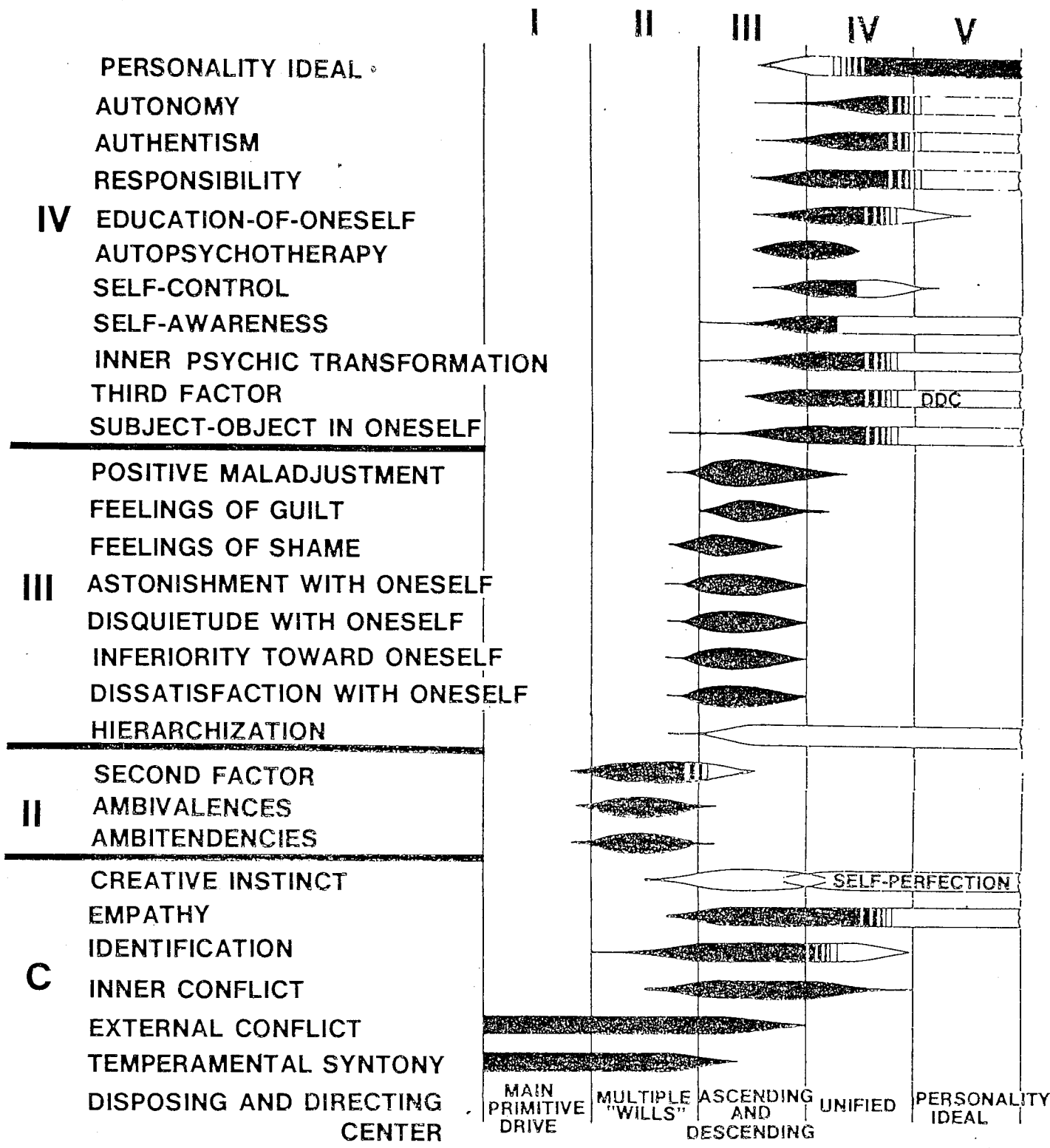


Figure 1.

i.e. the higher level it reaches, the less possible it is for it to slacken off and cease to carry on the process of intra-psychoic transformation. This is one reason why such advanced development was called accelerated (Dabrowski, 1970). Here acceleration does not denote a rate of change toward completion but rather the greatest extent and depth of the transformation of personality structure.

