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Sternberg's Transformational and Transactional Giftedness: A Dąbrowskian Interpretation

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Abstract

Sternberg's (2020) transformational and transactional giftedness are based on a theory of leadership. Transformational leaders are highly moral, make changes that benefit members and society. They are concerned with members' well-being and development. Transactional leaders are motivated by self-interest, concerned with members' compliance with expectations and standards. Qualities of these forms are applied to giftedness, yielding transformational and transactional giftedness. Sternberg's presentation and a review of leadership literature were examined from the perspective of Dąbrowski's theory of positive disintegration. It is concluded that they resonate well with Dąbrowski's theory. The current article suggests that Sternberg's transactional and transformational giftedness resemble Dąbrowski's conception of development and intelligence. The author proposes that Dąbrowski's positive disintegration, rather than leadership theory, is a more suitable theory on which to base Sternberg's new conception of giftedness.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership • transactional leadership • positive disintegration*

Reading the title of Sternberg's (2020) article, "Transformational Giftedness: Re-thinking the paradigm for gifted education", I immediately thought of Dąbrowski's theory (Dąbrowski, 1964; 1996). Why? Because, as a student of the theory of positive disintegration (Mendaglio, 2008, 2022), I am aware that the process of transformation, specifically personal transformation, is at the core of Dąbrowski's theory of positive disintegration. In fact, the term "transformation" occurs countless times, accompanied by a myriad of related comments, in Dąbrowski's English-language books. For example:

Throughout the course of life of those who mature to a rich and creative personality their primitive instincts and impulses with which they entered life undergo a transformation. For instance, when the instinct of self preservation changes, its primitive expression dis-integrates, and it is instead transformed into the behavior of a human being with moral values. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 28).

An indication that the idea of transformation is central to the theory of positive disintegration is that it is elevated to a dynamism (a force of development), namely, inner psychic transformation defined as: "The process which carries out the work of developmental change in man's personality structure, of which the changes in the emotional structure are by far the most crucial." (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 39). Further, inner psychic transformation "acts in close cooperation with all other dynamisms" (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 49) that are responsible for advanced development.

With the Dąbrowskian notion of "transformational" in mind, I was curious to see whether Sternberg (2020) was proposing a Dąbrowskian view of giftedness. I soon learned that Sternberg's latest conception of giftedness was not based on Dąbrowski's theory but rather on Burns's (1978) leadership theory, which differentiates between transformational and transactional leadership. These two forms of leadership represent starkly different approaches to leadership illustrated, in part, by how leaders approach their followers. Transformational leaders encourage innovation and creativity among followers through a spirit of collaboration. On the other hand, transactional leaders encourage compliance in their followers through dispensing rewards and punishment. Sternberg acknowledges that the application of the two forms of leadership is not new to the field of gifted education. He cites, for example, Karnes and Bean (2017) who note that leadership, a category in federal and state definitions of giftedness, is neglected in the identification of gifted youth for special programs. They argue that, given the challenges emerging in society today, there is a growing need for more attention to identification of support for young, gifted leaders. What is novel about Sternberg's application of the ideas underlying transformational and transactional forms of leadership is concern with the construct of giftedness itself. Like Karnes and Bean's focus on leadership in gifted education, Sternberg suggests that a different perspective on giftedness is needed because, among other issues, the established IQ-based approach underlying gifted education is inadequate to confront the societal challenges we currently face.

Sternberg's application of leadership theory to gift-

edness begins with a brief overview of transformational and transactional leadership theory. He then applies aspects of the two forms of leadership to giftedness. Qualities describing transformational leadership are attributed to transformational giftedness; qualities describing transactional leadership are attributed to transactional giftedness. Surprisingly, an examination of the descriptions of transformational and transactional leadership indicates to me that they, and therefore their giftedness counterparts, resonate quite well with fundamental aspects of Dąbrowski's theory. Specifically, the dual leadership formulation resembles the conception of development and intelligence in the theory of positive disintegration. The purpose of this article is to provide support for my contention.

