

# Dąbrowski Appendixes

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- Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). ..... 2
- Appendix 2: Authoritarian personality. .... 8
- Appendix 3: Moral Disengagement. .... 22
- Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. .... 27
- Appendix 5: Dąbrowski and Piechowski..... 33
- Appendix 6: Misrepresentations of the TPD. .... 72
- Appendix 7: Introduction of Multilevel Actualization (Tillier) ..... 79

## 2 [Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). – A.]

- “This paper is an attempt to establish some sort of correspondences between the theories of Dąbrowski, Kohlberg and Loevinger particularly between the lower levels or stages postulated by the respective theorists. All three are theories of development where development is understood as a change in level of organization or structure. All three have an empirical basis. In addition empirical studies of especially significant personality forms which appear to fit structures defined by these theories will be examined. Included here are Peck and Havighurst’s (1960) five character types, the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) and the psychopath (Cleckley, 1941).

Peck and Havighurst describe five basic character types: amoral, expedient, conforming, irrational-conscientious and rational altruistic, which are hierarchically arranged at least in terms of ‘successful’ adaptation to the environment and ‘mental health’ defined in a conventional way. The character types range from egocentric to allocentric, from external or no control to self control. Cleckley’s *Mask of Sanity* and Adorno’s *Authoritarian Personality*, though not presenting levels or stages of personality offer descriptions of two special personality types each having a particular set of characteristics by which they can be identified. Both these studies have of being particularly rich in case material” (p. 4).

## 3 [Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). – B.]

- “The psychopath of course is different than the authoritarian personality not only in being another type altogether but in that the psychopath appears to be born not made. Psychopaths appear to come from disparate backgrounds and often these to be optimal” (p. 67).
- “One of the most characteristic traits of the psychopath is the lack of feeling. They seem to have been born with not only weak emotional overexcitability but with emotional underexcitability. The psychopath can be highly intelligent and well aware how the world works. He can even have the overexcitabilities – psychomotor, sensual, and to a limited extent imaginal, but lacking the emotional component he is incapable of growth and development. Dąbrowski maintains that emotional overexcitability is the essential determiner of growth. Psychopathic personality demonstrates by its absence how important it is” (pp. 67-68).

## 4 [Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). – C.]

- “The psychopath is special case of Level I development, but many of his characteristics are shared by other Level I individuals to a greater or lesser extent. Cleckley’s psychopath is the unsuccessful type in terms of social norms. But take away unmotivated antisocial behavior, failure to learn by experience and failure to follow a life plan and add ambition and a little talent and you have a picture of success ruthlessly achieved and often admired” (p. 70).
- Dr. Piechowski said “Schmidt showed in her thesis that it [primary integration] largely corresponds to the concept of authoritarian personality” (2014, p. 13). However, he failed to mention Schmidt included **both** psychopaths and authoritarian personality in level I [this slide and the next]. She did not address the relative prevalence of each type.
- Schmidt: authoritarian personalities are **made**; created by their environment (parenting), but psychopaths are **born** (genetic).

## 5 [Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). – D.]

- “Both Cleckley and Adorno have shown that there are constellations of character traits that go into the makeup of particular personality types, that it is not content but the underlying response to the self, to others and the environment that produce the psychopath or the authoritarian personality. ***These underlying response patterns contain elements that are all characteristic of Level I functioning*** – deficient affect, lack of introspection, reification of others and viewing the elements of the environment as instruments for the satisfaction of one’s own basic needs. There are many differences between the psychopath and the authoritarian personality. The former appears to ‘repress’ nothing and acts out every whim and desire, the latter appears to have everything tightly under wraps. The most essential difference however is that the psychopath from all evidence is born that way while the authoritarian personality is a product of his environment” (pp. 73-74, italics added).

## 6 [Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). – E.]

- “it is very likely that given optimal, or at least favorable environmental conditions, no one outside of psychopaths, mental defectives, etc., would be limited to Level I. People functioning at Level I, it seems clear from the research cited here, are largely products of damaging home environments which are related to the quality of the society in which they exist. In a nation that preaches democracy, human rights, equality, etc., but glorifies material goods, power and prestige, and makes it difficult for fragile ‘human’ values to survive, it is not surprising that so many individuals are limited to Level I functioning” (pp. 74-75).
- Schmidt: with an optimal environment, authoritarian personalities could be eliminated, leaving mostly psychopaths at level I. Again, she does not note relative numbers.
- Dr. Piechowski introduces bias by focusing only on the authoritarian personality and ignoring psychopaths (it is not clear why).

## 7 [Appendix 1: Schmidt (1977). – F.]

- “an integrated self is not necessarily a healthy self. In fact, it has been demonstrated here that most of those at the level of Primary Integration are pathetic one-dimensional persons—the Delta’s the Impulsives, the authoritarians are basically stunted beings who function at a level that is closer to that of a machine than to the human. Therefore, counselors should not be necessarily striving toward adaptation or adjustment on the part of their clients nor toward squeezing them into the ‘right’ corner of the OK corral” (pp. 77-78).
- [Schmidt said; there are “many differences between the psychopath and the authoritarian personality.” But Maslow equated the two: “The conditions which the authoritarian attributes to human nature in general are in point of fact found only in a small proportion of our population. The only individuals who ultimately fulfill their conditions are those we call psychopathic personalities” (Maslow, 1943a, p. 411).]

## 8 [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – A.]

- During World War II, Nevitt Sanford (1986) was studying anti-Semitism and concluded that prejudice arose from deep emotional, personality-based needs.
- Sanford joined a group investigating “authoritarian potential.” They were concerned American popular culture was fertile ground to create political totalitarianism (Jay, 1973). They felt Americans could be vulnerable to sympathizing with antidemocratic propaganda and they developed the F (fascist) scale to research the “potentially fascistic individual.”
- Hypothesis: “that the political, economic, and social convictions of an individual often form a broad and coherent pattern, as if bound together by a ‘mentality’ or ‘spirit,’ and that this pattern is an expression of deep-lying trends in his personality” (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950, p. 1).
- Their studies were published in 1950 (Adorno et al., 1950).



## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – B.]

- Nine qualities were presented describing the authoritarian personality, aka ‘authoritarianism’ (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 228):
  - **1. Conventionalism.** Rigid adherence to conventional, middle-class values.
  - **2. Authoritarian submission.** Submissive, uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the ingroup.
  - **3. Authoritarian aggression.** Tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values.
  - **4. Anti-intraception.** Opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, the tender-minded.
  - **5. Superstition and stereotypy.** The belief in mystical determinants of the individual’s fate; the disposition to think in rigid categories.
  - **6. Power and ‘toughness.’** Preoccupation with the dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension, identification with power-figures; overemphasis on the conventionalized attributes of the ego; exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness.
  - **7. Destructiveness and cynicism.** Generalized hostility, vilification of the human.
  - **8. Projectivity.** The disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world; the projection outwards of unconscious emotional impulses.
  - **9. Sex.** Exaggerated concern with sexual ‘goings-on.’
- “These variables were thought of as going together to form a single syndrome, a more or less enduring structure in the person that renders him receptive to antidemocratic propaganda” (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 228).

