

**Conceptual Evolution of Overexcitability:
Descriptions and Examples from the Work of Kazimierz Dąbrowski**

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Types of Overexcitability (OE)

Without attempting to “measure” nor differentiate “precisely,” I will present an attempt at classification of the kinds of *superexcitability*, based on many years of observation and systematic investigation carried out by various methods at the Institute of Mental Hygiene. By means of these methods, to be described later, I have distinguished four types of overexcitability: psychomotor, affective, imaginal, and sensual. (Dąbrowski, 1938, p. 1)

Loosening of structure occurs particularly during the period of puberty and in states of nervousness, such as emotional, psychomotor, sensory, imaginative, and intellectual *overexcitability*. The necessity of partial submission of one impulse to the rule of another, the conflicts of everyday life, the processes of inhibition, the pauses in life’s activities—all take a gradually increasing part in the transformation of the primitive structure of impulses to a higher development. (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 6)

The principal periods during which the third agent appears distinctly are the ages of puberty and maturation. The attitude of affirmation and denial, just beginning to bud in childhood, becomes dynamic at the age of puberty. An increased emotional, psychomotor, imaginative, sensorial, and intellectual *excitability* favors the process. A young man experiencing a certain loosening of his internal and external environments observes both these environments more or less closely and manifests an attitude of “subject-object” toward his own self. He assumes a critical attitude toward himself and his surroundings, strives to verify opinions with reality, attempts to transmit personal moral experiences to others, and makes demands of a moral nature both on himself and on other people. The consciousness of his ambivalences arouses in him alternately a sense of superiority and of inferiority, a feeling of guilt and self-discontent, and a more or less strong anticipation of the future or retrospection over past experiences. During the period of puberty, young people become aware of the sense of life and discover a need to develop personal goals and to find the tools for realizing them. The emergence of these problems and the philosophizing on them, with the participation of an intense emotional component, are characteristic features of a strong instinct of development and of the individual’s rise to a higher evolutionary level. In the period of puberty, therefore, the third agent is more dynamic and conscious than it was in childhood but remains still relatively uncertain in its service to the poorly outlined and wavering disposing and directing center. (1964, p. 56)

Excessive excitability is, among others, a sign that one’s adaptability to the environment is disturbed. These disintegration processes are based on various forms of increased psychic excitability, namely on psychomotor, imaginative, affectional, sensual, and mental *hyperexcitability*. Psychomotor excitability is basic in the development of functional hyperkineses, tics, and psychomotor obtrusions, as well as vagrancy. Imaginative excitability reveals itself in the form of daydreaming, in the intensification of night dreams, in illusions, in

artistic ideas arising, which point to the tendency toward dissolution and disintegration of one's adaptability to the narrow actual reality. Affectional *hyperexcitability* produces states of agitation and depression, sympathy for or dislike of oneself and the world, dissatisfaction with oneself and the environment, strangeness in relation to oneself and the environment, and feelings of inferiority or superiority. Sensual excitability, with the cooperation of other forms of *hyperexcitability*, develops the complex receptors under the pressure of sensations and stimuli, making them sensitive (strengthening and refining the sensual and esthetic experiences, but leaving one with a feeling of their relative incompleteness), which, in turn, dissolves the tenacity of the structure. Finally, increased mental *excitability* causes the dissolution of its conjugation with the controlling set, makes itself independent, and dissociates itself from its too close relation with the aspirational and emotional structure; it discovers within itself and develops new directing tendencies, intellectualized to a great extent. (Dąbrowski, 1967, pp. 61-62)

