

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

# Transformation



*An interdisciplinary conference on Dabrowski's theory of Positive Disintegration  
drawing from education, psychology, religion, philosophy, counseling, spirituality...*

July 22-24, 2010

Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL

*Support gratefully acknowledged from*



Welcome 

*to the Ninth International Congress of the Institute for Positive Disintegration in Human Development. It is exciting that the legacy of Kazimierz Dabrowski lives on through the continued efforts of many caring volunteers whose efforts have converged to make this conference a reality.*

*The passion that surrounds the continuing exploration of Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) and related works has been of immense interest to those from varied backgrounds. We are delighted in having you join us and share in conversation and dialogue as we move from theory to practice and back again in these next few days.*

*The theme of this conference centers on Transformation. Sessions will revolve around this focus and take us from the transformation of self to the transformation of the universe. It seems apropos of these changing times that we examine how transformation is affecting us personally within the contexts of our environments.*

*Our conference is transforming as we become more global. We have representations from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and possibly Africa . . . we are becoming an ever increasing international community that is growing in size and scope.*

*Many of us are working with TPD regularly. By sharing these ideas we transform not only individuals but also the ideas of those in classrooms, the workplace, research venues, and therapeutic settings. We provide opportunities for others to have an alternative framework for understanding themselves and their interactions with others.*

*Your participation at this conference is critical to the understanding and development of Dabrowski's ideas. We appreciate your involvement whether you have come to listen, to discuss, to make a presentation, or to be involved at every level. It is our intention that you leave with a deeper richness of spirit, possibly transformed. Let us know if we can help with that process in any way.*

Warm regards  Michele & Cheryl

*The propensity for changing one's internal environment and the ability to influence positively the external environment indicate the capacity of the individual to develop.*

Dabrowski, 1964 (*Positive Disintegration*, p. 112)

# Strands

As you will see throughout the program, presentations have been put into one of four strands: theory, overexcitability, development, and gifted. These were the main themes we identified among presentations selected for the conference. With such a diverse group of participants, we thought providing this structure would help you identify sessions of potential interest. While strand names describe an important aspect of a presentation, many sessions address more than one strand topic, so be sure to look closer at the abstracts. There is much to explore here at the conference. Enjoy!



## Pre-conference

### Introduction to the Theory of Positive Disintegration

1:30 -  
5:00 pm

If you are a relative newcomer to Dabrowski's work or would like a refresher experience, this pre-conference workshop will be a helpful precursor to the more in-depth and diverse work to be discussed during the conference. The Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) is a developmental personality theory that helps us understand differences in social and emotional needs and development. TPD reframes individual characteristics and experiences by giving people alternative views of intensities and difficult times as potential for growth. During the preconference, the major theoretical elements and how they are interconnected will be presented: the five levels of development, developmental dynamisms, overexcitabilities, and other foundational aspects of the theory will be discussed. Participants will have ample opportunity to ask questions and interact with workshop content through reflection and practical integration activities. Drs. Ackerman and Silverman will work with participants to address their theoretical and practical interests.

Picasso  
Theory

Cheryl M. Ackerman, Ph.D.  [cma@udel.edu](mailto:cma@udel.edu)

Cheryl Ackerman has been involved in the field of gifted studies for 20 years. She presents locally, nationally, and internationally on Dabrowski's theory and other social and emotional topics, and recently guest-edited a special issue of *Roeper Review* on Dabrowski's theory. She is a former chair of the Conceptual Foundations Network of NAGC and president of Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG). Cheryl works at the University of Delaware, where she conducts program evaluations in several areas.

Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D.  [gifted@gifteddevelopment.com](mailto:gifted@gifteddevelopment.com)

Linda Kreger Silverman is a licensed psychologist and director of the Gifted Development Center/Institute for the Study of Advanced Development (ISAD) ([www.gifteddevelopment.com](http://www.gifteddevelopment.com)). For nine years, she served on the faculty of the University of Denver, where she co-sponsored the Dabrowski Study Group. She has contributed 300 publications, including *Counseling the Gifted & Talented*. She founded the only journal on adult giftedness, *Advanced Development*, which has increased awareness of the Theory of Positive Disintegration.

# Thursday

# Opening Reception

6:30 -  
9:30 pm

Join us for the opening after-dinner reception to kick-off the conference officially! Meet participants and presenters, while enjoying some sweets and snacks, before and after Michael M. Piechowski's invited presentation. A cash bar will be available, too.

Marsalis  
Ballroom

I & II

Theory

## Rethinking Dabrowski's Theory

Since Dabrowski's theory was introduced to gifted education 30 years ago, little effort was spent examining the concepts of developmental potential, integration versus disintegration, levels, dynamisms, multilevel vs. unilevel process, alternative developmental pathways, etc. Is it a theory of emotional development or personality? Although the theory defines five levels, they are not step-wise progression. Can Level I be the start? Does Level II represent development in Dabrowski's sense? What is the nature of developmental potential for different types of development? These and other questions are examined within the logic of the theory, case studies, and research.

spingif@earthlink.net 🐾 Michael M. Piechowski, Ph.D.

Michael M. Piechowski is the author of *Mellow Out, They Say. If I Only Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright*, of *Living with Intensity* with Susan Daniels, and of contributions to the *International Handbook on Giftedness*. As one of the designers of Yunasa, a summer camp for highly gifted youth, he takes part in it every summer.

# Friday

8:30 am  
Gauguin


Welcome

Michele Kane, Ed.D. 🐾 Cheryl M. Ackerman, Ph.D.