The theory of positive disintegration defines five levels of development which we shall describe in turn. The levels and their defining characteristics, i.e. dynamisms, are shown in Figure 1. The dynamisms are listed in groups specific for a given level. The group labeled "C" includes those dynamisms whose activity develops and extends over several levels.

Level I: Primary Integration

Primary integration is the least differentiated level of development. This is depicted in the first vertical column of Figure 1. We note the absence of developmental dynamisms. In the broadest sense primary integration is an organization existing prior to development, i.e. prior to a restructuring of the emotional and cognitive organization. It is characterized by externality, rigidity, lack of emotional relationships with others (others are treated as things), instrumentality of intelligence (absence of reflection) absence of internal conflicts but occurrence of external conflicts. Behavior is oriented toward the satisfaction of basic needs and is in all its aspects egocentric, such as striving for positions of recognition and power. The characteristics of authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) seem to correspond very closely to the characteristics of primary integration. Although the attempts to measure authoritarian personality have been seriously criticized (Christie and Jahoda, 1954), the

idea of a stereotyped and socially controlled psychological structure appears in new research (Kohlberg, 1973; Loevinger, 1976).

Here is a typical excerpt from one of our subjects (Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1972):

"In grade nine I was somewhat of a juvenile delinquent. I was stealing cars and bikes and eventually got caught for it. My only concern was with what my parents would think of me then. Very little was said by them and the only real discussion of it was with my probation officer who talked with both me and my parents. Of course I was the center of attention at school which I must say I rather enjoyed."

We note here absence of guilt, absence of reflection, and presence of self-centeredness and external orientation. He worries what his parents will think of him but he does not worry that he has caused them serious difficulty and grief over his conduct. He enjoys the attention he gets.

Level II: Unilevel Disintegration

Unilevel disintegration denotes a radical departure from the cohesive undifferentiated structure of primary integration (second vertical column of Figure 1). Externality is still strong but there are deviations from it, rigidity is replaced by hesitation, doubt, wavering attitudes, changing likes and dislikes. Emotional relationships with others exist but may have emotional components to excess (e.g. overdependence on others or jealousy). Patterns of thought are often circular, although they may appear sophisticated. Relativism of values predominates. Internal conflicts appear but often are more readily resolved by chance or superficial considerations than by internal struggle. However, intense emotional conflicts are possible, but lacking the crucial possibility of developmental resolution they lead to various mental disorders. Behavior can be essentially disoriented or conforming to external

standards. It easily follows changing fads, ideologies and leaders with little evaluation. When behavior is non-conforming, even rebellious, it is still without direction here--it is not based on autonomously developed principles. Because of the general looseness and lack of hierarchical structure at this level of development, it can result in the most severe mental disorders: psychosis, schizophrenia, phobias, psychosomatic disorders, alcoholism, or drug addiction.

Here is a typical excerpt from one of our subjects describing anxiety:

"Anxiety can overcome a person somewhat like a sudden fog. It slows one down, it makes it awkward to go about one's business normally.

Or from a grassy area one suddenly steps out into a muddy clay-like substance. Each step becomes more difficult, all becomes awkward. Or a steel reinforced brick wall. You are surrounded, can't escape, but there is a couch. How comfortable to lie down here and go to sleep, to forget about the wall. Or like being caught in a room with creepy, slimy, green ghost-like creatures, screaming at you---fear---fear---fear, coming closer and closer, all phantoms of course, but still...

It is important to realize that unilevel disintegration is behaviorally perhaps the most multiform structure. It appears to encompass all that is directionless, bizarre, unpredictable, enigmatic but usually lacking in reflection, differentiation of feeling and inner psychic transformation. Hence, in the extreme case, as in the above example it takes the form of a "no exit" situation - a conflict without resolution.