The essential characteristic of nervousness is an increased excitability, symptomatized in the forms of sensual, psychomotor, affectional, imaginal, and mental *hyperexcitability*. It consists in an unproportional reaction to a stimulus, an extended, long-lasting, accelerated reaction, and a peculiar reaction to a neutral stimulus. This *hyperexcitability* is therefore a strong, uncommon sensitivity to external and internal stimuli; it is virtually a positive trait. Talented people, capable of controlling their own actions and fighting against social injustice, are characterized by a sensitivity to esthetic, moral, and social stimuli, to various psychic processes in their own internal environment. Each of the forms of psychic *hyperexcitability* mentioned is characterized by valuable, actual or prospective, properties. Sensual *hyperexcitability* is an attitude of being sensitive to external stimuli, such as the sense of color, form, and tone. Psychomotor *hyperexcitability* gives sharpness, speed, and an immediacy of reaction and capacity for action; it is a "permanent" psychomotor readiness. Affectional *hyperexcitability* is evidence of the development of a property which is the controlling dynamism of the psyche. Imaginal *hyperexcitability* gives prospective and creative capabilities, as well as those of projecting and foreseeing. Finally, mental *hyperexcitability* results in easier and stronger conjugations of particular forms of increased sensibility, which facilitates their developmental work and is a factor that controls and enriches the mentioned dynamism (creativity, psychomotor readiness, etc.). None of the forms of *hyperexcitability* mentioned above develops in isolation. As a rule these are mixed forms with predominance of this or that form. They are disintegrating factors and, in conjugation with mental *hyperexcitability*, permit preparation for higher forms of disintegration and secondary integration. (1967, pp. 81-82)

The first [sensual] can manifest itself through a need and active search for sensory experiences, gentle touches and caresses. This can be later developed into sensual emotionality and a strong sexual drive. Psychomotor *hyperexcitability* is often expressed through general hyperactivity, domineering, discord, antagonistic attitudes. The potential for emotional *hyperexcitability* can manifest itself by a great sympathy and sensitivity. These represent nuclei for further growth towards a high level of empathy. Imaginal *hyperexcitability* can provide a basis for the

development of prospection and retrospection, that is to say, the ability to use one's past experiences in the planning of the future. Intellectual *hyperexcitability*, accompanied by other forms of *overexcitability*, especially emotional and imaginal, together with some potential for intuition, can lead to an early development of special interests and talents. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 31)

The main form of the positive developmental potential are five kinds of psychic *overexcitability* namely, sensual, psychomotor, affective (emotional), imaginal and intellectual. Each form of *overexcitability* points to a higher than average sensitivity of its receptors. As a result a person endowed with different forms of *overexcitability* reacts with surprise, puzzlement to many things, he collides with things, persons and events, which in turn brings him astonishment and disquietude. One could say that one who manifests a given form of *overexcitability*, and especially one who manifests several forms of *overexcitability*, sees reality in a different, stronger and more multisided manner. Reality for such an individual ceases to be indifferent but affects him deeply and leaves long-lasting impressions. Enhanced excitability is thus a means for more frequent interactions and a wider range of experiencing. (Dąbrowski, 1972, pp. 6-7)

An individual who is excessively sensitive sensually possesses a more or less superficial sensitivity to beauty, is suggestible, is more exposed to the difficulties of life. An individual who is psychomotorically *overexcitable* is restless, curious, cannot sit still in one place, wanders around, has an insatiable need of change and of "wandering into space." an individual who is emotionally *overexcitable* is sensitive, takes everything to heart is syntonik and even more often empathic though not necessarily in a highly developed manner. He has a need of exclusive and lasting relationships, of help and protection, of understanding suffering. An individual who is *overexcitable* in respect to imagination is sensitive toward "imaginal realities," is usually creative, has vivid fantasy and is often full of ideas and plans. He displays abilities in poetry, art or music. He has his "kingdom of dreams and fantasy." An individual intellectually *overexcitable* shows strong interests early in inner and in external life, has strong nuclei of analysis and synthesis. Early in life he is capable of asking questions and demanding logical answers. (1972, p. 7)

Some forms of *overexcitability* constitute a richer developmental potential than others. Emotional (affective), imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability* are the richer forms. If they appear together they give rich possibilities of development and creativity. If these three forms of *overexcitability* are combined with the sensual and psychomotoric then these latter two are both enriched and enhanced in their positive developmental possibilities. (1972, pp. 7-8)

We call nervousness all kinds of mental *overexcitability*: sensual, emotional, imaginative, psychomotor and intellectual. Mental *overexcitability* or nervousness in all forms, especially emotional, imaginative and intellectual are basic components of a developmental potential and the nuclei for the development of the inner psychic milieu and creativity. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 148)

A variety of forms of mental *overexcitability* have been distinguished, such as sensual, emotional, psychomotor, imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability*. The most favorable to mental development seem to be the emotional, imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability*. (1973, p. 173)