## Gifted and Traumatized: A 15-Year Case Study of Transformation

8:45 am  
Gauguin  
Gifted

This unusual session, focused on the intersection of giftedness and trauma and the subjective experience of positive disintegration, will be presented by both the researcher and the subject of a longitudinal case study. Not only did the phenomenological study illuminate the asset-burden paradox of giftedness, but also important factors of resilience. The study followed the subject's social and emotional development from age 14 through age 29, opening a window into how the disintegrating and reintegrating power of emotions influences personality development. In this case, all areas of development were affected. Dabrowski's theory offers a framework for understanding various responses and experiences. The subject epitomized basic tenets of the theory: self-education, self-correction, deliberately selecting higher values, developing responsibility for self and others, developing a strong sense of justice, and connecting to others with empathy.

Jean Sunde Peterson, Ph.D.  [jeanp@purdue.edu](mailto:jeanp@purdue.edu)


Jean Sunde Peterson is professor and director of school counselor preparation at Purdue University. A former classroom and gifted-education teacher, she is a licensed mental health counselor, with considerable experience with gifted youth and their families. Her studies of social and emotional development in this population are reflected in over 80 journal articles, invited chapters, and books, including *Gifted At Risk: Poetic Profiles*, *Essential Guide for Talking with Gifted Teens*, and *Models of Counseling Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults*.

Mariam Razian Willis, M.A.  [mariam.willis@gmail.com](mailto:mariam.willis@gmail.com)

Mariam Razian Willis is Director of Forensics and Debate in the Department of Communication Studies at Appalachian State University. Her interest in critical thinking about social and political issues led her to create the on-campus Aristotle's Café, which involves student-led small groups designed to explore complex questions.

Break



*The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious;  
It is the source of all true art and science.*  Einstein

10:00 am  
Gallery  
Hall Foyer

## Emergences of Creativity and the Teaching Profession

Comparison of the process of creativity with the process of emergence of the teaching profession is analyzed in this presentation. As both physicists and educators, we apply the concepts of chaos theory and the ideas of theory of positive disintegration to examine the professional development of an individual and compare it to creativity. Creativity and the teaching profession could be referred to as "self-organizing dissipative structures" originating spontaneously in far-from-equilibrium conditions. Applying the concepts of Dabrowski's theory, the emergence of teaching profession goes through the process of self-awareness accompanied by strong emotional instabilities and self-reflection. Then, as a result of awareness connected with the third factor (will and choices), one reaches the state of self-affirmation, which brings one to self-education that is characterized by moments of withdrawal from the daily routine in order to re-charge oneself with new energy and new solutions.

10:15 am  
Chagall  
Development

Bogusia Jankowska-Gierus, B.Sc., B. Ed.  [bogusia@gierus.ca](mailto:bogusia@gierus.ca)

Bogusia Jankowska-Gierus completed her Bachelor of Science degree in physics and mathematics at the University of Calgary, followed by a Bachelor of Education. She has been a teacher of math and science in many different environments and districts across Canada. She has recently returned to McGill University to do a Masters in Educational Psychology. Bogusia is also the creator of a popular math puzzle: *Hexa-Trex - The First Book of Hexa-Trex Puzzles* (2007). She also runs an educational website: [www.nucleuslearning.com](http://www.nucleuslearning.com).

Krystyna Laycraft, M.Sc.  [www.KrystynaArt.com](http://www.KrystynaArt.com) or [krystyna@platinum.ca](mailto:krystyna@platinum.ca)

Krystyna Laycraft finished her study at the University of Warsaw as a theoretical physicist. After moving to Canada, she continued her graduate study and worked as a scientist at the University of Calgary. Currently, she runs the Center for Chaos Studies and gives lectures on an application of Chaos Theory in creativity, psychology, and education. She has recently returned to the University of Calgary to do Ph.D. in Educational Research. She is a member of the Society for Chaos Theory in Psychology and Life Sciences and an active member of the Federation of Canadian Artists.

Friday

## Upgrade Your Life: Transformation at Puberty Based on Dabrowski

10:15 am Transformation is defined as change of inner psychic milieu. Dabrowski considers puberty as a period of risk for crises. In order to acknowledge being different and to enhance self-knowledge, we developed lessons for gifted aged 10-15 years, titled: "What Every Gifted Child should Know about Dabrowski". Topics are: coping with depressive feelings, overexcitabilities, problems with making friends, leadership and motivation. We aim at transformation of concepts as the self, motivation, happiness, learning, autonomy, heroes and role-models, truth, knowledge, meaning, ideals and perfection. Reports of try-outs with students will be presented.

Gauguin  
Gifted

truusvanderkaaij@introweb.nl 🐣 Truus van der Kaaij

Truus van der Kaaij is an English teacher and specialist in Gifted Education (ECHA). She co-authored *Thinking about Thinking (TaT)* enrichment materials. She is a teacher trainer, conducts parent courses, counsels G&T, and introduced Dabrowski in The Netherlands. She has extensive experience in special needs education in international school (European School Bergen). She initiated the association How to Philosophize.

[www.everyoneweb.com/TaT](http://www.everyoneweb.com/TaT) or [f.b.demink@gmail.com](mailto:f.b.demink@gmail.com) 🐣 Frank de Mink, M.Sc., M.Ed.

Frank de Mink started as a physics teacher and teacher trainer. He continued as a trainer and consultant in Higher Education. In 1995, he began working in gifted education and has focused fulltime on gifted education since 2006. He is the co-author of *Thinking about Thinking* enrichment for secondary schools based on psychology, philosophy, creative thinking, meta-cognition, and spirituality (age 10 to 15 yrs). He has introduced SENG and Dabrowski courses in The Netherlands.