Level III: Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration

Spontaneous multilevel disintegration is characterized by an extensive differentiation of psychological structures and functions (third vertical column of Figure 1). Internal experiential processes begin to influence behavior more and more, wavering is replaced by a growing sense of "what ought to be" as opposed to "what is" in one's own personality structure. Emotional relationships with others become more selective and exclusive. Internal conflicts are numerous and reflect a hierarchical organization of cognitive and emotional life: "what is" against "what ought to be." Behavior is guided by an emerging autonomous, emotionally discovered, hierarchy of values and aims. Self-evaluation, reflection, intense moral conflicts, perception of the uniqueness of others, and existential anxiety, are among the characteristic phenomena at this level of development. Outside of a developmental framework such reactions are considered psychoneurotic. To uncover the developmental multilevel nature of most psychoneurotic processes constitutes the major thrust of the clinical part of Dabrowski's work, as well as of his efforts to show that processes of the same nature operate in the development of creative personalities (Dabrowski, 1964, 1972).

Here is a typical example taken from the same research material (Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1972):

"I feel that at times I never really belong in society. I have been looking for an answer to what's life all about but so far I have failed to come up with any answer.

This represents the feeling of inferiority toward oneself and the beginning of an existential search for the meaning of life. Thus, it is a function of valuing "what is" against a yet dimly perceived "what ought to be."

Here is another example from a different subject in whom the process of self-evaluation is stronger and combined with very strong empathy:

During the year that I taught school, everything began to crumble for me. I woke during the night, or early in the morning, filled with dread. I doubted my ability to teach young children, and I was afraid they were all wasting a year under my supervision. The district was dreadfully poor, and I witnessed real need for the first time in my life. We had never had much, but we had enough to eat and enough clothes to wear, and some of these children were coming to school without adequate food or clothing. They ate sandwiches with nothing but jam on them - no protein. I couldn't eat my lunch.

Level IV: Organized Multilevel Disintegration

The earlier part of this chapter was devoted to the description of the characteristic attributes of highly developed individuals and we pointed out the example of Saint-Exupéry. Because of the central importance of level IV for our argument here, we shall devote more space to it.

Since level IV is also a hierarchical structure, and a further elaboration of that of level III, this accounts for overlaps between the two levels (Figure 1). But the distinguishing feature of level IV is conscious formation and synthesis--a directed and self-determined organization of development. In contrast to the spontaneity of level III, the establishment of an internal hierarchy occurs at level IV consciously. While tensions and conflicts are not as strong as at level III, autonomy and the internal hierarchy of values and aims are much stronger and much more clearly developed. Behavior tends toward self-perfection and service to others.

The structure of level IV consists of dynamisms which carry out different tasks in the course of an overall developmental transformation. These dynamisms are: subject-object in oneself, which carries out the task of observation, evaluation, judgment on oneself, reflection on oneself and others; third factor, which carries out the task of setting and following internal standards; inner

psychic transformation, which carries out the specific tasks of inner restructuring; self-control, which regulates development and keeps in check interfering processes; education-of oneself, which carries out programs of systematic development; and autopsychotherapy, a subset of the former, which devises suitable methods (Piechowski and Gage, in preparation).

Empathy, identification, self-perfection, and inner conflict acquire new aspects according to the structure of each level. At level IV, empathy represents compassion and love that transcends differences, it embodies readiness to protect and help others, and profound concern over their destiny; identification represents accurate empathic understanding and acceptance of the feelings, perceptions, and problems of others who may be quite unlike oneself; self-perfection (an outgrowth of the creative instinct) represents the expectation of perfection in oneself, warfare with failures in fulfilling one's own standards, and joyful zest of the struggle; internal conflict represents feelings of incompleteness and non-fulfillment stemming from disappointment in search for perfection and the ultimate meaning of human existence, or from suffering associated with spiritual deprivation (Piechowski and Gage, in preparation).