Emotional *overexcitability* is of fundamental importance in the formation and shaping of a hierarchy of values, empathy, identification, self-consciousness, autonomy, authenticity, etc.; that is to say, of the dynamisms which play a decisive role in the general and positive development of a human individual. Imaginal *overexcitability* is of great significance in artistic creativity, in positive infantilism, in the capacity for retrospection and prospection, in intuitive planning and even in contemplation and ecstasy. Intellectual *overexcitability*, especially in conjunction with emotional and imaginal *overexcitability*, gives rise to scholarly creativity, to the growth of reflection and self-control, of autonomy and authenticity, of an autonomous hierarchy of values, of the dynamism subject-object” in oneself and of the third factor. (1973, p. 173)

Psychic *overexcitability* is a term introduced to denote a variety of types of nervousness (Dąbrowski, 1938, 1959). It appears in five forms: emotional, imaginal, intellectual, psychomotor, and sensual. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 71)

Each of the forms of *overexcitability*, however, does not usually appear in isolation from the other forms. In a profile of a person who shows signs of *overexcitability* we will normally find a dominant form accompanied by varying strengths of the other forms. Only in the case of development limited to primary integration we may observe no *overexcitability* or only the psychomotor or sensual forms. (1996, p. 73)

The different forms of *overexcitability* are not of the same significance for development. as was just mentioned, the psychomotor and the sensual forms cannot by themselves break down the cohesive structure of primary integration. Psychomotor *overexcitability* is characterized by restlessness, need for activity, muscular tension. None of it leads necessarily to the engagement of psychic processes. The case is similar for sensual *overexcitability* which is characterized by extreme extraversion, seeking pleasure, comfort, superficial beauty, high turnover of contacts

with others, and is antagonistic to solitude, reflection and enriching lasting relationships. (1996, p. 73)

The following vignettes of the five forms are based on Dąbrowski's (1959) description, on an analysis of 433 instances of *overexcitability* identified in autobiographical material of the subjects included in Volume 2 (Piechowski, 1972) and material accumulated in addition to that. Each form of *overexcitability* appears to have a number of distinct forms of expression. Manifestations of the expression of *overexcitability* at each of the five levels are given in Chapter 8. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 31)

Combination of Emotional, Imaginational, Intellectual

The three forms of *overexcitability* mentioned first are always associated with accelerated and universal development, that is development in which autonomous factors are particularly strong (Dąbrowski, 1970). The psychomotor and the sensual forms of *overexcitability* may enhance such development by giving it more energy and more numerous areas of conflict. However, the psychomotor and sensual *overexcitability* by themselves alone do not contribute to the autonomous factor. In the case when intellectual, imaginational and emotional *overexcitability* are weak, or completely absent, development remains under strong, if not total, external control. (Dąbrowski, 1996, pp. 15-16)

The formation of a hierarchy of values out of personal experience and the fear that those values may not survive is the theme of great existential poems and novels, religious dramas and tragedies extant in the history of literature and art. Multilevel creativity is a manifestation of the conjunction of emotional, imaginational and intellectual *overexcitability*, with emotional being clearly the strongest. (1996, p. 36; Dąbrowski, 1977)

The *overexcitabilities* of greatest developmental significance are the emotional, imaginational and intellectual. They give rise to psychic richness, the ability for a broad and expanding insight into many levels and dimensions of reality, for prospection and introspection, for control and self-control (arising from the interplay of excitation and inhibition). Thus they are essential to the development of the inner psychic milieu. (1996, p. 73; 1977, p. 34)

The hierarchy of levels of integration and disintegration serves as a chart on which individual development can be mapped. as the extent of development is a function of DP, one may ask whether or not a developmental sequence limited to level I, and a sequence extending to level II, and one covering I, II, and III all produce comparable level I structures. The answer is no. Reference to Table 2 and Figure I shows that the composition of DP necessary to produce level

II or III is strikingly different from that which limits development to level I only. The difference in DP for development not reaching beyond level II and for development extending as far as level III and beyond lies in the difference in the strength of three forms of *overexcitability*, namely, imaginal, intellectual, and emotional. These three forms, and especially the emotional one, are necessary for the appearance of multilevel processes. Whether or not these three forms suffice to give rise to multilevel processes is a different question and one to which we do not know the answer. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 63)¹