## <sup>10</sup> [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – C.]

- Later, Adorno rejected the psychological/Freudian basis of the published study: “the ultimate source of prejudice has to be sought in social factors which are incomparably stronger than the ‘psyche’ of any one individual involved” . . . “anti-Semitism, fascism, and authoritarianism were due to ‘the total structure of our society’” (Gordon, 2017, p. 43).
- Adorno explained, “men tend to become transformed into ‘social agencies’ and to lose the qualities of independence and resistance which used to define the old concept of the individual” (Gordon, 2017, p. 45).
- Adorno: “People are inevitably as irrational as the world in which they live” (Gordon, 2017, p. 46).
- “Initially their theory of the authoritarian personality and the F scale attracted enormous interest, however, by the early 1960s interest in this perspective had largely collapsed because of its numerous weaknesses” (Duckitt, 2001, p. 42).
- Recent Research: Grzyb et al., 2017; Harms et al., 2017; Hodson, MacInnis, & Busseri, 2017; Hotchin & West, 2018; Richey, 2017

## <sup>11</sup> [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – D.]

- Authoritarian personality: “socially conservative, nationalistic, intolerant of deviance and outgroups, and politically right-wing, preferring strict laws and rules, and supporting tough, punitive social control and authority” (Duckitt, 2013, p. 1).
- Later theorists discarded psychodynamic views, but saw stable individual differences in these ideological attitudes as a personality dimension. Altemeyer, developed the construct of Right Wing Authoritarianism (Duckitt, 2013).
- “Contemporary theories have [therefore] tended to see Right Wing Authoritarianism (or social conservatism) as influenced by both personality and situational factors” (Duckitt, 2013, p. 1).
- Vials (2017, p. 7): “Applying this conception to our time, movements of the right—from the Goldwater campaign to the Tea Party—are ‘rebellions’ ultimately submissive to authority because their members know that private-sector employers, not the government, are the real forces in control of daily life.”

## <sup>12</sup> [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – E.]

- Dr. Piechowski: “The characteristics of **authoritarian personality** (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) seem to correspond closely to primary integration as well as to the lower stages in Kohlberg’s and Loevinger’s approach (Schmidt, 1977)” (Piechowski, 1977, p. 23).
- “2. *Is primary integration a personality structure?* To my mind, one of the five levels is highly problematic. It is Level I or primary integration. Dąbrowski viewed primary integration as a rigid personality structure. The closest to this idea is the concept of **authoritarian personality** (Adorno et al., 1950). It began as a study of personality traits found in prejudiced, or ethnocentric individuals. They are non-reflective, egocentric and they identify only with their own group, they lack empathy, insight and self-criticism. Their thinking is stereotyped, they hold black and white conceptions of good and bad, and have a tendency toward physical aggression. Cont. . . .

## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – F.]

- Cont ...“They view others as objects and are manipulative and exploitative. They value status, power, and wealth (Schmidt, 1977). But the study found that prejudice and ethnocentrism are not built into people but are the result of child rearing that emphasizes obedience to authority, respect for power, and which sanctions aggression against all those who are perceived as a threat. This means that such individuals are made, not born. They are the **outcome of particular socialization** which fosters antagonism toward anything that is different, unfamiliar and contrary to one’s tradition” (Piechowski, 2002, p. 178).

- Additional Research: Allport, 1954; Altemeyer, 2006; Ashton & Lee, 2018; Ashton, Lee, & de Vries, 2014; Cohen, 2017; Ekehammar, Akrami, & Gylje, 2004; Grzyb et al., 2017; Haidt, 2013; Harms et al., 2017; Hodson, MacInnis, & Busseri, 2017; Hotchin & West, 2018; Lee & Ashton, 2012; McFarland, 2010; Prescott & Logan, 2018; Richey, 2017; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008

## <sup>14</sup> [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – G.]

- “My first graduate student, Margaret Lee Schmidt, chose for her Master’s thesis the comparison of Kohlberg’s and Dąbrowski’s theories (Schmidt, 1977). Her analysis led her to several conclusions, three of which are relevant here. One, that the first four stages of Kohlberg’s sequence of moral reasoning are encompassed within Dąbrowski’s Level I (primary integration). Two, that the study of **authoritarian personality** (Adorno, Fraenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) was the best description of behavior characterizing Level I. And three, that **Level I is not a personality structure**, but instead is the result of limited developmental potential of people trying to survive in a ruthlessly competitive and economically uncertain world. While Dąbrowski, just like Adorno et al., viewed primary integration as a rigid personality structure, now it makes more sense to see it as the outcome of social conditions. If people are operating at Level I, it is because this is the condition of their world, not because they are constituted that way” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 55).

## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – H.]

- “The concept of primary integration—originally called primitive integration by Dąbrowski—was not examined until Margaret Schmidt showed in her thesis that it largely corresponds to the concept of authoritarian personality (Schmidt, 1977). Authoritarian personality results from strict parenting and social pressures that enforce conformity and respect for authority; that is, those who hold power. Therefore, it is not an integration either inherited genetically or arrived at by the individual himself” (Piechowski, 2014, p. 13).
- “In regard to ‘authoritarian personality’ and ‘moral disengagement’ it needs to be clarified that ***we are not talking about auth. personality but auth. behavior***. We live in a world in which authoritarian behavior is rampant. Moral disengagement is an expression of the authoritarian world we live in” (Piechowski, 2018, March 27, e-mail).

## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – I.]

- Dr. Piechowski's position – Summary (chronological):
  - Dr. Piechowski has ignored Schmidt's (1977) inclusion of psychopaths at level I (see appendix 1).
  - Primary integration corresponds to the authoritarian personality.
  - Authoritarian personality is the best description of behavior characterizing Level I.
  - Such individuals are made, not born; i.e., they are the outcome of a particular type of socialization.
  - Now, **not** authoritarian personality, rather authoritarian **behavior** expressed via **moral disengagement**, caused by the authoritarian world we live in (social causes).



## 17 [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – J.]

- Research for a genetic basis for authoritarian personality:
  - “The results do not suggest that, as Adorno et al. (1950) hypothesized, authoritarian parental behavior or familial structure induces rigid cognitive functioning as a component of the authoritarian personality. RWA and intelligence are heritable and family environment does not predict authoritarianism scores for individuals who are not genetically related to their rearing parents” (McCourt, Bouchard, Lykken, Tellegen, & Keyes, 1999, p. 1008).
  - “Authoritarianism, as measured by the RWA, is not simply a manifestation of one’s level of intelligence. Instead it appears to exist as a trait influenced by genetic factors largely independent of those that contribute to intelligence” (McCourt, et al., 1999, p. 1008).

## 18 [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – K.]

- “Facets of RWA’s nomological network have been revamped. In contrast with the conclusion of Altemeyer (1981, 1988) that the rearing environment is the primary determinant of attitudes, the results here support the hypotheses that human beings are active in creating and choosing their environments and that these transactions with the environment are influenced in part by the genotype. As Scarr (1997) has long contended, family environment appears to be an important influence mainly because it is confounded with genetic relationship” (McCourt, et al., 1999, p. 1009).

## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – L.]

- “individual differences in tendencies to submit to conventional authorities thus represents driving force behind their social, political, and religious attitudes (Bouchard, 2009), though the particular ideas espoused by those high or low in this orientation will vary among cultures and time periods” (Ludeke, Johnson, & Bouchard, 2013, p. 376).
- “Our analyses supported the hypothesis that Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Religiousness, and Conservatism are different measures of a single underlying trait. These are not merely highly related constructs, then, but instead are each a manifestation of the same underlying tendency across the social, political, and religious domains. With genetic influences contributing 44% of the variance in this latent trait, the heritability of the TMVT trait was comparable to that found in studies focusing on single-trait measures in this domain” (Ludeke, Johnson, & Bouchard, 2013, p. 378).

## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – M.]