To achieve my purpose, I first examine Sternberg's rationale for the application of transformational and transactional leadership to giftedness, followed by my detailed Dąbrowskian interpretation of his proposal. While Sternberg has elaborated upon transformational and transactional giftedness in recent publications (e.g., Sternberg, 2021, 2022; Sternberg et al., 2021), the most detailed explanation of his rationale for his application of the two leadership concepts to giftedness appears in Sternberg (2020). Harper (2022), in her application of Dąbrowski's theory to the two types of giftedness traces their development differently, namely, to Sternberg's own theory of leadership, in which wisdom is foundational:

Underpinning the ACCEL [active, concerned citizens and ethical leaders] model is the construct of wisdom, where an individual's knowledge and skills are specifically used in transformational ways, through the inclusion of positive ethical values. From this foundation stems the conceptions of "transactional giftedness" and "transformational giftedness" that were introduced into the gifted education literature. (Harper, 2022, p. 202)

Harper anchors Sternberg's two forms of giftedness to his overall theorizing about leadership, while, as I noted above, the academic origin is outlined in his 2020 article. This difference reflects our different purposes. Harper applies Dąbrowski's theory to support and, perhaps, to enhance the application of the concepts of transformational and transactional as indicated in her statement of purpose: "The intricacies of Dąbrowski's theory provide an additional way of understanding the behaviors and experiences of our gifted learners, and with this understanding comes the capacity to nurture and support their developmental process" (Harper, 2022, p. 203). As a result, her focus tends to be transformational giftedness. For example, Harper proposes the use of Dąbrowskian concepts of overexcitability and dynamisms to assist in identifying "learners with the potential to become transformationally gifted" (p. 216). In contrast, my purpose is to present a Dąbrowskian interpretation of transformational and transactional giftedness.

Therefore, for the purpose of this article, it is necessary to examine in detail Sternberg (2020) before presenting an interpretation of transformational and transactional giftedness from a Dąbrowskian theoretical perspective.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

In this section, I reproduce in full Sternberg's definitions of the forms of leadership upon which he bases his conception of giftedness. Each definition is followed by my review of a sample of literature related to it.

Transformational Leadership.

Sternberg defines transformational leadership as follows:

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders inspire, encourage, and motivate followers to innovate and create positive change and also to shape the positive future for the organization or entity for which the leader is responsible. Transformational leadership is very much a team effort, where, by motivating employees, the leader succeeds in attaining both organizational and personal growth for followers. The transformational leader is a positive role model and leads by example (Sternberg 2020, p. 231).

While Sternberg's description of the qualities of transformational leadership is rather positive, it does not include some other notable positive qualities presented by authors in the field of leadership. In a classic study of political leadership, Burns (1978), the first to propose the two forms of leadership (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011), emphasized the moral character of transformational leaders. In his view, the transformational leader strives to "raise the level of human conduct and *ethical aspiration of both the leader and led*, and thus it has a transforming effect on both" (italics added, Burns, 1978, p.20). In a similar vein, Bass (1999) notes that mature moral development is a characteristic of transformational leaders. Germain (2017) emphasizes how transformational leaders go beyond self-interest:

They consistently do the right thing and put the needs of the mission and their followers above their own needs. They act as catalysts for creating shared visions of a positive future. They bring to bear the full talent of their followers in making progress on difficult problems (Germain, 2017, p. 170).

Bass (1999) explains the beneficial effects of transformational leadership on those they lead: "It elevates the follower's level of maturity and ideals as well as concerns for achievement, self actualization, and the well-being of others, the organization, and society" (Bass, 1999, p. 11).

Transformational leaders, then, are moral, ethical, empathic, collaborative individuals who share power with

followers. Such leadership is said to have significant beneficial effects on both followers, and leaders.

Transactional leadership.

This form of leadership is described by Sternberg as follows:

Transactional leadership is a system of leadership that achieves results by rewards and punishments. It is a kind of tit-for-tat: "You do this for me, and I'll do this for you." The leader operates a complex system of reinforcements to reward those who help attain the goals he or she sets and to punish those who do not help to attain those goals. (Sternberg, 2020, p. 231).

Burns (1978) describes transactional leadership in terms of an exchange relationship and notes that it is the most common form of leadership:

The relations of most leaders and followers are transactional—leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. Such transactions comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers... (Burns, 1978, p. 4).

In the transactional form of leadership, the relationship serves both a leader's and a follower's self-interests. In such an exchange relationship, however, it is clear where power resides as indicated in the actions of the leader:

Transactional leadership is based on economic exchanges between leaders and followers, whereby leaders establish goals and objectives, structure, organize, and resource work, and establish rewards for followers who meet assigned task standards (Hannah et al., 2020, p. 226).