Characteristics of OE

In young people of introverted, anxious, and *overexcitable* natures, bound by affection or feeling of love, we find characteristic tendencies of self-mutilation to "spite" the beloved person. This is a punishment of the dear one by causing harm to oneself, and is quite characteristic of women or of men with some feminine psychic traits. This mechanism is illustrated by the case of M, sick with pneumonia, who in the course of a heated discussion with her fiancé declared that, on any further argument from him, she would go out barefooted in the snow. In reply to this the fiancé remarked that one more unpleasant word from her would make him stab his hand with his penknife. Self-mutilation is for such individuals the simplest means for release of the tension and also for a more or less conscious attainment of certain ends. (Dąbrowski, 1937, p. 18)

According to Adler, daydreaming about one's own death, sickness, humiliations, and sometimes the realization of these dreams develops itself on the basis of a feeling of inferiority, and is a compensation for this feeling, in order to arouse pain and pity in the parents so as to be kept deeply in mind by them (2). No doubt this is a common, but not all-explanatory mechanism. Mental *overexcitability*, anxiety, inability to adapt oneself to new surroundings, and especially poor sociability and difficulty in one's relationship with others may be the bases of self-criticism and self-reproach. Individuals with such peculiarities reproach themselves for their inadequate behavior in play and in work; they discover a series of faults in their conduct and in adverse and grave situations: they always foresee the worst possibilities and have no faith in themselves. Some real inadequacy of behavior in a given situation, together with the feeling of inferiority and the need to assert oneself, is the cause of continuous reproaches as well as of *overexcitability*, depression, and "eating oneself up" with worry. (1937, p. 22)

In Bhagavad-Ghita we find the definition of an ascetic as follows: "It is one who has neither desires nor prejudices (ill will)". In *hyperexcitable* and introverted individuals it was insufficient to reach the state of indifference to experiences of life; they found an outlet for their *excitability* in increasing the life experiences by the application of self-mutilation. The following passages from Hindu books indicate various immediate causes for self-mutilation, all of which have as a common basis the desire for the annihilation of pain by producing indifference to earthly

pleasures, for attaining higher aims, and for the transformation of the lowest orders to the values of higher orders. (1937, p. 37)

Overexcitable individuals who are inclined to experience strong emotional states are marked also by a greater tendency to dissociation. Stimulation of a particular excitable group of tendencies leads to the realization of these tendencies, despite opposition, resistance, and struggle. A great conflict between opposite tendencies arises from various states of emotional ambivalence (attraction and repulsion, a need and fear of its realization) which, in conjunction with a degree of mental disintegration, is the basis of the domination of one group of emotions over the others. This is realized many times by way of self-mutilation. (1937, p. 40)

Pathological forms of asceticism, such as mutilation of the body, extreme self-destruction, bringing oneself to ecstasies by self-mutilation, or by the use of narcotics, the infliction of pain for the delight of suffering (intoxication with suffering), may develop on the basis of experiences of mental injuries in childhood, states of anxiety and feelings of guilt, hysteria, tendency to obsessions, lack of refinement of the personality, or mental **overexcitability**. Therefore, the prevention and treatment of this type of self-mutilating symptom must be aimed at the basic disorder. Constitutional factors of poorly known structure and mechanism take part in the arousal of auto- and heteromutilating and sado-masochistic complexes, playing a great part in self-mutilating processes. (1937, pp. 96-97)

According to the theory of Freud, the education of a child during the first years of life, based on principles of mental hygiene of the sexual life, can have great prophylactic value. The early prevention of **overexcitability** and of tendencies to aggression and explosiveness and the development of persuasion and self-control may also be of importance here. The comprehension by pedagogues, physicians, and parents of the psychology of the developmental periods (especially the period of maturation) may be of great importance for the prevention of the pathological appearance of these disharmonious tendencies and struggles of conflicting complexes characteristic of **overexcitable** individuals in this period. Lastly, the elimination of such determining factors as balanitis, phimosis, and various irritations of the rectum may weaken masochistic and sadistic tendencies. (1937, p. 97)