- “Altemeyer in 1981. His research suggested that only three of the original nine facets of authoritarianism described by Adorno et al. (1950)—conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission—covaried strongly to form a unitary social attitude dimension, and he developed his Right-wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale to measure this dimension” (Duckitt, 2001, p. 42).
- “The core model predictions are that the two socialization practice dimensions, [1] punitive and [2] unaffectionate socialization, impact on the two personality dimensions, [1] social conformity and [2] tough-mindedness respectively, which impact on the two social worldviews, [1] belief in a dangerous and [2] competitive-jungle world respectively. Both personality and worldview then impact on RWA and SDO. This core model thus comprises a theory of the dual psychological bases of the two ideological attitude dimensions of authoritarianism and social dominance” (Duckitt, 2001, pp. 58-59).

## [Appendix 2: Authoritarian Personality. – N.]

- “the RWA scale is a unidimensional and reliable psychometric measure of authoritarianism” (Duckitt, 2001, p. 42).

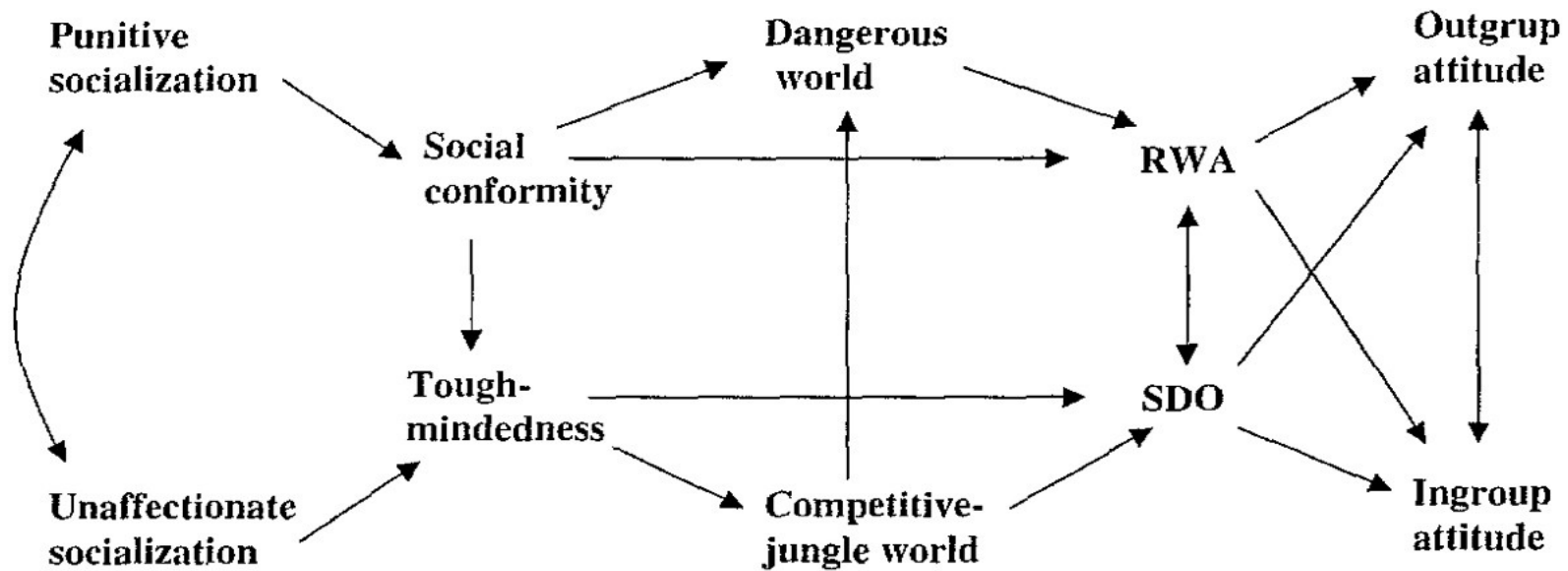


Fig. 1. A causal model of the impact of socialization, personality, and worldview on the two ideological belief or social attitude dimensions of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) and their impact on intergroup attitudes. (Duckitt, 2001, p. 58).

- “RWA is now also considered an ideological belief (Duckitt, 2001) that people should obey and respect authorities deemed as legitimate, abide by social conventions, and endorse harsh punishment of norm violators” (Choma & Hanoch, 2017, p. 287).

## [Appendix 3: Moral Disengagement. – A.]

- Bandura has many references on social cognitive theory and moral disengagement; his recent major work is Bandura (2016).
- Moral disengagement is a subset of social cognitive theory.
- 8 Mechanisms:
- *Moral, social and economic justification.* People do not ordinarily engage in reprehensible conduct until they have justified to themselves the rightness of their actions. In the process of moral justification, detrimental conduct is made personally and socially acceptable by portraying it in the service of valued social or moral purposes. (behavior locus)
- *Euphemistic labeling.* Activities can take on markedly different appearances depending on what they are called. Euphemistic labeling provides a tool for masking reprehensible activities or even conferring a respectable status upon them. Through sanitized or convoluted language, destructive conduct is made benign or acceptable [“collateral damage”]. (behavior locus)

## [Appendix 3: Moral Disengagement. – B.]

- *Advantageous (palliative) comparison.* Behavior can assume different qualities depending on what it is contrasted with. By exploiting advantageous comparisons, injurious conduct can be rendered benign or made to appear to be of little consequence. The more extreme the contrasted activities, the more likely it is that one's own injurious conduct will appear trifling or even benevolent ["the lesser of two evils"]. (behavior locus)
- *Displacement of responsibility.* Under displacement of responsibility people view their actions as springing from the social pressures or dictates of others rather than as something for which they are personally responsible. Because they are not the actual agents of their actions, they are spared self-censuring reactions. Hence, they are willing to behave in ways they normally repudiate if a legitimate authority accepts responsibility for the effects of their actions ["just following orders"]. (agency locus)

## [Appendix 3: Moral Disengagement. – C.]

- *Diffusion of responsibility.* The exercise of moral control is weakened when personal agency is obscured by diffusion of responsibility for detrimental conduct. Any harm done by a group can be attributed largely to the behavior of others. People behave more cruelly under group responsibility than when they hold themselves personally accountable for their actions [“I was just one soldier”]. (agency locus)
- *Minimizing, ignoring, or misconstruing the consequences.* The agent of harm may deny that people were seriously harmed, or say that the punishment actually was good for the individual because it toughened him up. In addition to selective inattention and cognitive distortion of effects, the misrepresentation may involve active efforts to discredit evidence of the harm that is caused [“It was just an insurance company—no one got hurt”] [Catholic Church ignored abuse of children]. (outcome locus)



## [Appendix 3: Moral Disengagement. – D.]

- *Dehumanization.* Self-censure for injurious conduct can be disengaged or blunted by dehumanization that divests people of human qualities or attributes bestial qualities to them. Once dehumanized, they are no longer viewed as persons with feelings, hopes, and concerns but as subhuman objects [“he was a cockroach”]. (victim locus)
- *Attribution of blame.* Blaming one’s adversaries or circumstances is another expedient that can serve self-exonerating purposes. By fixing the blame on others or on circumstances, not only are one’s own injurious actions excusable but also one can even feel self-righteous in the process [“she was asking for it”]. (victim locus)
- Further references: Caroli & Sagone, 2014; Moore, 2015; Proios, 2016; Tillman, Gonzalez, Whitman, Crawford, & Hood, 2018; Walters, 2017; Zheng, Qin, Liu, & Liao, 2017.