While in level III the essential structure of the developmental process is represented by a split between "what is" and "what ought to be," in level IV it is represented by the transformation "what ought to be, will be." The advancement of this structure toward secondary integration (level V) involves another set of dynamisms: responsibility, or taking on tasks for the sake of others (and also for the sake of one's own development); autonomy, or the confidence in one's development as moving away from lower levels and becoming more strongly anchored in higher levels; authenticism, or the hierarchy of universal values in action - the enactment of what one believes; and personality

ideal, or the highest guiding level embodying all that one begins to perceive one can authentically become. This final transformation changes the "what will be" of level IV into the "new what is" of a total and harmonious unification of personality structure. In the overall process of multilevel restructuring, subjection to governance of lower levels is replaced by the supreme harmony and autonomy of the highest levels. The lower levels are disassembled and are excluded from the structure of secondary integration; with their disappearance, regression to a lower level of functioning is not possible.

These dynamisms, with two exceptions discussed below, were all found in Saint-Exupéry. This reflects a fully established level IV structure, and further, a continuity of transformation toward secondary integration (level V). The detailed study is reported elsewhere (Piechowski and Dabrowski, 1977).

Persons representing so high a level of development are not numerous but they do exist and they are the ones who represent our ideal norm of robust psychological health in the human species. If now we go back and compare the characteristics of level IV with the six categories of concepts of positive mental health identified by Jahoda and the six criteria of maturity given by Allport, we can readily see that the characteristics of self-actualization satisfy them all to a high degree while the dynamisms of level IV show the basic set of underlying source-traits. In other words, the dynamisms of level IV constitute the underlying structure.

Level V: Secondary Integration

Secondary integration represents the highest level of development. At this level, the process of developmental synthesis leads to a harmonious unity as a function of the "fullest dynamization of the ideal" (Dabrowski, 1974). Those who achieve it epitomize universal compassion and self-sacrifice, and here,

Dag Hammarskjöld is a good example. There are no internal conflicts at this level, in the sense of opposition between "what is" and "what ought to be." Developmental differentiation reaches here its full fruition. The lower "what is" is replaced by the "ought" of the highest level, which thus becomes the new and ultimate "what is."

Personality ideal is the principal and the strongest dynamism of secondary integration, and because of its supreme importance, it might be worthwhile to illustrate how its activity can be observed. Here are two pertinent fragments from Hammarskjöld's "Markings;" the first conveys the experience that the inwardly perceived world of beauty and harmony makes a lasting impression - one that lives on, while the memories of things actually seen fade away; the second fragment gives us a closer insight into how the ideal can be seen to be operating - here it is "a magnetic field in the soul."

Where does the frontier lie? Where do we travel to in those dreams of beauty satisfied laden with significance but without comprehensible meaning? Etched into the mind far deeper than the witness of the eyes. Where all is well - without fear, without desire.

Our memories of physical reality, where do they vanish to? While images of this dream world never grow older. They live - like the memory of a memory. (year 1951).

* * * * *

Now you know. When the worries over your work loosen the grip, then this experience of light, warmth, and power. From without - a sustaining element, like air to the glider or water to the swimmer. An intellectual hesitation which demands proofs and logical demonstration prevents me from 'believing' - in this, too. Prevents me from expressing and interpreting this reality in intellectual terms. Yet, through me there flashes this vision of a magnetic field in the soul, created in timeless present by unknown multitudes, living in holy obedience, whose words and actions are a timeless prayer.

- 'The Communion of Saints' - and - within it - an eternal life. (year 1952).

Empirical Indicators of the Capacity for Psychological Health

The hierarchy of levels of integration and disintegration serves as a chart on which individual developmental sequences can be mapped (Piechowski, 1975). If we now compare the characteristics of the five levels of development through positive disintegration with Jahoda's six categories of concepts of positive mental health and with Allport's six characteristics of mature personality, it becomes clear that none of them can be associated with level I or II. At level I there is no conception of self that could generate a reflective attitude toward one's self. At level II the self is either fragmented, unstable, or externally dependent, which leads to the same result as in level I.