Psychic **overexcitability**, the lack of a uniform molding of the personality, and instability of the psychic structure are not always the basis of mental disease. Frequently, independent of disease, or after having gone through a psychotic episode, great mental suffering because of conflicts, or a crisis, stabilization of the personality at a higher level occurs (Beers, Dostoyefsky). States of struggle of conflicting complexes, suppression, and torture of one complex by another often produce outbursts of energy from a strong tension in the form of creative activity (Dostoyefsky, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Weininger, Zeromski, and others). We think that educational

suggestions recommending temperance, the acceptance of responsibility for one's actions, and the undertaking of necessary responsibilities are not alien to the spirit of a reasonable and moderate asceticism. It is an expression of the indispensable subordination of natural impulses under the will of the subject (9). (1937, pp. 99-100)

Enhanced psychic excitability, or *superexcitability*, to differentiate it in every case from manifestations of “normal” excitability, is a phenomenon difficult to delineate precisely. To move from “normal” reactions to heightened ones, to capture the degree of their intensity, to establish causal links between stimuli and augmented responses, to capture the causes of these frequently unexpected responses—are all issues which in most cases one can only approach in a manner that is approximate. (Dąbrowski, 1938, p. 1)

The phenomena that can be roughly counted as showing psychic *superexcitability* are: evidence of the manifestation of symptoms evoked in some individuals by stimuli that do not evoke them in others; excessive intensity of the responses, their disproportion to the stimuli, and their frequency; responding to different stimuli in a characteristic manner, indicating that the individual has a point of “irritation” that appears in reactions without any direct connection to the stimuli evoking them, etc. etc. (1938, p. 1)

Characteristically, a state of tension that is too low is inappropriate for the individual, is unpleasant and associated with anxiety. Under these conditions we are dealing with a quest for stimulation in order to increase the tension and then discharge it. Although the stimulus is disproportionate to the reaction, it has to have a proper strength for the individual so that it could lead to a release and lifting of anxiety. Seeking to increase the tension is rarely conscious, more often it is subconscious and is an expression of the self-preservation instinct. It will be difficult to calculate for each individual the characteristic strength of the stimulus that would lead to discharge. (1938, p. 7)

The positive effect of some forms of disintegration is shown by the fact that children (who have greater plasticity than adults) present many more symptoms of disintegration: animism, magical thinking, difficulty in concentrating attention, *overexcitability*, and capricious moods. During periods of developmental crisis (such as the age of opposition and especially puberty) there are many more symptoms of disintegration than at other times of life. These are also the occasions of greatest growth and development. The close correlation between personality development and the process of positive disintegration is clear. (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 18)

Individuals of advanced personality development whose lives are characterized by rich intellectual and emotional activity and a high level of creativity often show symptoms of positive disintegration. Emotional and psychomotor *hyperexcitability* and many psychoneuroses are positively correlated with great mental resources, personality development, and creativity. (1964, p. 18-19)

Let us now turn to the expression of positive disintegration as it occurs in some mental disorders. Hysterics do not have a harmonious emotional life, but very often they have deep emotional relationships to other people and a sensitivity to the feelings both of others and of themselves. They often show a tendency to idealize and present individualistic patterns of intellectual and imaginative activity. They are frequently highly creative. Because of a propensity to suggestion and autosuggestion, they have a very changeable attitude toward reality. Their inclination toward dissociation is unilevel in nature. They do not adapt easily to new conditions. They are moody and display a tendency to *overexcitability* and depression. Their opinions, work, relationships with other people, and life attitudes are likely to be quite changeable. Besides these characteristics, they have rather infantile psychic traits. The expression of the instincts of self-preservation and sex is, for example, rather superficial and capricious. The lack of multilevel forms of disintegration means the lack of sufficient self-consciousness and self-control. (1964, pp. 14-15)

Any of the types of excitability, if too strongly developed, subordinates to itself the function of reality and often results in a limitation of other kinds of experiences. Habits and addictions occur usually, therefore, when the individual is unable to endure too excessive internal psychic tension at the existing excitability. Excessive smoking of cigarettes by people with sensual and psychomotor *hyperexcitability*, is symptomatic of a venting of passion in a substitutional, indirect, abortive form. This is often a palliative action where one lacks the possibility of proper action. The use of alcohol and other narcotics often signifies violation of the function of reality, whose inhibitions are too weak to control impulses aimed at splitting the individual from actual reality. (Dąbrowski, 1967, p. 62)

The second form of mental development consists of the transcendence of those activities, in some degree of maladjustment to the universal phases of development. It is characterized by mental *hyperexcitability*, that is to say nervousness, frequent disintegration of functions, psychoneuroses, social maladjustment and accelerated process of mental transformations. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 29)