## [Appendix 3: Moral Disengagement. – E.]

- Bandura: morality is rooted in self-regulation of behavior, part of an agentic perspective—“to be an agent is to intentionally produce certain effects by one’s actions” (Bandura, 2018, p. 130).
- Essentially a socially based alternative theory to the genetic explanation of psychopathy.
- Behavioral locus: harmful behavior is seen as good behavior.
- Agency locus: displacement or obfuscation of blame regarding who is responsible for harmful acts.
- Outcome locus: attempted explanations for effects of behavior.
- Victim locus: attempts to displace blame onto the victim.
- Discussions of moral disengagement (social cognitive theory) are often applied to sports ethics (e.g. Lance Armstrong) and the morality of corporations and business (e.g. entertainment, guns, food, tobacco, etc.).

## [Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. – A.]

- Nomological network: the interlocking system of laws which constitute a theory—a form of construct validity.
- “A nomological network is a theoretical framework that specifies relationships among variables in such a way as to help both differentiate and define the construct of concern, and that enables the formulation of a measurement model” (Zimmerman, 1995, pp. 582-583).
- “The laws in a nomological network may relate (a) observable properties or quantities to each other; or (b) theoretical constructs to observables; or (c) different theoretical constructs to one another. These ‘laws’ may be statistical or deterministic” (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955, p. 290).
- “‘Learning more about’ a theoretical construct is a matter of elaborating the nomological network in which it occurs, or of increasing the definiteness of the components” (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955, p. 290).

## [Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. – B.]

- “Rationalization is not construct validation” (p. 291).
- “Since the meaning of theoretical constructs is set forth by stating the laws in which they occur, our incomplete knowledge of the laws of nature produces a vagueness in our constructs” (p. 294).
- “If prediction and result are in harmony, [the researcher] can retain his belief that the test measures the construct. The construct is at best adopted, never demonstrated to be ‘correct’” (p. 294).
- “All the events successfully predicted through a sub-theory are of course evidence in favor of that theory” (p. 294).

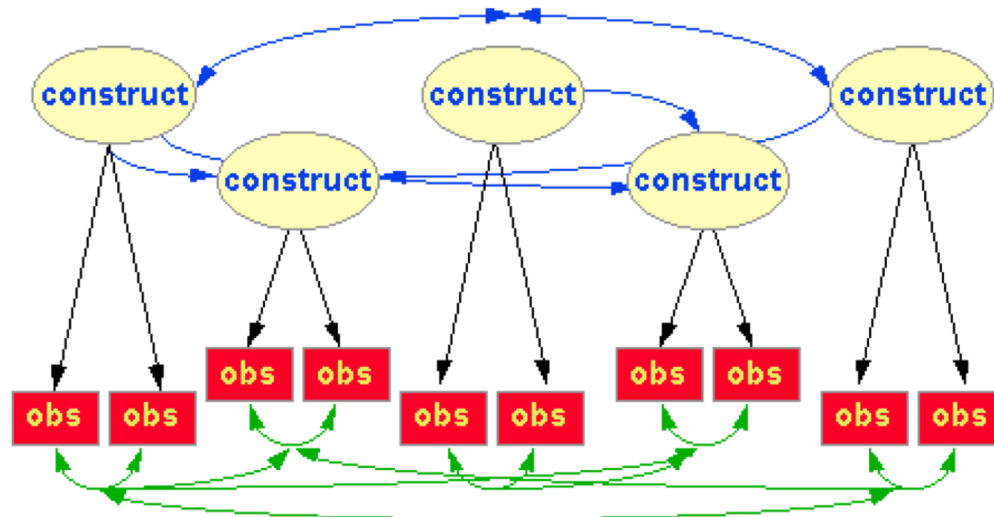
## [Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. – C.]

- “A construct is defined implicitly by a network of associations or propositions in which it occurs. Constructs employed at different stages of research vary in definiteness” (pp. 299-300).
- “Altering the network so that it can cope with the new observations is, in effect, redefining the construct. Any such new interpretation of the test must be validated by a fresh body of data before being advanced publicly. Great care is required to avoid substituting a posteriori rationalizations for proper validation” (p. 300).
- A definitive reference is: Slaney, (2017).
- Zuckerman, (2008) also provides a succinct overview.

# [Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. – D.]

## The Nomological Network

a representation of the concepts (constructs) of interest in a study,



...their observable manifestations, *and the interrelationships among and between these*

This network would include the theoretical framework for what you are trying to measure, an empirical framework for how you are going to measure it, and specification of the linkages among and between these two frameworks.

# [Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. – E.]

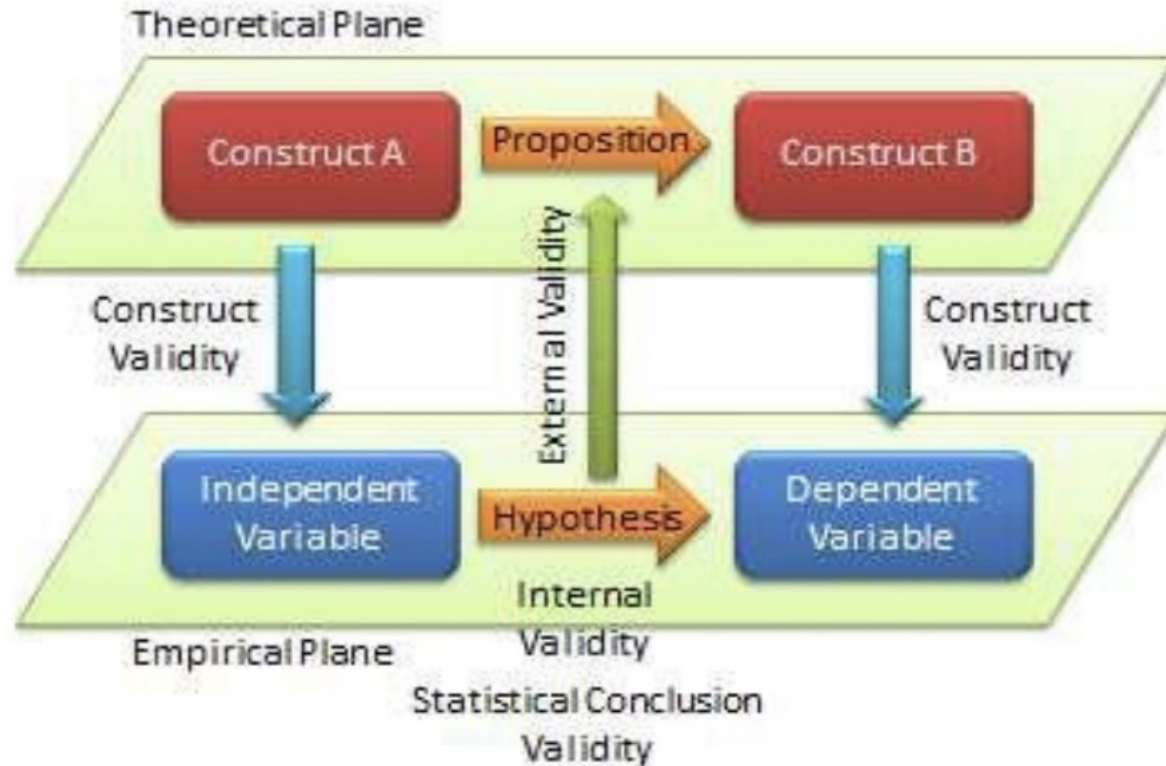


Figure 5.2. Different Types of Validity in Scientific Research

- In social science research, constructs can be very difficult to define as they are often quite similar (e.g. empathy/compassion). In many cases, preliminary analysis of pilot data must be undertaken, often using factor analysis, to help initially define constructs. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-research-methods/chapter/chapter-5-research-design/>

## [Appendix 4: Nomological Networks. – F.]

- Constructs cannot be considered in isolation from their nomological network—the network gives the construct its specific meaning and context. Constructs can not be assumed to be equivalent *prima facie* if they belong to different networks as they will be based on different assumptions, and have different relationships with other, different constructs in each respective network.
- Aron's construct of the highly sensitive person and Dąbrowski's construct of overexcitability are examples of two constructs that belong to different nomological networks and therefore cannot be directly equated.
- Other examples: Dr. Piechowski's comparison of self-actualization and TPD.