## A Comparison of Overexcitabilities of Artistically Gifted and Non-Gifted Middle and High School Students in Korea

10:15 am The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of giftedness, gender, and grade level on OEs for middle and high school students in Korea. The subjects of this study were second-year middle and high school students who are gifted or non-gifted artistically. A three-way ANOVA utilizing giftedness, gender, and grade level revealed that gifted students significantly showed higher degrees of sensual, intellectual, and emotional OEs than non-gifted students. There was no difference of OEs between genders. Regarding grade level, high school students showed a significantly higher degree of sensual, intellectual, and emotional OEs than middle school students. There were not only significant interaction in the sensual OE between giftedness and gender but also significant interaction in emotional OE between grade and gender.

Picasso  
OEs

hoyayoungah88@hanmail.net 🐣 Young-Ah Kim, Ph.D.

Young-Ah Kim is a research professor, Honors Program at Hanyang University in Seoul, Korea. She received Ph.D. from Sookmyung Women's University in 2008. The title of her dissertation: *A Study on the Validation and Application of the Dabrowskian Overexcitability Questionnaire-II (OEQ II)*. Young-Ah Kim worked as a researcher at the National Research Center for Gifted and Talented Education (NRCGTE), Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI). She is a counselor certified from the Korean Psychological Association and has counseling experiences at several counseling centers. Her research interests are counseling for the gifted, creativity, and gifted education.



## Examining the Relationships between Ego Development, Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, and Behavioral Characteristics of Gifted Adolescents

This research study explored the relationships between ego development, Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration (TPD), and the social, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of gifted adolescents. Literature exploring the experiences of gifted individuals has often focused on asynchronous development, particularly during childhood and adolescence. Also discussed in the literature are the unique social, emotional, and behavioral characteristics innate to the gifted population. However, there is still an unclear picture concerning the implications of this work as related to the specific counseling needs of gifted students, and little empirical support is provided. This study seeks to build, through a developmental lens, a more comprehensive base from which to conceptualize counseling and teaching approaches with gifted students. Results of the study will be provided, and attendees will engage in discussion regarding the implications of the study for future research and counseling practice.

12:00 pm

Gauguin

Gifted

Carrie Lynn Bailey, Ph.D., LPC, LPSC, NCC  cbailey@georgiasouthern.edu

Carrie Lynn Bailey, an Assistant Professor in Counselor Education at Georgia Southern University, is also a licensed professional counselor with clinical experience in both school and family counseling settings. Grounded in a humanistic worldview, Bailey strives to facilitate growth in both her students and clients through providing an environment in which meaningful, self-directed learning can flourish. Current research interests include exploring the developmental counseling needs of gifted individuals, and application of humanistic counseling and educational approaches.

## Towards a Theory of Positive *Organizational* Disintegration: A Generative Dialog

This session will involve members of the Congress learning community in a facilitated process to actively imagine the Theory of Positive Disintegration applied to organizational development and transformation. In so doing, members will begin to articulate a Theory of Positive *Organizational* Disintegration (T-POD). Organizations have complex meta-personalities, often referred to as corporate or organizational cultures, which are constructed and develop over time. Each organization's unique culture or meta-level "personality of personalities," reflects the personalities of its founders, leaders, boards, employees, clients, and others. A theory of adult development that addresses the underlying *processes* (in addition to stages) of adult development could (a) lead to deeper understanding of the dynamics of organizational change and transformation, (b) inform more effective approaches for catalyzing deep organizational change, and (c) advance organizational development practice. Action research methodologies derived from social construction and Appreciative Inquiry will be employed to guide dialog and inquiry.

12:00 pm

Chagall

Develop-  
ment

# Friday

jodyjacobson@sbcglobal.net 🐼 Jody Jacobson, M.S., MSBA

Jody Jacobson is an organizational consultant and educator with 20 years experience in education, technology, and non-profit settings. She enjoys creating synergies across disciplines. Jody is a doctoral candidate in organizational development at Tilburg University (Netherlands). She has an Appreciative Inquiry Certificate from Case Western University, an M.S. in organizational theory from Bucknell University, and an M.S. in health sciences from the University of Maryland. She is currently President at Aerial View Consulting LLC and Board-President-elect of MAQIN-Madison Area Quality & Innovation Network.

## Theory of Positive Disintegration and / Ching: The Philosophical Similarities

12:00 pm

Picasso  
Theory

Similarities of two philosophies, / Ching and Theory of Positive Disintegration, will be presented. / Ching (or *Book of Changes*) is the oldest and greatest Chinese classic. It became the foundation of the Taoist and Confucian philosophies. Theory of Positive Disintegration is a complex and comprehensive theory of human development, described by K. Dabrowski as the philosophy of "existence through essence." / Ching and Theory of Positive Disintegration treat the human being as a complex, nonlinear, dynamic system. Both philosophies provide detailed analyses on human nature, encompassing emotions, internal and external conflicts, motivations, thoughts, creativity, and positive and negative tendencies within any given situation. Both stress the idea that conflicts, crises, or challenging experiences become opportunities for the human growth. Both philosophies present a comprehensive view of the variety of human experiences, enabling him/her to shape his/her life by his/her own will and choices (third factor) into an organic whole (the personality).

krystyna@platinum.ca 🐼 Krystyna Laycraft

Krystyna was born in Poland. She finished her study at the University of Warsaw as a theoretical physicist. After moving to Canada, she continued her graduate study and worked as a scientist at the University of Calgary. Currently, Krystyna shares her time between art, science, and teaching. She is a member of the Society for Chaos Theory in Psychology and Life Sciences, she runs the Center for Chaos Studies, and she is an active member of Federation of Canadian Artists.