In the first kind of development mental *hyperexcitability* and maladjustment appear usually in specific developmental phases and in situations of stress. They vanish when a biological phase or a grave experience comes to an end. In the second kind of development, the contrary is true: *hyperexcitability*, maladjustment, creative projections become permanent, or almost permanent elements and manifest themselves not only in difficult periods. (1970, p. 29)

Let us now consider psychoneurotic depression. The individual with such a neurosis is characterized, in general, by emotional and imaginal *hyperexcitability* and a very great fatigability. This leads to irritability, greater suggestibility, low frustration tolerance, dissatisfaction with others and with oneself, and very weak adjustment to reality. (1970, p. 52)

It seems that a creative man an individual in the process of accelerated mental development must experience states of disequilibrium. The essence of the process of creativity involves increased mental excitability, especially emotional and imaginal. It is mainly mental *hyperexcitability* through which the search for something new, something different, more complex and more authentic can be accomplished. All this is associated with the loosening and disintegration of primitive homeostasis. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 15)

Nervousness consists in mental *overexcitability* which may take emotional, sensual, psychomotor, imaginative or intellectual form. It must be emphasized that clear cases of such forms of *overexcitability* do not exist. They appear, as a rule, in compounds of two or more forms some of which may be more or less favorable for development. For instance, it seems that the coexistence and collaboration of emotional, imaginative and intellectual *overexcitability* are very favorable for development, because they are strongly connected with general mental sensitivity, with creative tendencies and with capabilities for prospection and retrospection. However, we do not regard the union of sensual and psychomotor *overexcitability* as useful for development, because they create a rather narrow structure on the borderline of psychopathy with little reflectivity and limited creative possibilities. (1973, pp. 146-147)

Mental *overexcitability* is based on hereditary endowment and is shaped through the influence of the external environment and autonomous factors. Freud maintained that nervousness is the product of some psychoneurotic processes, while Janet considered it an introductory global state before the development of psychoneuroses. (1973, p. 147)

Psychoneurosis is a structure characterized by mental *overexcitability*, a tendency toward unilevel and multilevel disintegration, with a growing or distinctly developed hierarchy of values, an inclination toward inner conflicts, feelings of inferiority, guilt, dissatisfaction with oneself, and with the ability for accelerated mental development. (1973, p. 167)

Comparing these three types of development we may say that both 'normal' and one-sided development proceed in conformity with the general maturational pattern of the human species of infancy, childhood, adolescence, maturity, aging and culminate in death. It is characterized by gradual psychobiological integration of functions. There is adjustment to external conditions of life, and conformity to a prevailing in a given culture pattern of professional, social, and sexual pursuits. Mental *overexcitability* and maladjustment appear only in specific phases of development, such as puberty and adolescence, or under stressful conditions, but disappear when the maturational phase or the stress pass. In this type of development we observe the prevalence of biological and social determination which gives it a fairly narrow and inflexible pattern. (1996, p. 22)

The prefix over attached to 'excitability' serves to indicate that the reactions of excitation are over and above average in intensity, duration and frequency. There is another essential feature characteristic for reactions of *overexcitability*, namely, that the response is specific for that type of *overexcitability* which is dominant in a given individual. For instance, a person with prevailing emotional *overexcitability* will always consider the emotional tone and emotional implications of intellectual questions, i.e. what do they mean for people's feelings and experiences. Because of this such a person may fail to appreciate intellectual insights if they do not translate into human relationships and conversely, a highly intellectual person may, in the extreme case, be so caught up in the analysis of feelings and behavior, and his need to seek causal relations to everything that he may not be capable of a genuine emotional relationship with another person. (1996, pp. 71-72)

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[At Level I] Anger is brutal, frequently combined with aggression. It is aroused by obstacles in the realization of such needs as self-preservation, sex, ownership of property, power, etc. One frequently observes anger arising without clear reason. Such anger results from psychomotor *overexcitability* which has no counteracting or transforming components of emotional, imaginal, or intellectual *overexcitability*. In situations of forced inhibition (restriction by rules or confinement) one also observes anger arising without control and growing in intensity. This comes from an easy intensification of a negative reaction (a grudge, dislike, animosity) frequently converted into strong, primitive anger. (1996, pp. 89-90; 1977)