- Appendix 5

- 5. Dąbrowski and Piechowski.

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Dr. Piechowski was given a preview of this section and his comments were incorporated.

## Piechowski Meets Dąbrowski.

- In 1967, Michael Piechowski was a microbiologist at the University of Alberta when he met Dąbrowski. He gave up his position to become a student, a research assistant and subsequently a Dąbrowski co-author.
- In January 1970, Piechowski went to Wisconsin to pursue a doctorate in counseling.
- After meeting Nick Colangelo in 1979, he became active in disseminating Dąbrowski's construct of overexcitability in the gifted field.
- Piechowski's interpretation differs from Dąbrowski's original on several important points, but he has not always made this clear. This has created confusion: what Dąbrowski said versus what was Piechowski.

## 35 **Piechowski Disagreed with Dąbrowski #1.**

- I knew both Dąbrowski and Piechowski and heard first-hand their comments pertaining to these issues.
- Piechowski has expressed many philosophical disagreements with the theory of TPD.
  - Example: He says he believes that everyone must have development potential and all should have equal access to advanced growth, or alternately, that development potential is not required for growth: “under optimal conditions, even children with limited developmental potential can grow up to be good citizens with a strong sense of fairness” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 54).
- Piechowski has been asked to, and refuses to, present his ideas under his own name.

## 36 **Piechowski Disagreed with Dąbrowski #2.**

- He refers to Dąbrowski's theory as being "wrong" and needs "to be corrected to conform to his ideas."
- His objections involve several basic tenants of TPD:
- There is no such thing as primary integration.
- Level I is influenced by first factor; applies only to a small number of people.
- Level II is influenced by second factor, not unilevel disintegration; level of the average person.
- Strong developmental potential and/or positive disintegration are not needed for advanced growth.
- Contrary to Dąbrowski's experience, examples of Level V people are commonly found.

## Misattributions to Piechowski #1.

- Historically, Piechowski inserted his own views under the titling of TPD and Dąbrowski's name, making it difficult for new readers to see the different contributions of each author, thus creating confusion.
- Example: Chia (2017, p. 651) misattributed the creation of the five levels to Piechowski. "The past experiences provided Dąbrowski food for serious thought and certainly enriched fodder for developing his theory which, later, his colleague, Piechowski (2003), adapted to create the continuum of five developmental levels in personality structure: primary integration, unilevel disintegration, multilevel disintegration, directed multilevel disintegration, and secondary integration."

## Misattributions to Piechowski #2.

- Example: Vuyk (2015, p. 15) says: “Later, Piechowski (1979, 2006), who was a student of Dąbrowski, described five areas of heightened sensitivity or OEs that represented developmental potential and could lead to this advanced development.” [The five overexcitabilities were clearly elaborated by Dąbrowski (1972, pp. 6-7)].
- I will discuss six theoretical disagreements:
  - Re-titling of the 1977 Volumes
  - Structure of Levels I & II
  - The Role of Developmental Potential
  - Two Approaches to Development
  - Piechowski Questions Multilevelness
  - The Role of Self-actualization

## 39 **Issue 1: Re-titling of the 1977 Volumes #1.**

- After leaving Edmonton, Piechowski continued to collaborate with Dąbrowski by correspondence.
- Culminating their collaborative work on a book, while Dąbrowski was in Poland, in final galley proof editing, Piechowski submitted revised titles to the publisher to emphasize emotional development and inserted a chapter on self-actualization (among other changes)
- Published as Dąbrowski, 1977 [vol. 1]; Dąbrowski & Piechowski, 1977 [vol. 2].
- To see this follow this link:  
<http://positivedisintegration.com/1977info.pdf>

# Issue 1: Re-titling of the 1977 Volumes #2.

- Dąbrowski's original manuscript titles:
  - *Multilevelness of emotional and instinctive functions Part 1: Theory and description of levels of behavior.*
  - *Multilevelness of emotional and instinctive functions Part 2: Types and Levels of Development.*
- Piechowski's revised titles as published in 1977:
  - *Theory of levels of emotional development Volume 1 - Multilevelness and positive disintegration.*
  - *Theory of levels of emotional development Volume 2 - From primary integration to self - actualization.*
- Dąbrowski rejected the books and insisted the original manuscripts be republished (done in 1996).



## Issue 1: Re-titling Created Confusion.

- Piechowski's usage has created ongoing confusion in the gifted literature, for example, Sisk (2008, p. 26) referred to the theory using both titles: "Dąbrowski's . . . Theory of Positive Disintegration, also known as the Theory of Emotional Development."
- In a 2008 lecture, Piechowski referred to "Dąbrowski's theory of emotional development through positive disintegration."
- It is important to emphasize that in Dąbrowski's theory, it is not emotion that develops, it is personality.
  - While emotion plays an important role in advanced development, the theory does not describe emotional development *per se*.

## Issue 1: Re-titling Shifted the Focus.

- Piechowski's ongoing dissemination in the gifted field created a substantially different and narrower focus of Dąbrowski's theory.
- Dąbrowski's broader theoretical constructs of personality development and the critical developmental roles of positive disintegration and psychoneuroses were lost with Piechowski's narrowed focus and his primary emphasis on emotional development and overexcitability.
- Ironically, research in the gifted field on OE has now been criticized as being isolated from a broader theoretical context (i.e. TPD) (Vuyk, Kerr, & Krieschok, 2016; Vuyk, Krieschok, & Kerr, 2016).

# Issue 1: Toward Clarity?

- Dąbrowski called his work **the theory of positive disintegration** to highlight the disintegrative process he felt was necessary for personality development.
- Piechowski says he historically used a “generic name” and primarily portrayed “**Dąbrowski’s theory of emotional development**” as a theory describing and measuring emotional development. (see Piechowski, 2014).
- In 2014, he said: Piechowski said the “proper name” of the theory is the *theory of positive disintegration* [The convention all researchers should use when referring to the theory]. (Piechowski, 2014, p. 12).
- In 2017, he said: “Dąbrowski’s theory of positive disintegration, a theory of emotional development” (Piechowski, 2017, p. 87).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #1.

- In Fort Lauderdale, in 2002, Piechowski said that because Level I and II are not associated with development *per se*, these levels are “totally irrelevant” and “should be dropped from the theory.” (See Piechowski, 2009, 2014, 2017; Mendaglio & Tillier, 2015; Tillier, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).
- Little significant inner life exists at Levels I (primary integration) and II (unilevel disintegration), inner psychic life only begins at Level III with multilevel processes (Piechowski, 2008, p. 43; Piechowski, 2014).
- Development only begins at Level III with the inner psychic milieu and its creative and transforming dynamisms and with multilevel disintegration (Piechowski, 2008, p. 43; Piechowski, 2014).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #2.