In contrast to the transformational form, in transactional leadership both parties pursue their respective interests, not bound by a commonly agreed upon purpose (Burgess, 2016). Transactional leadership and its focus on an exchange relationship has been maligned by Bass (1999) and by Germain (2017) who termed it as perpetuating an outdated form of quid pro quo relationship.

Reading Sternberg's description of transactional leadership and reflecting upon my perusal of a sample of publications on leadership, it is difficult not to view the transformational-transactional view of leadership as value-laden. Transformational leadership is moral and empathic, replete with concern for others, and their self-actualization, that is, clearly associated with lofty values. Transactional leadership is associated with self-interest, rewards, and punishment. One might conclude that transformational leadership is the form that leaders should always use. However, that conclusion is not borne out in the general literature on Burns' theory.

Transactional leadership is part of the Full Range Model of Leadership developed by Avolio and Bass (1991) which

includes three forms: Laissez Faire—Transactional—Transformational. While the model proposes that transformational is, in general, the most effective style, it is not the only style that effective leaders consistently use. As Burgess (2016) points out:

[A] key, often overlooked point is that the most effective leaders use all of the styles to some extent, the style that's most appropriate to the situation. *Transformational leadership is not always the "right" style for every context* (italics added, Burgess, 2016, p. 4).

It stands to reason that some aspects of transactional leadership are fundamental to effective leadership in general. For example, members of organizations need and want to know what is expected of them, and the standards by which they are assessed. Furthermore, transformational leaders may use transactional mode to benefit followers, for example: "Through transactional means leaders can design appropriate jobs and tasks that provide followers opportunities to develop self-acceptance and boost self-esteem" (Hannah et al., 2020, p. 228).

Pseudo-Transformational Leadership

Although Sternberg does not address it in his discussion of leadership, he applies a third type of leadership to his novel conception of giftedness: *pseudo-transformational* leadership. Bass's early description was concerned with the ethics of charismatic leaders: "The immature, self-aggrandizing charismatic is pseudotransformational. He or she may seem uplifting and responsible but on closer examination is found to be a false Messiah" (Bass, 1999, p. 11). More recently, the concept has been elaborated upon. For example, Christie et al. (2011) defines pseudo-transformational leadership as "self-serving, yet highly inspirational leadership behaviors, unwillingness to encourage independent thought in subordinates, and little caring for one's subordinates more generally" (p. 2944). According to Christie et al, these leaders create visions defined by self-interest, excluding the best interests of followers, influence followers by deception, discourage opposing viewpoints, and use followers as means to leaders' ends. Pseudo-transformational leadership has been termed negative leadership, a manifestation of the dark side of leadership (Cote, 2017).

This conception of leadership—transformational, transactional, pseudo-transformational—complete with its value differential, is viewed by Sternberg as applicable to the construct of giftedness.

Sternberg's Application of Burns' Theory to Giftedness

To provide an accurate account of Sternberg's application of the leadership concept to giftedness, it is wise to

provide direct quotations, rather than my paraphrasing them. To begin, I present Sternberg's definition of transformational giftedness:

I [Sternberg] will define *transformational giftedness* as giftedness that is transformative—that by its nature seeks positively to change the world at some level—to make the world a better place....Transformational giftedness focuses on positive and meaningful change (Sternberg, 2020, p. 231).

Sternberg's transformationally gifted individuals do not seek change for its own sake, or change that would benefit themselves, but rather aim to enact changes for the betterment of society. As with transformational leadership, this form of giftedness is characterized by altruism, not self-interest. For Sternberg, transformational giftedness refers to the employment of gifts to effect positive changes. These changes include a range of domains from micro to macro systems.

Transformational giftedness is not about inborn or developed "gifts," per se, but about how those gifts are utilized to make the world a better place by seeking a common good at some level, whether within the family, with the state, within the nation, or within the world. The transformationally gifted individual literally seeks transformation—to use their gifts to effect some kind of change—in how people hear music, or how they see art, or how they perceive the role of government, or in how they view or benefit from the legal system, in how they benefit from scientific findings, or whatever (Sternberg, 2020, pp. 233–234).

Sternberg defines transactional giftedness as follows:

Transactional giftedness is giftedness that is tit-for-tat in nature—an individual is identified as gifted and then is expected to do something in return, usually, to perform well in academic coursework, perhaps coursework specifically targeted at the gifted. There may also be an expectation that the individual later in life will continue to show high educational achievement, such as by going to a prestigious university and doing well there, and then getting a high-prestige job, which duly can be recorded as showing the success of the system for identifying the gifted. (p. 231)

Sternberg's transactionally gifted individuals have no apparent interest in making changes; their interest lies in learning societal expectations and behaving in ways that comply with them. Their utilization of their gifts, far from being motivated to improve society, is directed strictly at their own material success in life.