The forms of *overexcitability* may be likened to channels through which information is flowing. The five forms function as selective channels, or color filters, through which the various external and internal stimuli reach the individual. Such channels determine to what stimuli and in what way he is capable of responding. As modes of functioning or experiencing, the five forms of *overexcitability* are present in rudimentary form in every individual. If they are regarded as channels conducting information. Obviously, the amount of information depends on the aperture of the channel. If more than one or all five channels have fairly wide apertures, then the abundance and diversity of information (that is, simultaneous experiencing in different modes) will inevitably lead to dissonance, conflict, and tension. Dissonance, conflict, and tension are the substrates of the developmental process of positive disintegration. In short, experiencing can be regarded as a kind of information processing. (Dąbrowski, 1977, pp. 30-31)

Responses to a variety of stimuli may markedly exceed the value of an average response, they may last significantly longer (although this is not a necessary attribute of *overexcitability*), and they may occur with greater frequency. For instance, a child's puzzlement with causes of events becomes evident in frequently asked questions, in long periods of concentrated observation and thought, in insistent demands for answers to his questions; all of these are manifestations of intellectual *overexcitability*. A child who is disturbed when a leaf is broken off a plant, who feels that the plant is hurt, and who often identifies with feelings of other living creatures manifests emotional *overexcitability*. In such children, the anxiety over an accident or injury to their siblings or playmates is greater than over their own. (1977, p. 30)

The development of an individual advances and accelerates toward extensive psychological transformation as a function of the strength of these five modes of experiencing. This is why they are part of the structure of the developmental potential (Chapter 5). In this sense and within this framework, *overexcitability* is developmentally significant while plain excitability (that is a simple stimulus-response reaction) is not. (1977, p. 31)

Each of the forms of *overexcitability* do not usually appear in isolation from the other forms. In a profile of a person who shows signs of *overexcitability*, we will normally find a dominant form accompanied by varying strengths of the other forms. Only in the case of development limited to primary integration, we may observe little *overexcitability* or only the psychomotor or sensual forms. (1977, p. 34)

The different forms of *overexcitability* are not of the same significance for development. The psychomotor and the sensual forms cannot by themselves break down the cohesive structure of primary integration. Psychomotor *overexcitability*, characterized as it is by restlessness, need for activity, muscular tension cannot, by itself, lead to the engagement of psychic processes. The case is similar for sensual *overexcitability*, which is characterized by extreme extraversion, seeking of pleasure, comfort, superficial beauty, and high turnover of contacts with others. Sensual *overexcitability* is antagonistic to solitude, reflection, and enriching lasting relationships. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 34)

In each of its forms, psychic *overexcitability* is displayed either in broad or narrow forms. For instance, in its broad form, emotional *overexcitability* may seize the whole psyche in a psychoneurotic process such as a general depression or anxiety. In its narrow form, it is displayed, for instance, as phobias. In such reactions as neurasthenia or hypochondria, emotional *overexcitability* is also in its narrow form. Psychomotor *overexcitability* in the broad form manifests itself as general restlessness, sudden movements, explosions of anger or physical violence. There may be psychomotor crises, although similar in display to the above, that reach more deeply into psychic life, even to the unconscious and the subconscious, which last longer and have a better prognosis. Narrow forms of psychomotor *overexcitability* appear as ticks and hyperkineses. The broad forms of *overexcitability* are richer, hence more conducive to developmental transformations. (1977, p. 34)

Differences in the strength, quality, and balance of different assortments of *overexcitabilities* account for forms of development which appear flamboyant and abundantly creative (for example, as in the personalities of some painters, actors, film makers) but which, sometimes, do not extend beyond level II. In such cases, *overexcitability* may appear abundant and rich, yet it may lack the particular emotional and cognitive components which open a path of developmental transformation toward multilevel process. Here, a closer analysis should eventually reveal those components which are crucial for development to proceed beyond unilevel disintegration. (1977, pp. 57-58)