1:00 pm

Your choice.



*Take Nami Do literally means bamboo, wave, way. It is a metaphor of the relationship between the elements. The bamboo bends, is flexible. In the face of strong forces it yields but does not succumb. This is because it does not resist the force and so by not resisting, it is strong. The wave, in turn, uses its great force to overpower whatever stands in its way, and by sheer brute force is also powerful. Psychologically, the bamboo means to yield, to not resist inwardly. If one insults you, that insult is listened to, understood and gone beyond. There is no need to react to the insult. Therefore one is free, beyond the conflict of reaction. Psychologically, the wave represents that insult, that anger, that need to hurt another. Physically, the bamboo is the block, the wave is the... strike, punch or kick. In order to bring about an intelligent practice one must have the right relationship between these elements, to create a way that is balanced, whole.*


## Lifespan Intensity and Giftedness in Adults: Advantages and Challenges

The multifaceted aspects of intensity as described by Dabrowski's theory manifest themselves throughout an individual's lifespan. Gifted adults are criticized for their intensity and sensitivity throughout their lifespan and typically cannot understand why others don't understand who they are, how they think, and how they feel. Adults whose intensity permeates their very being may live lives enhanced by peak experiences, great satisfaction, and joy. However, the lows in their lives are generally more intense as well. This session will focus on both the advantages and the challenges to a lifetime filled with intensity, looking at intensity in adults specifically from the perspective of Dabrowski's theory. Its paradoxical nature also will be viewed through several other lenses: Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, Streznewski's exploration of the lives of gifted grownups, Sheehy's views regarding the cycles (and crises) of adult life, and Jacobsen's concept of everyday geniuses. Participant interaction will be encouraged.

2:15 pm

Picasso

Gifted

Ellen D. Fiedler, Ph.D.  ellenfiedler@comcast.net

Ellen D. Fiedler, Professor Emerita, Masters of Arts in Gifted Education, Chicago's Northeastern Illinois University, has been a Gifted Program Coordinator and a State Consultant for Gifted. She regularly provides consultation services for school districts, presents at state, national, and international conferences, and conducts professional development for teachers and presentations for parents. Her Ph.D. was in Counseling and Guidance from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is President of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.

## The Function of Transcendent Experiences in Personality Development

This presentation will examine the role of transcendent experiences in personality development. By transcendent experiences, I mean visions, auditions, near death experiences, mystical encounters with a source of knowledge and energy that seem to have their source outside of normal consciousness, etc. These experiences vary in intensity, extent, and duration, and while often understood to be religious in nature, they are not always so understood. I suggest that such experiences have a double function in terms of promoting personality development as described in the theory of positive disintegration. On the one hand, the experiences can make one aware of developmental dynamisms that are part of the structure of the next developmental level; and on the other hand, such experiences can serve to deautomatize habitual patterns of perceiving, thinking, imagining, feeling, or acting associated with the current level of personality, and thus make possible a shift from one level to another.

2:15 pm

Chagall

Develop-  
ment

Laurence F. Nixon, Ph. D  nixon3694@yahoo.com

Laurence F. Nixon is the Chair of the Religion Department at Dawson College, Montreal, Quebec. His research interests range from religion and art to contemporary expressions of religion in Canada, but his primary area of investigation is the psychological analysis of mystical lives on which subject he has published a number of articles.

Friday

## Advanced Topics: Going Deeper into the Theory

2:15 pm

Gauguin

Theory

This session is an opportunity to move past introductory levels of understanding the Theory of Positive Disintegration to delve into the intricacies of the theory and its applications. The actual content will be developed based on participant questions. Participants may send their questions in advance of the conference to: [spirgif@earthlink.net](mailto:spirgif@earthlink.net).

[spirgif@earthlink.net](mailto:spirgif@earthlink.net) 🐼 Michael M. Piechowski, Ph.D.

Michael M. Piechowski is the author of *Mellow Out, They Say. If I Only Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright*, of *Living with Intensity* with Susan Daniels, and of contributions to the *International Handbook on Giftedness*. As one of the designers of Yunasa, a summer camp for highly gifted youth, he takes part in it every summer.

3:15 pm

Gallery  
Hall Foyer

*A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for*

🐼 William Sheek



Break

## The Third Factor and the Reality of Value Hierarchy

3:30 pm

Gauguin

Theory

Dabrowski defines the Third Factor as a synthesis of all autonomous and authentic factors needed for self development that is fashioned according to the "value hierarchy." However, he seems more reluctant to go farther with a more precise description leaving a space for "the presence of a mystery in the creation of internal autonomy" (Dabrowski, 1972). Contemporary scientific naturalism in the various forms of evolutionary psychology, behavioral neuroscience, or cognitive neuropsychology challenges the idea of transformation guided by "higher values and meanings" as objective and genuine reality, therefore, they are rather more or less artificial phenomena subjugated to and determined by biological, intrinsic factors. If so, the core idea of TPD, namely the development of personality towards a certain ideal "I" more or less intuitively directed by the Third Factor, is placed in danger by scientific reductionism. Maynard Adams argues that value and meaning are dimensions of reality and that we can gain knowledge about those dimensions.

[ww4p@uvawise.edu](mailto:ww4p@uvawise.edu) 🐼 Witold P. Wolny, Ph.D.