Transactionally gifted individuals are consummate adapters. They figure out the rules of the game they are supposed to be playing and then play it to the utmost, whether in taking standardized tests or in getting good grades in school or in getting into good colleges or whatever. They mold themselves into whatever they are supposed

to be to merit being labeled as "gifted." Transactionally gifted individuals fit the societal prototype of "gifted"—they have deeply internalized societal norms, are consummately able to learn what society expects of them, and then strive to fulfill their part of the bargain. (p. 232)

Sternberg further differentiates between the two types of giftedness using the concept of motivation. Transformationally gifted individuals are intrinsically motivated; transactionally gifted are extrinsically motivated. The intrinsic motivation of transformationally gifted is of a particular quality: motivation to apply gifts toward positive ends. Meanwhile, transactionally gifted are motivated by external demands and rewards received when successful at meeting the demands.

In addition to applying transformational and transactional leadership to giftedness, Sternberg also applies a third type of leadership, noted earlier in this article: pseudo-transformational. Sternberg describes his application of it to giftedness:

Gifted individuals, like gifted leaders, can be pseudo-transformational. On the surface, they appear to be transformational, but deep down, they are transactional and view the appearance of being transformational as a way to conduct a transaction that benefits them.... Pseudo-transformational gifted individuals often have gotten to where they are because they are *skilled at deception*. Individuals who are weak in critical thinking or who choose not to exercise their critical-thinking capacity to any meaningful extent thus may be fooled by them. Many of the "gurus" of popular culture get to where they are because they appear to be transformationally gifted when in fact they have little that is both new and useful to offer. (italics added, p. 234)

Summary

Drawing upon leadership theory, Sternberg applies the dichotomy of transactional and transformative leadership initially proposed by Burns (1978) to the construct of giftedness. Sternberg explicitly proposes two types of giftedness, transformational, transactional, and alludes to a third type, pseudo-transformational. Transformational giftedness is a desire to transform society in positive ways; in effect, to use gifts for the betterment of the world. Transactional giftedness is defined as a form of exchange relationship in which self-interest prevails. Opportunism and compliance characterize transactional giftedness. Motivation differentiates the two forms of giftedness; transformational giftedness is equated with intrinsic motivation, transactional, with extrinsic. Pseudo-transformational giftedness is defined as transactional giftedness masquerading as transformational. Sternberg's examples, though, speak of a form of giftedness that is more sinister than transactional because, a core element of the pseudo-transformational giftedness is deception.

Sternberg's Three Types of Giftedness and Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration

After presenting his descriptions of the three types of giftedness, Sternberg contrasts his latest conception of giftedness to two other perspectives of giftedness that he believes are closely related: Renzulli's distinction between schoolhouse and creative-productive gifted and Sternberg's analytical and creative giftedness. He does not include Dąbrowski's theory, which is understandable in a way because the theory of positive disintegration is not a theory of giftedness. However, the theory is accepted in the field of giftedness/gifted education as having applications to and implications for gifted individuals as manifested in both prescriptive and research literature. Further, given the value-laden nature of the transformational-transactional-pseudo-transformational giftedness triad, it is surprising that Dąbrowski's theory is not even mentioned. The theory of positive disintegration addresses, in detail, concepts—transformation, morality, selfishness, altruism, compliance, and extreme self-interest—inherent in the proposed types of giftedness. Stating that Dąbrowski's theory is not mentioned in his 2020 article is not meant to imply that Sternberg is unaware of the theory of positive disintegration. As a matter of fact, Harper (2022, discussed earlier in this article) is a chapter in the handbook of transformational giftedness that Sternberg co-edited (Sternberg, Ambrose, & Kairi, 2022).