- Dąbrowski: lacking strong developmental potential, the “so called normal person” (about 65% of the population) is limited to Level I, primary integration, or to the borderline of Level I – II.
- Piechowski: Says that the whole construct of primary integration should be reconsidered – “as it is neither primary nor a personality structure but the outcome of the way society is” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 76).
- He has told me that “it is philosophically unacceptable for anyone to be seen as biologically limited in terms of growth; limitations are social and can be eliminated.”

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #3.

- Piechowski: “Although Dąbrowski viewed primary integration as a rigid [genetic] personality structure, it makes more sense to see it as the outcome of socialization. *If people are operating at Level I it is because this is the condition of the world, not because their psyche is constituted that way*” (italics in original) (Piechowski, 2003, p. 289).
- “Level I is not a personality structure, but instead is the result of limited developmental potential of people trying to survive in a ruthlessly competitive and economically uncertain world” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 55).
- Here, growth is limited by socialization, not by genetic developmental potential as Dąbrowski described it.

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #4.

- “By definition, primary integration has a developmental potential so limited that inner transformation, the essence of multilevel development, is out of reach. Consequently, the theory makes it clear that primary integration is not where development can start under any conditions” (Piechowski, 2014, p. 14) .
- The behavior Dąbrowski described at Level I “is not a personality structure but the consequence of a culture that increasingly puts distance between people” (Piechowski, 2014, p. 15).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #5.

- “The concept of primary integration—originally called primitive integration by Dąbrowski—was not examined until Margaret Schmidt showed in her [masters] thesis that it largely corresponds to the concept of authoritarian personality (Schmidt, 1977). Authoritarian personality results from strict parenting and social pressures that enforce conformity and respect for authority; that is, those who hold power. Therefore, it is not an integration either inherited genetically or arrived at by the individual himself” (Piechowski, 2014, p. 13).



## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #6.

- Discussing Milgram's famous obedience experiment, Piechowski said: "The high proportion of people who obeyed the authority figure to the end demonstrates that the concept of primary integration does not fit reality. It is the response to the situation, and the person's assigned role in it, that for a period of time leads to harming others. Does this make people part-time psychopaths, as Dąbrowski would have it?" (Piechowski, 2014, p. 16).
- "Abolishing the concept of primary integration does not mean that the concept of Level I should be abolished" (p. 2014, p. 14) . . . "it makes sense to separate the concept of Level I from primary integration, a descriptive but ill-defined term" (Piechowski, 2014, p. 16).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #7.

- Dąbrowski named Level II to reflect its basic feature – *unilevel disintegration*, characterized by brief and often intense crises between equivalent alternatives.
- Dąbrowski stressed the intense, transitional nature of the level: “Prolongation of unilevel disintegration often leads to reintegration on a lower level, to suicidal tendencies, or to psychosis” (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 7).
- Unless one falls back to Level I or progresses onto Level III, one chronically at Level II risks finding oneself in “a trap of a rapidly growing mental tension” – a drama “without exit” (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 135).
- Level II – “perhaps they present twenty percent of all people” (quoted in Rankel, 2008).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #8.

- “I feel very strongly that emotional growth within the unilevel universe of Level II should not be underestimated but respected and explored further. This raises the question as to whether it is possible to facilitate a transition to multilevel emotional growth if a person’s developmental potential is limited. And is it possible to imagine a harmonious society without a multilevel majority? I feel it is possible—to imagine” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
- This quotation also foreshadows two further issues: that developmental potential may not be critical to *emotional* growth and that multilevelness may not be a critical element in human psychology.

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #9.

- Dąbrowski described 3 factors influencing behavior:
  - First factor: heredity – biological (genetic) instincts
  - Second factor: environment – external mores/socialization
  - Third factor: autonomy – conscious choice and valuation
- Dąbrowski:
  - Level I = first and (primarily) second factor,
  - Levels III and above = the third factor.
- Piechowski: (see Piechowski, 2003, p. 286).
  - Level I = first factor,
  - Level II = second factor,
  - Levels III and above = the third factor.
  - “[At Level II] the self derives its definition from fulfilling the expectations of others, family, or society (‘second factor’)” (Piechowski, 2003, p. 289).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #10.

- Piechowski: “Level II is not always characterized by disintegration, because it carries the possibility of partial integration, or adaptive integration, that follows the conventions and dictates of society and one’s immediate environment” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 69).
- Based upon Piechowski’s interpretation, in the gifted literature, Level II is often described as a level of socialization (encompassing the average person) and the goal of Level II has been described as socialization (Silverman, 1993, p. 14).

# Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #11.

From Bailey (2010)

“Summary of Dabrowskian Developmental Levels (adapted from Piechowski, 2003)”

## LEVEL I: PRIMARY INTEGRATION

- Individuals are governed by the “first factor” and are primarily influenced by heredity, impulses, and/or social, environmental forces.
- This level is marked by selfishness and egocentrism; individuals generally seek self-fulfillment above all through “ends justify the means” behavior.

## LEVEL II: UNILEVEL DISINTEGRATION

- This level is characterized by a lack of inner direction, submission to the values of the group, relativism of values and beliefs, and the prevalence of ambivalences and ambistencies.
- The “second factor” serves as the organizing principle of this level with social factors primary to the individual” (Bailey, 2010, p. 2).
- Bailey’s (2010) description illustrates the confusion often seen in describing Level I & II and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> factor. Also, no mention of disintegration in Level II.

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #12.

- Tillier: The removal of primary or primitive integration (but retaining Level I) and to view Level II as dominated by second factor and only partly involving unilevel disintegration would represent a major theoretical departure from Dąbrowski's theory – it would no longer be appropriate to refer to it as Dąbrowski's theory.
- Tillier: The lower levels are critical because Dąbrowski explicitly described lower and higher levels that would account for both the lowest and highest behaviors seen in humans, and proposed mechanisms by which development can occur, moving from the lowest levels to the highest.

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #13.

- “Primary Integration. The characteristic of cognitive and emotional structures and functions of primary integration is that they are automatic, impulsive, and rigid. Behavior is controlled by primitive drives and by externality. Intelligence neither controls nor transforms basic drives; it serves the ends determined by primitive drives. There is no inner conflict while external conflicts are the rule. The overall picture is of little differentiation, primitive drive structure, and predominant externality [second factor]. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 18) [both quotes]
- Unilevel Disintegration. “It consists of disintegrative processes occurring as if on a single structural level. There is disintegration but no differentiation of levels of emotional or intellectual control. Unilevel disintegration begins with the loosening of the cohesive and rigid structure of primary integration. There is hesitation, doubt, ambivalence, increased sensitivity to internal stimuli, fluctuations of mood, excitations and depressions, vague feelings of disquietude, various forms of mental and psychosomatic disharmony. There is ambitendency of action, either changing from one direction to another, or being unable to decide which course to take and letting the decision fall to chance, or a whim of like or dislike. Thinking has a circular character of argument for argument’s sake. Externality is still quite strong.”



## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #14.

- Piechowski's view of level II appeared in the 1974 manuscript, that was republished in 1996:
  - LEVEL II: UNILEVEL DISINTEGRATION
  - Second factor. Susceptibility to social opinion and the influence of others. Behavior is guided by what people will think or say, or by the need for recognition and approval. Feelings of inferiority toward others. Values are internalized from external sources: parents, church, government, authority of the printed word. Acceptance of stereotyped ideas and values is a function of the need to conform since there is no internal structure to generate and support nonconformity. Relativism of values and ideas (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 33).
- Note: the 1974 manuscript and the 1996 book [vol. 1] are listed as authored by Dąbrowski with no co-author. The 1977 book, volume 1, appeared as Dąbrowski with the assistance of Michael M. Piechowski.
- When Dąbrowski taught in Edmonton, he did not publically mention Piechowski or his ideas (it was left to us to sort out these issues ourselves).