Similarly, for the remaining categories of growth and development, balance of psychic forces, autonomy and perception of reality. While in regard to environmental mastery, let us not forget that it includes social sensitivity and an ability to relate to others.

Level III, however, is that kind of behavioral structure where movement toward these aspects of healthy and mature personality begins to take momentum. The dynamisms operating at this level carry out the necessary preparatory work toward a balance of psychic forces, autonomy, better perception of reality and higher level of life competence. These dynamisms carry out the work of psychological transformation, the results of which we label "growth." The very nature of these dynamisms represents a burst of new attitude toward oneself. These dynamisms constitute the developmental forces operating in psychoneuroses (Dabrowski et al., 1970; Dabrowski, 1972).

To the degree that precursor manifestations of these dynamisms can be observed amidst a person's process of unilevel disintegration, we can speak of a potential for mental health. The stronger these dynamisms, as in level III, the stronger the capacity for greater mental health, as epitomized by

self-actualization or level IV.

Besides dynamisms, we must also pay attention to the forms of psychic overexcitability among which emotional overexcitability together with the imaginal and intellectual gives us another and independent set of indicators of the potential for mental health. Thus, the theory of positive disintegration provides the empirical tools which allow not only to assess actual psychological health but also the potential for attaining a higher than actually present level of psychological health. This has been measured as the developmental potential and the methods, subject and empirical tests of the theory have been described (Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1972; Piechowski, 1975).

The Empirical Basis of a Universal Ethic

We are left with the thorny problem of the empirical basis for a universal ethic, or a universal hierarchy of values. This issue raises always such tremendous controversy that one begins to suspect that the critics do not react to a particular solution of the problem but, rather, to the very audacity of the claim that a universal ethic can be objectively established. It seems that it is the kind of problem that most intellectuals would prefer to make sure that it will never be solved and thus remain forever tantalizing. The really serious aspect of the problem is that the acceptance of a universal ethic has immediate consequences for the ways in which we view and judge our conduct. The discomfort with this conclusion rests on a fundamental misunderstanding, namely, that the acceptance of universal ethical norms would bind everyone to adhere to them equally. Here, resistance to such a solution is quite justified: it abolishes individual freedom of choice, it abolishes self-determination, and consequently, it abolishes individual and autonomous development toward a conviction that the universal values are true.

Maslow's suggestion in relation to this was different. Having studied self-actualizing people, he discovered that their sense of right and wrong is practically unerring ("they do right and they do not do wrong") and that it does represent universal values of truth, beauty and justice. Maslow then proposed that our value judgements should be deferred to self-actualizing people because they are the ones we can depend on for good judgment. This argument has also been strongly developed by Dabrowski (see below). This, of course, is a valid argument provided we have the means of identifying such people. The critics, for instance Smith (1961), question the empirical basis for this argument.

From the perspective of science (Kuhn, 1962, Lakatos, 1974), it is clear that a good part of the reason why Maslow's study had not been accepted as totally valid is because there has been no well-developed theory to give it validity. The isomorphism of the structure underlying self-actualization and the structure of level IV, as demonstrated recently (Piechowski and Dabrowski, 1977), provides the theoretical validity for Maslow's original study. Consequently, both the theoretical and the empirical basis for a universal ethic is thereby defined. This problem has been cogently presented earlier by Dabrowski:

Outstanding personalities, particularly those who have attained a high level of universal development, give in the course of their lives a dynamic example of the manner in which the transition from lower to higher levels is accomplished. At the same time, they exhibit the highest presently recognizable levels of development and thus show the function of the ideal of personality in development. Through the concrete example of their lives they indicate to others programs of moral and social development, i.e. the aims to be reached and the methods to be used. It is important to be aware of the empirical content in the developmental path of eminent individuals. Their trials and errors provide practical demonstration of the problems and possibilities of their solution that everyone has to face at each successive level of his development. Knowledge of their lives, their difficulties

and their attainment provides guidance for the creation of one's own program of development (Dabrowski and Piechowski, 1969).