Witold P. Wolny is the Associate Professor of Comparative Religions at the University of Virginia's College at Wise in Wise, VA. Previously, Wolny was the professor of the Phenomenology of Religion at the CEU College in Seville, Spain. He studied theology and philosophy at universities in Poland, Spain, and Sweden. Born in Poland, Wolny graduated from The University of Salamanca and received his doctoral degree in Philosophy from the University of Seville, Spain. He is the author of various articles and editor of books on contemporary culture and religion.

Readings



*The only real prison is fear, and the only real freedom is freedom from fear* ~ Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Friday  
4:45 pm  
Gauguin

Dinner (pre-registration required)

6:30 pm  
Marsalis  
Ballroom  
I & II

Opening



Saturday  
8:30 am  
Gauguin

Cheryl M. Ackerman ~ Michele Kane

## Panel Discussion: The Theory of Positive Disintegration's Family Tree

This panel discussion will explore Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration from its foundations, through its development, applications, and research, trying to capture the major branches of TPD's family tree. Many questions will be considered as the impetus for panel member comments. For instance: What theories underlie Dabrowski's theory? Who have been the major voices working with the theory across different disciplines? What areas of research have been explored? Where does the theory currently stand in terms of its development, application, and research? Where is it headed in the coming generations? What possibilities exist for exploring the theory further? Participants will be encouraged to help develop the family tree as it expands. Where are the broken branches, if any? What branches do we know little about? Hopefully, a diagram will emerge from the group process.

8:45 am  
Gauguin  
Theory

R. Frank Falk ~ Krystyna Laycraft ~ Sal Mendaglio  
Elizabeth Mika ~ Nancy B. Miller ~ Linda K. Silverman  
Moderator: Cheryl M. Ackerman

See individual session listings for the biographies of the other panel participants.

Elizabeth Mika, M.A., LCPC ~ elamika@yahoo.com

Elizabeth Mika, of Gifted Resources in Northern Illinois (in the Chicago area), specializes in assessment of gifted children and counseling for gifted adults. Her professional interests include creativity, learning differences and learning styles, multiple exceptionalities, moral and emotional giftedness, Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, and mental health and socio-emotional development of gifted children and adults.

# Saturday

10:00 am

Gallery  
Hall Foyer

*Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal. In reality, there are as many different religions as there are individuals.*



Break

☺ Gandhi

## The Little Mermaid: Dabrowski's Model Lived in Fairy Tale & Life

10:15 am

Chagall  
Development

In *The Little Mermaid*, there is a yearning of the most beautiful voice to rise from the depths of the sea. There is also a lie told - that soul can only be gleaned through marriage to The Prince. As she attempts to make her way onto land, her loss of voice and painful steps are emblematic of the "tragic gift" many gifted voices experience. Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration comes alive through the story of *The Little Mermaid*, and the parallel transformative journey of a woman psychologist who, amidst a profession increasingly devoid of soul, attempts to reconcile within herself the love of psyche and the sterility of pathology. As the tension builds between heart and mind in the darkest night, a crucifixion occurs. The tertium non datur/transcendent function leads to disintegration. Surrender "costing not less than everything" brings, for both, a new dawn, soul, and Secondary Integration.

drsandraborke@gmail.com ☺ Sandra L. Burke, Ph.D.

Informed by decades of using metaphor in teaching, Sandra Burke combines religion, psychology, and mythology in understanding human development. Trained in Los Angeles at The Jung Institute and The Wright Institute, she also studied at The Jung Institute in Zurich. Burke has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute, and an M.A. in Culture & Spirituality from The Sophia Program at Holy Names University. The ocean's breath is her sanctuary.

## *Be Greeted Psychoneurotics Java Shoppe Interview*

10:15 am

Picasso  
Theory

In this session, participants will view two film that feature footage with Dr. Kazimierz Dabrowski, author of the theory of Positive Disintegration and the reason you are at this conference. The first, *Be Greeted Psychoneurotics*, shows several interactions between Dabrowski and his patients. You will see him administer some of the tests he used to identify overexcitabilities as well. The second film, *Java Shoppe Interview*, shows Dabrowski being interviewed by a colleague at a local café. He responds to questions about his theory in an informal setting.



Saturday

# Deal or No Deal: The Validity of Overexcitability

Theoretically, constructs are concepts thought to represent real world phenomena. In the social and behavioral sciences, constructs are usually not directly observable. Their validity, or soundness, is established by creating propositions and hypotheses about their relationship to other constructs. For example, one might hypothesize that intellectual overexcitability will lead to academic achievement or that students involved in a number of extra-curricular activities will score higher on psychomotor overexcitability than a comparison group. The results of testing such relationships establish what is known as the nomological network, or set of interconnected, law-like associations. In this presentation, we will show how some of the recent empirical findings contribute to the validity of the concept of overexcitability. We will discuss various forms of measurements used in these studies, as well as their known characteristics. We argue, regardless of the specific form of measurement, construct validity continues to accrue for the concept of overexcitability.

10:15 am

Gauguin

OE's

R. Frank Falk, Ph.D.  rfalk@uakron.edu

R. Frank Falk serves as Director of Research for The Institute for the Study of Advanced Development. Falk received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Minnesota and for many years taught and served as an administrator at both the University of Denver and the University of Akron. He has authored numerous books, monographs, chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, and presentations at professional meetings including the NAGC, SENG, and the World Conference on Gifted.