## Issue 2: Structure of Levels I & II #15.

- Here is an example of a description based on Dąbrowski's views, from Mika, 2003 (p. 2):
  - Although primary integration describes level 1 and thus encompasses the majority of individuals in the present human society, people existing in primary (negative) integration do not form a homogenous group. According to Dąbrowski, there are degrees of primary integration, just like there are degrees of disintegration. An overwhelming majority of people possess some developmental potential, which means that they have some capability for positive disintegration. Dąbrowski also notes that a great majority of people also exhibit some psychopathic traits; but only constitutional psychopaths and persons with global mental retardation are so highly integrated that they are incapable of any degree of development. Based on the degree of integration and disintegration, Dąbrowski described the following groups of people inhabiting level 1:
    - Psychopath and psychopath-like individual.
    - Borderline between average person and psychopath.
    - Average person.
    - Borderline between average person and psychoneurotic.

## 59 **Issue 3: The Role of Developmental Potential.**

- Dąbrowski defined developmental potential as “The constitutional endowment which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for a given individual” (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 293).
- Piechowski: “under optimal conditions, even children with limited developmental potential can grow up to be good citizens with a strong sense of fairness” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 54).
- “Speculating about . . . developmental potential, we came up with two terms: conserving and transforming. Potential for conserving growth would allow it to continue through Level II close to Level III, but not any further. Transforming growth, however, would continue” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 74).

## 60 Issue 4: Two Approaches to Development #1.

- Piechowski now outlines two approaches to development and to developmental potential:
- 1). Following Dąbrowski's approach, Piechowski equated personal growth with climbing a mountain saying that “not everyone has the strength, endurance, and determination to go far; few manage to reach the summit” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 64).

## 61 Issue 4: Two Approaches to Development #2.

- 2). Piechowski reviewed examples of “unilevel development” occurring at Level II and concluded these cases represent significant growth:
  - “This raises the question as to whether it is possible to facilitate a transition to multilevel emotional growth if a person’s developmental potential is limited” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
  - “The above examples show that not all material has to be generated from the framework of Dąbrowski’s theory” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
- Summary: In 2008, Piechowski outlined 2 growth processes; one reflecting TPD, governed by DP, and another path “not generated from” Dąbrowski’s TPD.

## Issue 5: Piechowski Questions Multilevelness.

- “And is it possible to imagine a harmonious society without a multilevel majority? I feel it is possible – to imagine” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
- Tillier: This raises several questions: What is Piechowski’s philosophical approach to development? If the goal of social development is *not* a multilevel majority, what is it? And what then is the goal of individual development if not multilevelness? What role do developmental exemplars play in his approach? Finally, if developmental potential does not control development, then what does determine one’s potential for growth?
- Tillier: Piechowski’s position represents a very different and new approach to development.

## Issue 5: Dąbrowski's Position.

- The crux of individual development is multilevelness.
- Multilevel exemplars:
  - Herald the next step in human evolution.
  - Serve as role models of what is possible.
  - Challenge one to take active control of one's development and strive for ideals and growth.
- Today, society is based upon unilevel principles and reflects self-centered and self-serving motives.
- An ideal society would be based on multilevel principles and ideals, reflecting other-centered motives and would be comprised of a majority of multilevel individuals.

## Issue 6: The Role of Self-actualization.

- From material Piechowski added to the 1977 books:
  - “We shall try to demonstrate that Maslow’s concept of SA fits the structure of Level IV and that, consequently, the traits of SA logically follow from that structure” (Dąbrowski & Piechowski, 1977, pp. 158-159).
  - “Self-actualization, as a psychological norm suggested by Maslow, now finds support in the framework of the theory of positive disintegration as an attribute of the Level IV structure” (Dąbrowski & Piechowski, 1977, pp. 218-219).
- “The correspondence between Saint Exupéry’s material and SA and between the terms of SA and the terms of positive disintegration shows that the structure of Level IV underlies all of the characteristics of SA” (Piechowski, 1978, p. 229).



## Issue 6: Self-actualization and Level IV.

- “In Level IV, we have an explicit and detailed developmental structure which accounts for the pervasiveness and the cohesion of the traits of SA” (Piechowski, 1978, p. 230).
- “The fit between Level IV as the structural skeleton and self-actualization as the flesh of rich description with which to cover the bones is too good not to be true” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 58).
- In 1991, Piechowski explained: “Maslow’s self-**actualizing** person fits Level IV; the self-**actualized** person – the enlightened one – fits Level V.” “The early stages of self-actualization” . . . “correspond to Level III growth processes” (p. 20).

## Issue 6: “Dąbrowski Just Didn’t Understand.”

- In justifying his position, Piechowski resorted to an *ad hominem* attack on Dąbrowski: “He didn’t know that Maslow had changed his position and realized that self-actualization does not necessarily follow satisfaction of all of the needs below (Maslow, 1971). I believe he must not have read Maslow’s description of self-actualizing people nor gotten through my paper (it is rather dense). His conclusion was that his theory and Maslow’s could not be commensurate. He never understood that by providing a theoretical structure for Maslow’s concept of self-actualization, his theory was showing its power” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 57).
- Piechowski did not acknowledge that Maslow also described a level higher than self-actualization, namely transcendence. At this highest level “one transcends one’s own personality” (Maslow, 1967, p. 160). See Koltko-Rivera, (2006) for more information.

## A Pathway Forward?

- Mendaglio and Tillier (2015) responded to Piechowski.
- Suggested 2 possible resolutions: “(a) Piechowski might differentiate his work from that of the originator of the theory as Jung did [from Freud] and propose his own theory under his own name or, alternatively, (b) he could take the approach that Robbie Case did in developing a neo-Piagetian theory and integrate his views in a neo-Dąbrowskian, conceptualization, amending TPD to reflect a Piechowskian perspective [put forth under his own name]” (Mendaglio & Tillier, 2015, p. 220).
- Piechowski’s ongoing arguments appear to be based more on philosophical grounds and differences rather than upon strong research data (1978, 2002, 2003, 2008).

# Summary #1.

- Piechowski has introduced a number of objections that have influenced the literature.
- Confusion was created as these differences were not clearly differentiated from Dąbrowski's original works.
- Awareness of these issues is critical for those who want to understand and apply Dąbrowski's approach.
- Piechowski (2014) advocated "rethinking Dąbrowski's theory." Mendaglio and Tillier (2015) replied.
- Piechowski has indicated to me that he intends to follow-up with a number of articles "setting the record straight," the second article in the series was Piechowski (2017).

## Summary #2.

- Piechowski rejected Dąbrowski's view of Level II as a transitional level dominated by unilevel disintegration: "The concept of unilevel disintegration, however, cannot be applied wholly to Level II because the majority of lives identified within this level are more or less stable. Even Dąbrowski's concept of partial integration seems to have limited application because it implies that there is some 'disintegration' going on or that the person is chronically on the brink of one. This makes little sense. Instead, we should conclude that the lives of most people follow the stages of lifespan development and that some may be so unreflective that they match Level I and others are somewhat more reflective and match Level II" (Piechowski, 2017, p. 93).

## Summary #3.

- I have included this long quote in the summary because it succinctly captures the dilemma: some of Dąbrowski's constructs make little sense to Piechowski and he favors different conclusions.
- For example, he favors a lifespan development stage theory (in the previous quote).
- Dąbrowski rejected this approach because a stage model could not reconcile the unique combination of ontological and non-ontological developmental features he observed.