There are also parallel and independent approaches. By the very fact that they are independent, their convergence on universals is highly significant and must be taken seriously. One such approach is Kohlberg's theory of moral development which by now has an extensive empirical basis (Kohlberg, 1963, 1973; Lickona, 1976). Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development. Only the sixth stage represents a mode of moral reasoning based on intrinsic universal ethical principles comparable to those of self-actualizing people and embodied in the structure of level IV in the theory of positive disintegration.

There are also biological arguments. Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1974) on the basis of vast material shows clearly that the social nature of human beings has been shaped in long evolutionary history which we share with other social species. The mechanisms underlying the evolution of social and interpersonal bonds involve mechanisms of appeasement of aggression, mechanisms of bond formation, division of work in the group, caring for the young, and leadership roles, to mention only a few. Among animals with social hierarchy, the leader of the group is never the most aggressive one but rather that animal which shows protectiveness, cooperativeness, tolerance toward other members, ability to end disputes. It is no accident that we as humans associate these traits with a good leader. The idea of a good leader is thus, not a peculiar product of human culture but the product of our biological evolution. But then, one will ask, how come so often we have bad leaders? The answer, in principle, is simple. It happens when the social structure does not operate anymore on the basis of established but slow working mechanisms of bond formation. These mechanisms require time for individual members to come and recognize each other and consequently feel safe with each other.

When individuals do not know each other well then the takeover by the more enterprising or the more aggressive one is easier. When such a leader emerges, he does not feel strong kinship with those he leads. Thus, an adversary rather than a cooperative condition arises.

That a stranger is an enemy is one of the universals of the socially living world of animal and human species. This is why the rites of recognition and acceptance are so universal. But technology and overpopulation press us to accelerate the resolution of the imbalance between the thus far evolved mechanisms of bond formation and the consequences of isolation and mutual alienation. Our responsibility lies in our individual evolution, in our individual development and discovery of the universal values which are, perhaps, uniquely human such as empathy, responsibility, creativity and ideal. These values, represented by self-actualizing people and shown to logically flow from the laws of emotional development defined by the theory of positive disintegration, can be our aims. But they have to be self-chosen aims. And if there is anything universal about a universal ethic it is this: it does not impose itself on others - it lives by example. "By their fruits you shall know them."

REFERENCES

- Adler, A. What Life Should Mean to You. Boston: Little, 1931.
- Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D. J., and Sanford, R. N. The Authoritarian Personality. New York: Harper, 1950.
- Allport, G. W. Personality: A Psychological Interpretation. New York: Holt, 1937.
- Allport, G. W. Pattern and Growth in Personality. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.
- Christie, R., and Jahoda, M. (Eds.) Studies in the Scope and Method of the Authoritarian Personality. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1954.
- Cleckley, H. The Mask of Sanity. Fourth Edition. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby, 1964.
- Dabrowski, K. Typy wzmożonej pobudliwości psychicznej. Biul. Inst. Hig. Psychicznej 1 (3-4), 3-26, 1938.
- Dabrowski, K. Pojęcie zdrowia psychicznego. Zdrowie Psychiczne, 2, 37-51, 1947.
- Dabrowski, K. Dezyntegracja jako pozytywny etap w rozwoju jednostki. Zdrowie Psychiczne 3 (4), 26-63, 1948.
- * Dabrowski, K. Sur la désintégration positive. Annales Médico-Psychologiques, 117 (2), 643-668, 1959.
- * Dabrowski, K. O dezyntegracji pozytywnej. Warszawa: PZWL, 1964.
- Dabrowski, K. Psychoneurosis is not an Illness. London: Gryf, 1972.
- Dabrowski, K. Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions. Vol. 1. Theory and Description of Levels of Behavior. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, 1974.
- Dabrowski, K. and Piechowski, M. M. Les émotions supérieures et l'objectivité d'évaluation. Annales Médico-psychologiques, 127 (2), 589-613, 1969.
- Dabrowski, K. and Piechowski, M. M. Multilevelness of Emotional and Instinctive Functions. Vol. 2. Types and Levels of Development. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, 1972.
- Dabrowski, K., Kawczak, A., and Piechowski, M. M. Mental Growth through Positive Disintegration. London: Gryf, 1970.
- Eibl-Eibesfeldt, I. Love and Hate. New York: Schocken, 1974.
- Hammarskjöld, D. Markings. London: Faber and Faber, 1964.