As in Burns' (1978) theory, "transformation" is a fundamental concept in Dąbrowski's theory. In the theory of positive disintegration, transformation is associated with neither leadership nor giftedness, but rather with a process of human development. Upon close examination, there is similarity among Burns' transformational leadership, Sternberg's transformational giftedness, and Dąbrowskian development. In the theory of positive disintegration, development is conceived as a movement from an egocentric to an altruistic mode of functioning, from a drive-satisfaction to a positive values-driven mode of living. Additionally, development includes the progression from being prisoner of primitive instincts and drives and mindless compliance with the demands of the social environment to self-control, creativity, and autonomy. In the theory of positive disintegration, such progression is termed *autonomous* development (Dąbrowski, 1970). Dąbrowski (1996) also termed it accelerated or universal development. Autonomous development is permeated with self-awareness, empathy, and responsibility for self and others. Descriptors of transformational leadership and transformational giftedness resemble Dąbrowski's autonomous development to such a degree that the latter may be appropriately termed *transformational development*. Though Dąbrowski does not use the phrase transformational development, "transform" and "transformational" occur

countless times in his various detailed descriptions of the process of development (e.g., see Dąbrowski, 1970, 1973, 1996). A significant difference, of course, between transformational leadership, transformational giftedness and autonomous development is that autonomous development is part of a conceptual framework that not only describes this form of development, but also explains how it occurs: namely, through positive disintegration. Positive disintegration is the destruction of the lower, primitive forms of human functioning and replacing them with higher, advanced forms including responsibility for self and others, authenticity, and autonomy. The detailed account of how Dąbrowskian development occurs is beyond the scope of this article, though the details can be found elsewhere (e.g., Mendaglio, 2022; Tillier, 2018).

The similarity between Sternberg's descriptions of giftedness and Dąbrowski's autonomous (also known as "accelerated") development is not limited to transformational giftedness and autonomous development. Sternberg's transactional and pseudo-transformational giftedness have their counterparts in Dąbrowski's (1970) two other types of development: *normal* and *one-sided* development respectively. Transactional giftedness, with its characteristics of self-interest, extrinsic motivation, compliance, and absence of critical thought, bears a striking resemblance to Dąbrowski's normal development:

Normal development. By this we [Dąbrowski] mean a type of development which is most common and which entails the least amount of inner conflict and of psychological transformation. Development is limited to the maturational stages of human life and to the innate psychological type of the individual (Boldface in original, Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 20).

In normal development (also termed biologically determined type of development, see Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 29) individuals are influenced by biological drives/needs and the demands of the social environment. Normal development is characterized by self-interest, while conforming with societal mores and expectations, with little questioning and reflection. Normal development may typically include behaviors that go beyond self-interest, but such altruism is often the product of learned values through socialization; that is, behaviors beyond self-interest represent a form of compliance to social norms. In Dąbrowski's theory, normal is the most common form of development. It is reasonable to assume that transactional giftedness is the most prevalent form of giftedness since it is based on Burns' transactional (most commonly occurring) leadership.

Pseudo-transformational giftedness is like Dąbrowski's one-sided development. Descriptions of one-sided development are found in both Dąbrowski (1970) and Dąbrowski (1996). Dąbrowski's (1970) description is exclusively negative in nature:

One sided Development. Apart from the two kinds of mental development there is a third kind of mental development. It is manifested in psychopathy and paranoia, that is to say, in mental processes and structures integrated in an asocial or antisocial, sometimes even criminal character (Bolded font in original, Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 29).

Dąbrowski (1996) adds socially acceptable manifestations of one-sided development, while retaining the potentially socially harmful nature. On the socially favorable side, one-sided development is manifested, for example, in creative contributions to science and fine arts, while other functions such as empathy remain undeveloped. As Dąbrowski (1996, p. 21) states: "Only some emotional and intellectual potentials develop very well while the rest remains undeveloped, in fact, it appears lacking." This form of development may have a sinister dimension, as described by Dąbrowski (1996, p. 21):

One-sided development may also take a totally negative turn. This occurs in psychopathy and paranoia. In this case mental processes and structures are strongly "integrated" and resistant to environmental influence. Intelligence serves to manipulate objects in the environment, including, and foremost, other human beings.

I use the term "psychopathic development" to encapsulate the combination of Dąbrowski's (1970) description of one-sided development as well as its negative form, described by Dąbrowski (1996). Psychopathic development epitomizes self-interest, in which satisfaction of drives/needs, and impulses predominates, with little regard to societal expectations and prescriptions. It is equated with a psychopathic approach to life. Like the third form of giftedness, psychopathic development is characterized by deception: concern for others, empathy, and altruistic behavior are simply ploys used to serve one's selfish ends. Sternberg's conception of pseudo-transformational giftedness includes the notion that such individuals are the transactionally gifted pretending to be transformational. Psychopaths are not normal pretending to be psychopathic, they are simply psychopathic. While normal development is not as negatively toned as transactional giftedness, pseudo-transformational giftedness is more positively toned than psychopathic development. Despite the dissimilarities between Sternberg's types of giftedness and Dąbrowski's forms of development, I believe that there is sufficient "face validity" apparent in their descriptions to consider Sternberg's typology as an approximation of Dąbrowskian development.