## Summary #4.

- The quote also illustrates another dilemma: Piechowski's frequent contradictions. He concluded "the lives of most people follow the stages of lifespan development." Yet in the opening paragraphs of this same paper, Piechowski rejected a stage approach: "The challenge in understanding the theory lies in the fact that the levels are not successive stages but represent different types of development" (Piechowski, 2017, p. 87; also see Piechowski, 2014, pp. 11-12).
- In summary, rather than "rethinking Dąbrowski's theory," both Piechowski and the gifted community would be better served if he developed his own constructs and published his own theory that could then be compared to Dąbrowski's original.

- Appendix 6

## 6. Misrepresentations of the Theory of Positive Disintegration.



# Misrepresentations.

- Theory building proceeds by generating hypotheses, testing hypotheses, revision of theory and more research.
- In order to have a solid foundation to generate relevant hypotheses one needs to have access to the existing theory – in this case, TPD.
- Interpretation by others is not an issue if clearly identified as such and differentiated from the original.
- Unfortunately, we often see lots of mistakes or misunderstandings in reference to Dąbrowski, apparently based on limited or out of context readings or based on inaccurate secondary sources.
- As always, the definitive source is what Dąbrowski wrote himself.

# Examples of Misrepresentations #1.

- Portraying OE as a pathology: “Another vulnerability associated with giftedness is overexcitability (Porter 2005; Pfeiffer and Stocking 2000)” (Van der Meulen, et al, 2013).
- “According to Dąbrowski’s clinical observations, people with overexcitabilities are neurotically allergic or nervous” (Chang & Kuo, 2013).
- Circuitous referencing: “The concept of ‘overexcitability’ (OE) was first introduced by Dąbrowski (1938; cited in Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984) as a means to understand individual differences in intensity and sensitivity in responses to stimuli (see also Piechowski, 2006)” (He & Wong, 2014).

## Examples of Misrepresentations #2.

- “In Dr. Dąbrowski’s day, overexcitabilities were thought to be the core trait of psychological development. Succeeding researchers further broadened this idea. It can be applied to identify gifted and talented students. It is correlated to IQ, it predicts cognitive abilities, there are correlations between OEs and gender, OEs and age, it predicts creativity or creative personalities, and it predicts psychological adjustment. Although the results of these studies are not identical, the main findings in these dimensions were almost consistent, suggesting that the use of OE patterns has a statistically meaningful correlation with predicting these dimensions” (Chang & Kuo, 2013).

## Examples of Misrepresentations #3.

- “Dąbrowski (Dąbrowski, 1938; Miller, Silvermany [sic], & Falk, 1995; Silverman, 1993) indicated five dimensions of heightened psychological responses presented by gifted and talented students: psychomotor (POEs; pressure for action), sensual (SOEs; sensate pleasures), imaginal (MOEs; active imagination), intellectual (TOEs; intellectual and moral pursuits), and emotional overexcitabilities (EOEs; intense connectedness with others)”  
(Kuo, et al 2014).

## Examples of Misrepresentations #4.

- “My list of intensities varies only in that I use the term ‘creative intensity’ rather than ‘imaginational.’ This not only better describes the intensity, but also enables a nifty little acronym for the intensities, SPICE, since the intensities are the spice of life” . . . .
- “These intensities correspond to the symptoms of ADHD perfectly, except that they identify the whole intensity instead of just focusing on the negative aspects”
- [Dąbrowski called the third element]. . . . “This third element is exactly what I have been describing throughout this book: intensity” (all from Burge, 2012).

## Examples of Misrepresentations #5.

- “These heightened and intense characteristics are known as overexcitabilities and are claimed as universal characteristics of gifted individuals (Webb et al., 2005)” (Alias et al 2013).
- “According to Daniels and Meckstroth (2009), Dąbrowski had stated that an individual who possesses more than one overexcitability characteristic is a gifted and talented individual” (Alias et al 2013).
- “These overexcitabilities form the foundation of Dąbrowski’s theory of positive disintegration (Dąbrowski, 1964), a theory of self-actualisation which develops to a high level in only certain individuals” (White, 2014).

- Appendix 7

- 7 Introduction of Multilevel Actualization (Tillier):

Presented by Bill Tillier at the  
Eighth International Congress of the  
Institute for Positive Disintegration  
in Human Development  
August 7 - 9, 2008 Canmore, Alberta, Canada  
Revised 2018  
Dąbrowski and Gifted Education:  
Beyond Overexcitabilities.

# Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #1.

- Previous efforts to simply equate self-actualizing / actualization with Dąbrowski have been confusing and very misleading as the underlying rationale and assumptions of the two theories are quite different.
- In order to advance from this impasse, I am introducing the new, neo-Dąbrowskian and neo-Maslowian construct of **multilevel actualization (MA)**.
- Multilevel actualization bifurcates Maslow's continuum differentiating between animal and human traits, making it clear that lower level features qualitatively differ from higher ones, thus reflecting the differences Dąbrowski described between unilevel and multilevel experience.



## Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #2.

- Before authentic actualizing can begin, a multilevel differentiation of instincts, traits, characteristics and emotions must take place.
- One must carefully review one's character and imagine one's aims, goals and personality ideal.
- Lower aspects must be identified and inhibited to allow the actualization of higher features.
- The differentiated personality ideal subsequently becomes crucial in directing the process of actualizing and moving toward deliberate personality shaping, eventually resulting in the actualization of the qualities and characteristics of an authentic, unique individual.

## Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #3.

- In Maslow, self-actualization involves a superior perception of reality, a clearer and more undistorted view of things *as they really are*.
- In multilevel actualization, one's dreams and ideals represent the images of a higher reality – a potential reality, a reality of *what is possible* – this vision becomes one's quest; guiding actualization to create one's new reality.
- Actualizing reality as it exists versus establishing ideals and goals to strive for is a fundamental difference between Maslow and Dąbrowski.

## Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #4.

- Dąbrowski: disparities between one's imagined reality and ideals versus one's actual reality creates strong vertical (multilevel) conflicts.
- These multilevel conflicts are a fundamental part of the developmental process acting through anxiety, depression, psychoneuroses and positive disintegration.
- In Maslow, conflicts, anxiety, crises and neuroses are “diseases of cognition” – blockages to development.
  - “What is psychopathological? Anything that disturbs or frustrates or twists the course of self-actualization” (Maslow, 1970, p. 270).

## Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #5.

- The features of self-actualization put forth by Goldstein and Maslow can be reviewed, revitalized and re-conceptualized using a multilevel approach.
- An integration of SA and multilevelness would lead to an important new paradigm of development and a new list of developmental features, some old, some new.
- Research using this more comprehensive approach to development would provide important new insights.

## Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #6.

- In summary, multilevel actualization involves a two-step process:
  - 1). A multilevel differentiation involving a careful review of the essence of one's character to identify the elements to be included versus those to be discarded in creating one's personality ideal.
  - 2). Actualization of this personality ideal involves:
    - Amplification and realization of the higher elements one considers more like oneself.
    - Active inhibition, repression and transformation of lower elements that are less like oneself.

## Multilevel Actualization – Tillier #7.

- As a developmental construct, self-actualizing is limited to unilevelness if we do not incorporate a multilevel reality, self-review, vertical differentiation and self-shaping.
- Recalling Lincoln's first inaugural address in 1861, a multilevel approach to actualization will help free the better angels of our nature from the bonds of our animal ancestry leading yet another step closer toward the realization of authentic human nature.