- Hogan, R. Moral conduct and moral character: A psychological perspective. Psychol. Bull. 79, 217-232, 1973.
- Jahoda, M. The meaning of psychological health. Social Casework. 34, 349-354, 1953.
- Jahoda, M. Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health. New York: Basic Books, 1958.
- Janis, I. L. Emotional inoculation: Theory and research on effects of preparatory communications. Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences 5, 119-154, 1958.
- Kohlberg, L. The development of children's orientation toward a moral order. I. Sequence of the development of moral thought. Vita Humana 6, 11-63, 1963.
- Kohlberg, L. Continuities in childhood and adult moral development revisited. In P. B. Baltes and K. W. Schaie (Eds.) Life-Span Developmental Psychology. New York: Academic Press, 1973.
- Kuhn, T. S. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- * Lakatos, I. Falsification and the methodology of scientific research programs. In I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave (Eds.) Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Lickona, T. (Ed.) Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research, and Social Issues. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1976.
- Loevinger, J. Ego Development: Conceptions and Theories. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.
- Lowry, R. J. and A. H. Maslow: An Intellectual Portrait. Monterey, Cal.: Brooks/Cole, 1973.
- Maslow, A. H. Self-actualizing people: A study of psychological health. Personality Symposia: Symposium No. 1 on Values. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1950.
- Maslow, A. H. Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper, 1954.
- Maslow, A. H. Deficiency motivation and growth motivation. In M. R. Jones (Ed.) Nebraskas Symposium on Motivation. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1955.
- Maslow, A. H. Motivation and Personality. Second edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
- Maslow, A. H. The Farther Reaches of Human Nature. New York: Viking, 1972.
- Offer, D. and Sabshin, M. Normality: Theoretical and Clinical Concepts of Mental Health. New York: Basic Books, 1966.

- Piechowski, M. M. Forms of psychic overexcitability. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Positive Disintegration, Montreal, December 1972.
- Piechowski, M. M. A theoretical and empirical approach to the study of development. Genetic Psychology Monographs, 92, 231-297, 1975.
- Piechowski, M. M. and Dabrowski, K. Self-actualization as a developmental structure: A profile of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Genetic Psychology Monographs, 1977, in press.
- Piechowski, M. M., and Gage, D. Dynamisms of positive disintegration. In preparation.
- Powers, W. T. Behavior: The Control of Perception. Chicago: Aldine, 1973.
- Rogers, C. R. Client-Centered Therapy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.
- Rogers, C. R. The concept of the fully functioning person. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice 1, 17-26, 1963.
- Rosenhan, D. L. On being sane in insane places. Science, 179, 250-258, 1973.
- Seligman, M. E. P. Helplessness. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1975.
- * Smith, M. B. Mental health reconsidered: A special case of the problem of values in psychology. American Psychologist, 16, 299-306, 1961.
- Suppe, F. (Ed.) The Structure of Scientific Theories. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1974.
- White, R. W. Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. Psychol. Review, 66, 297-333, 1959.
- Whiteley, J. M. (Ed.) The Healthy Personality. Counseling Psychologist 4 (2), 2-69, 1973.