Nancy B. Miller, Ph.D.  nmiller@uakron.edu

Nancy B. Miller holds degrees in psychology and sociology and has received advanced training in family processes and children's psychological adjustment. She is currently editor of *Advanced Development*, a journal on adult giftedness. From 2002-2006, she served as Executive Officer for Sociologists for Women in Society. Her publications focus on emotional development, gender and giftedness, and women's social support and adjustment.

## Conversation Cafe




Opportunities for informal discussion around themes.

11:15 am

Gauguin

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.

Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

 Marianne Williamson

# Saturday

## Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration: Perception of Parents of Gifted Children

12:00 pm

Chagall

Gifted

Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) has been introduced to many parents of gifted children through articles, books, and presentations. Many aspects of the theory have particularly resonated for these parents. Some experts in the field (Daniels, 2009; Silverman, 2009) have acknowledged this phenomenon; yet, there has been little data collected specifically from parents regarding their perceptions of Dabrowski's TPD. This qualitative study provides the results of interviews with parents of gifted children and extends the work of Daniels (2009). The observations of these parents regarding how the theory has affected their parenting and their relationships with their children will be discussed. The results of these interviews are analyzed for common threads and themes that emerge as well as the differences. In particular, the transformative aspects of how parents approach their role both before and after learning about TPD are examined for any significant changes. The aspects of TPD that validate the qualitatively different experiences of parenting gifted children will also be provided.

michelekane1@aol.com  Michele Kane, Ed.D.

Michele Kane is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Gifted Education Program at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago. Michele is currently the President of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children and the Chair of the Global Awareness Network of the National Association for Gifted Children. She has been involved with Dabrowski's theory since 1982 when she heard a presentation by Linda Silverman. It was a life-changing event.

## Imaginational Overexcitability, Everyday Creativity, and Personal Transformation

12:00 pm

Picasso

Develop-  
ment

"Creativity is the ability for, and realization of, new and original approaches to reality...*The individual who shows personality development always has... some creativity.*" (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 114, emphasis added) This presentation will explore the ways by which imaginational overexcitability, everyday creativity, and the third agent – combined – may create the right combination of intrapsychic elements to take us beyond what is – to what might be – in a classic Dabrowskian sense, including the potential for enhanced creative development and personal transformation.

drs.daniels@yahoo.com  Susan Daniels, Ph.D.

Susan Daniels is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling at California State University, San Bernardino, where she also serves as Coordinator of the Gifted and Talented Education Certificate Program. She is co-editor, along with Dr. Michael Piechowski, and co-author of several chapters in *Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults*, published in 2009 by Great Potential Press. Her areas of expertise include Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, gifted education, creativity, and adolescent development.

## Philosophical Discussion of K. Dabrowski's Normative Moral Psychology

The theory of positive disintegration is a normative theory, and just like Maslow, Dabrowski crosses the fact-value distinction so prominent in philosophy. His arguments seem Spencerian: higher stages in personality development rely on evolutionarily newer parts of the brain. But Spencer's interpretation has been abandoned since not all evolutionary newer areas are higher in axiological sense or evolutionarily beneficial. Dabrowski also refers to higher emotions in justifying the axiological aspect of his hierarchy but what emotions are higher is part of that very argument; finally he makes some broadly spiritual points. Dabrowski argues that the highest stages have lower survival value than the lower ones (especially one and three). The paper analyzes potential tension between Dabrowski's claims that advanced dynamisms rely on evolutionarily newer parts of the brain and that such dynamisms may decrease evolutionary fitness. This leads to a philosophical examination of the personality ideal presumed in Dabrowski's theory.

12:00 pm

Gauguin

Theory

Piotr Boltuc, Ph.D.  [pbolt1@uis.edu](mailto:pbolt1@uis.edu)

Piotr Boltuc, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Illinois, Springfield, has published over 50 articles and given over 100 presentations on topics ranging from moral theory to machine consciousness. A former Fulbright scholar at Princeton and SCR member at St. John's Oxford, he is one of the pioneers of online learning in philosophy and was perhaps the youngest disciple of Dabrowski, frequenting his dacha with Bialkowski, Swiatek, Kobierzycki, and others. He has also lectured on normative moral psychology at Warsaw University and the University of Illinois.

Lunch



Your choice.

1:00 pm


## Portrait of an Inspirational Teacher of the Gifted

The purpose of this interpretive inquiry was to examine and depict the lived experience and essence of one inspirational teacher of gifted learners and to apply Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration to further understand the phenomenon. There has been no previous research that explores the application of Positive Disintegration to the personality structure of teachers of gifted students. The findings in this study indicate the strength of the theory and its application to the inspirational teacher of gifted students exists in its provision of a context within which to understand multilevel emotional and moral development, personal growth, inner transformation, and the creative personality.

2:15 pm

Gauguin

Theory

Janneke Frank, Ph.D.  [jannekefrank@shaw.ca](mailto:jannekefrank@shaw.ca)

Janneke Frank has doctorate in Gifted Education from the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She holds extensive experience as a teacher and administrator in Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools that offer the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Her passionate advocacy for gifted students inspires her work as a private consultant and former director of the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary.

# Saturday

## Negative Development Potential: Understanding the Absence of Transformation

2:15 pm

Chagall  
Theory

Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) explains various forms of human experiences ranging from what may be described as egocentric-automatic, to authentic-altruistic. Specifically, TPD concerns itself with the entire range of ways of being from the lowest level driven by self-preservation instinct to the pinnacle achievement of personality. Developmental potential is essential in the transformative process by which individuals transcend biological drives and need for social approval. This positive outcome of developmental potential is often described by Dabrowskian scholars in gifted education. However, Dabrowski differentiated between positive developmental potential and negative developmental potential. The former leads to development, the latter does not. This session contrasts positive and negative developmental potential, with particular focus on the outcomes of negative developmental potential.

mendagli@ucalgary.ca 📧 Sal Mendaglio, Ph.D.