Additional support for a Dąbrowskian interpretation of Sternberg's types of giftedness is visible in the role of intelligence in the theory of positive disintegration. Dąbrowski's English language books are replete with references to the construct of "intelligence" which Dąbrowski clearly distinguishes from intellectual over-

excitability (Mendaglio, 2008). A theme evident in Dąbrowski's descriptions of intelligence is that the role of intelligence is determined by an individual's level of development (Mendaglio, 2012, 2014). In Dąbrowski's own words:

At a very low level of development primitive urges direct the individual towards certain aims while his intelligence is used exclusively as an instrument completely subservient to those primitive urges. At a higher level, when higher emotions appear, intellectual functions serve on the one hand, as the provider of means toward emotionally determined goals, and on the other hand, in the shaping and growth of emotions (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 112).

Psychopathic (one-sided), normal, and autonomous development represent development from lowest to highest levels. The role intelligence plays, then, is a function of a particular type of development.

Beginning with the highest form of development, autonomous, intelligence is used for personal growth through transformation and for the betterment of society; that is, it serves as a tool for the implementation of positive values. In normal development, intelligence is employed for the learning of societal values, with the aim of behaving in compliance with them. With respect to biological drives/needs satisfaction, intelligence is used to accomplish this while avoiding societal disapproval. Intelligence is not generally used to question societal expectations nor for the purpose of self-reflection. In psychopathic development, intelligence is utilized to satisfy drives and needs by using whatever means including finding ways to manipulate and take advantage of other people in the process. Though Sternberg, in his application of leadership to giftedness, does not explicitly refer to intelligence, the construct is common in his previous works respecting giftedness (Sternberg, 1986, 2005). In Sternberg (2020) intelligence is implicit in his contrasting transformational and transactional giftedness to his ideas of analytical and creative giftedness:

Certainly, the distinction between analytical and creative giftedness is related to that between transactional and transformational giftedness....But a transactionally gifted person can be creative as well as analytical if it serves his or her personal interest and a transformationally gifted person needs to be analytical in ascertaining whether the transformations he or she proposes are sound and actually have a reasonable chance of success. (Sternberg, 2020, p. 235)

It is impossible to consider *analytical* and *creative* as separate from intelligence, their substrate. Like Dąbrowski's role of intelligence in autonomous development, Sternberg's transformationally gifted individuals use analysis and creativity (intelligence) for assessing and refining potential positive changes; transactionally gifted individuals use analysis and creativity (intelligence) for

personal self-interest. While Sternberg does not include pseudo-transformational giftedness in his discussion, its connection to his two concepts is easily inferred. Pseudo-transformational individuals use analysis and creativity (intelligence) for achieving their exclusively selfish goals.

Conclusion

Sternberg has had a long-term interest in exploring the related constructs of intelligence and giftedness. Regarding giftedness, his contributions appear to have a common aim: to move the field beyond an IQ-based approach. His recent work is the application of leadership theory to propose another novel approach to giftedness. Transformational, transactional, and pseudo-transformational represent a value-laden conceptualization of giftedness. It is Sternberg's infusion of morality into the core of giftedness that coincides with the foundations of the theory of positive disintegration. The three forms of giftedness, with their moral differences, are analogous to Dąbrowskian dif-

ferentiated moral development. Further, the three types of giftedness resonate with Dąbrowski's three types of development: autonomous, normal, and one-sided (psychopathic development). Assuming that intelligence is the substrate of giftedness, regardless of definition, the giftedness that Sternberg proposes is equivalent to the use of intelligence in Dąbrowski's development. Having examined closely Sternberg's rationale for applying leadership theory to propose a novel conception of giftedness and contrasting the ideas inherent in the labels transformational, transactional, and quasi-transactional with Dąbrowski's theory, I conclude that the theory of positive disintegration may be a better anchor for Sternberg's three types of giftedness than leadership theory.

As I said at the beginning of this article, when I first encountered Sternberg (2020), I wondered whether I would find a Dąbrowskian view of giftedness in it. While writing this article, I believe that I did find it—in Sternberg's latest conception of giftedness, the labels are Burnsonian; the ideas are Dąbrowskian.

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