Sal Mendaglio is a professor with the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary, Canada. He teaches graduate courses in gifted education and undergraduate courses in teacher education. His interests include the theory of positive disintegration, models of counselling gifted individuals, and social-emotional aspects of giftedness. Mendaglio is a licensed psychologist with many years of experience counselling gifted individuals of all ages.

## Developing Arabised Image of the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQII)(based on Dabrowski's theory) and Measuring Effectiveness in Identifying Gifted Students in Middle Stage of Kuwait

2:15 pm

Picasso  
OEs

This study aims to develop Arabised images of the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQII) and to measure its effectiveness in identifying male and female gifted students in the Middle Stage of Kuwait. It explores the relationship among the OEQII with traditional measures of giftedness (IQ test & academic achievement). Findings favoring gifted middle stage students over average students were significant in intellectual OE and achievement. In light of the outcomes of the research findings, the researcher provides recommendations for future educational applications in the field of Arab gifted education, especially in the areas of identification and guidance.

rakad677@hotmail.com 📧 Thamer Fahed Almutairi, Ph.D.

Thamer Fahed Almutairi has been involved in the Dabrowski community for the past 5 years. His working interests focus on meeting the socio-emotional needs of gifted and talent students. Almutairi has received a Bachelor's of Islamic and Social Studies from Kuwait University, a Master's in Gifted Education from the Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain, and his Doctor of Philosophy (Specialization in Gifted Education) from Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies, Jordan. He works for the Kuwait Ministry of Education.

Break



*It's life's illusions / recall. / really don't know life at all.*  
~ Judy Collins

Saturday

3:15 pm  
Gallery  
Hall Foyer

## Perfectionism as a Vehicle for Transformation

As a personality trait, perfectionism has been deeply maligned in the field of psychology. Through the lens of Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, different aspects of perfectionism are revealed at each level of development. At Level I, perfectionism is narcissistic: others are expected to live up to the person's expectations. At Level II, the individual feels unable to live up to his or her own expectations or the perceived expectations of others. At Level III, perfectionism fuels the drive for self-perfection. At Level IV, there is an appreciation of the inherent perfection in all of life. At Level V, the personality is perfected and there is no inner conflict. Most of the bad press associated with perfectionism describes its manifestations at lower levels of development. In the rich inner milieu of those with multilevel development, perfectionism becomes the driving force to attain the personality ideal.

3:30 pm

Gauguin

Develop-  
ment

Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D. ~ gifted@gifteddevelopment.com

Linda Kreger Silverman is a licensed psychologist and director of the Gifted Development Center/Institute for the Study of Advanced Development (ISAD) ([www.gifteddevelopment.com](http://www.gifteddevelopment.com)). For nine years, she served on the faculty of the University of Denver, where she co-sponsored the Dabrowski Study Group. She has contributed 300 publications, including *Counseling the Gifted & Talented*. She founded the only journal on adult giftedness, *Advanced Development*, which has increased awareness of the Theory of Positive Disintegration.

## Closing Conversations & Future Plans



Michele Kane ~ Cheryl M. Ackerman

4:45-

5:30 pm

Gauguin

## *Nothing Can Be Changed Here*

(a play by K. Dabrowski)

This play by Kazimierz Dabrowski presents an alternative framework to understand his work and offers the opportunity to integrate something artistic into the conference. *Nothing Can Be Changed Here* is a mystery play, an allegory striving to dramatize spiritual truth. It was written in 1973 under the impact of a series of events in Dabrowski's experience with the treatment for neurotics and psychoneurotics, and it reveals a lot of his thinking and experiences at the time: the historical setting. In this informal session, participants will be asked to take on roles and read sections of the play for the whole group. Before starting, there will be a brief discussion of the play touching on its story and three levels of meaning: eternity compared to actual reality, the dramatic level, and the "Real" level of meaning (the problems of mental health, psychoneuroses, TPD, and personality development).

6:30 pm

Truus van der Kaaij ~ Frank de Mink

# Notes

## Dabrowski DVD - \$45

Bill Tillier has assembled a DVD of Dabrowski materials that is available by mail.

### Highlights of the DVD:

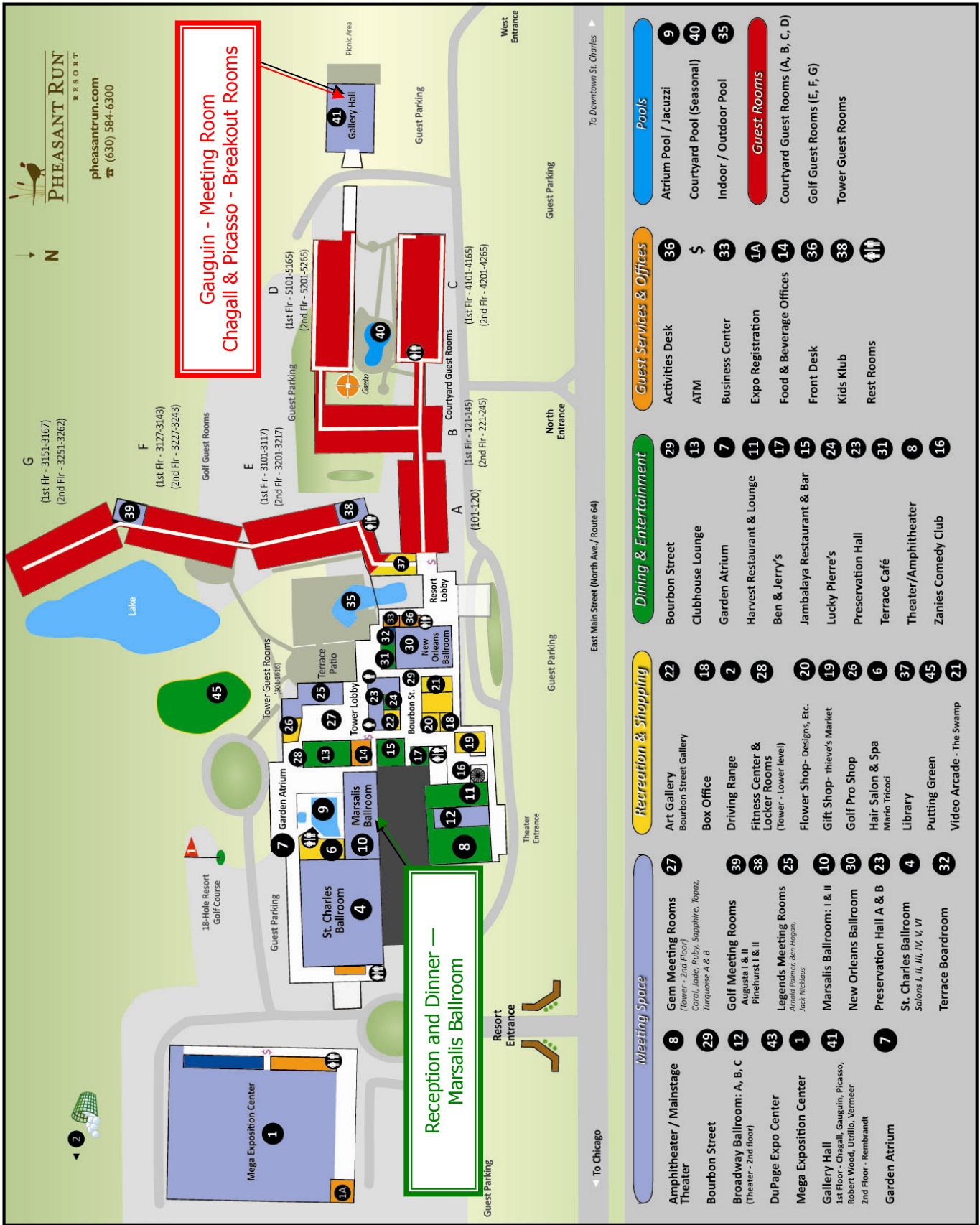
- Contains all of Dabrowski's published works in English (about 2000 pages).
- 10 of Dabrowski's Polish books.
- Many of the papers by others that have been published relating to his work.
- Conference materials including the proceedings from previous conferences.
- The two Filmwest movies of Dabrowski.
- Photographs of Dabrowski.

Contact: [bill@positivedisintegration.com](mailto:bill@positivedisintegration.com)



Website: <http://positivedisintegration.com>





Many thanks to D&M Collaborations™ for program design & production.

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

8:30  
8:45

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

July 22-24, 2010

**Strands**

- 12:00 Gifted Theory
- Overexcitabilities (OEs) Development

Welcome/Gauguin

**Gifted & Traumatized: A 15-Year Case Study of Transformation**  
Gauguin

Break

Emergences of Creativity & the Teaching  
Chagall

Transformation at Puberty  
Gauguin

OEs of Artistically Gifted/Non-Gifted In Korea  
Picasso

Conversation Café  
Gauguin

Theory of Positive Organizational Disintegrational  
Chagall

Ego Development, TPD, & Behavioral Characteristics of Gifted Adolescents  
Gauguin

TPD & / Gifted: Philosophical Similarities  
Picasso

**Lunch**  
(on your own)

TPD: Perceptions of Parents of Gifted Children  
Chagall

Dabrowski's Normative Moral Psychology  
Gauguin

Imaginational OE, Everyday Creativity, & Personal Transformation  
Picasso

Opening/Gauguin

**Panel Discussion: The Theory of Positive Disintegrator's Family Tree**  
Gauguin

Break

The Little Mermaid: TPD Lived in Fairy Tale & Life  
Chagall

Deal or No Deal: The Validity of Overexcitability  
Gauguin

Be Greeted Psychoneurotics; Java Shoppe Interview  
Picasso

Conversation Café  
Gauguin

1:00

2:15 Pre-conference  
1:30 - 5:00  
Introduction to the Theory of Positive Disintegration  
(additional cost)  
Picasso

Transcendent Experiences in Personality Development  
Chagall

Advanced Topics: Going Deeper into the Theory  
Gauguin

Lifespan Intensity & Giftedness in Adults  
Picasso

Negative Developmental Potential: Absence of Transformation  
Chagall

Portrait of an Inspirational Teacher of the Gifted  
Gauguin

Effectiveness of Arabised OEQI to Identify Middle Stage Gifted in Kuwait  
Picasso

**The Third Factor and the Reality of Value Hierarchy**  
Gauguin

**Perfectionism as a Vehicle for Transformation**  
Gauguin

Break

Closing Conversations & Future Plans  
Gauguin

End of presentations

4:45  
5:00  
5:30

Opening Reception  
**Rethinking Dabrowski's Theory**  
Marsalis Ballroom

Dinner  
(additional cost)

**Nothing Can Be Changed Here**  
(A play by K. Dabrowski)  
Gauguin

6:30  
- 9:30