If we examine the forms of *overexcitability*, we can see that they are a conflict-generating substrate. Strong emotional and strong intellectual *overexcitability* lead to a powerful conflict between a personal, feeling, and relationship-oriented intuitive approach to and an approach which is probing, analytical, and logical. Inevitably, the two will clash repeatedly in the course of development before a resolution of the basic conflict is achieved. If strong imaginal *overexcitability* comes into play, the conflict spreads even further. When sensual *overexcitability* enters the picture, conflicts arise between pleasure orientation, which touches only the surface of experience, even though it might be aesthetically refined, and the more rigorous and profound demands of empathy, self-control, moral principles and need for self-perfection. There may be violent and enduring conflict between lower needs of comfort and sensual satisfaction and the higher needs of reflection, solitude, and attenuation of sensual desires, which become regarded as interference. (1977, p. 64)

Here, we turn our attention to the manifestations of each form of *overexcitability* at the first four levels. At lower levels of development, *overexcitability* is more often narrow and tends to occur in isolation from its other forms. The characteristics of a low level of development such as primitivism, lack of reflection, self-evaluation, and control, egocentrism, lack of creativeness apply also to the manifestations of *overexcitability*. The characteristics of a high level of development are the very opposite. For example, a person of high level of emotional *overexcitability* displays a great deal of inner psychic transformation, a rich hierarchical inner psychic milieu, and strong control by inhibition. (1977, p. 105)

Consequences of OE

In *overexcitable* individuals showing a lack of mental equilibrium, a sudden unpleasant excitation often causes an emotional shock. This facile appearance of shock is combined with a tendency toward nervous outburst. In introverted, schizoid individuals, we often encounter self-mutilation as one of the most convenient means of liberating oneself from an unbearable tension. Self-mutilation may act, in this condition, by means of the most easily borne physical pain or suicidal attempt, as a compensatory substitute for psychic pain or shame. (Dąbrowski, 1937, p. 12)

We deal here with the necessity for the liberation of accumulated psychic tensions in the easiest form for the given individual. The release is not entirely automatic, but to some extent conscious. We have also observed cases of self-mutilation as one of the means of getting rid of an unbearable state of psychic tension caused by great vasomotor effort. The anxious state, feeling of strangeness of one's body (extremities), and feeling of dying away were causally related to pinching, in order to bring back the state of activity, to increase by this means its weakened functions. A similar mechanism was found to exist in one of Janet's (44) young patients who, letting drops of boiling water fall on his palm, said, "Only this can bring me back the feeling of

myself." We have also noticed a similar mechanism in individuals with symptoms of acute depression. In these cases it was, as we emphasized above, for the anxious, introverted, or passive types, the easiest way of release from an unpleasant state of psychic *overexcitability*. (1937, p. 13)

What are the pathological foundations on which is based the mental structure of individuals showing a conflict of tendencies? This is a complicated problem, and we are not trying to solve it. We shall submit only a series of examples, indicating their complexity. Mental *overexcitability* may cause the need of action which may be expressed in the form of good for the community, in reform work, etc., but it is usually associated with sensitiveness (vulnerability), isolation, repression of emotional needs, and self-mutilation. In individuals with homosexual tendencies there occurs often a struggle between their natural instincts and the feeling of shame, inferiority, and depression associated with knowledge of their abnormality. In drug addicts, alcoholics, and gamblers endowed with a refined conscience, their tendencies are in constant struggle with the feeling of humiliation and helplessness. Compulsions and sado-masochistic impulses may be the bases of conflicts of different groups of tendencies (loss of some tendencies due to the awakening of aversion to them during the fight, love, and hatred involved in sado-masochism). The more they are equal in strength, the harder the struggles and the more intensive becomes the self-mutilation. (1937, p. 33)

Difficult mental conflicts and an abnormal educational environment have a great influence on the arousal and development of suicidal desires as enlarged self-mutilating tendencies. Parental love and the child's feeling that he is of some value play a great part in the development and transformation of the child's egocentrism. An abandoned child is deprived of the influence of these factors. A break in the physical and spiritual contact with the mother and disorders during the developmental periods cause a weakening of self-esteem which retards the development of the instinct of self-preservation. The feeling of affection and cordiality is to the child as indispensable for his mental development as feeding is for his physical growth. The gradual development of self-reliance and of the ability to adapt easily to new surroundings is based on the feeling that in case of mistakes one has the unfailing help of his dear ones. Lack of this assurance causes mental *overexcitability*, a feeling of uncertainty and self-appraisal as an unnecessary and useless individual. (1937, p. 45)

In *overexcitable* and introverted individuals of a high cultural level two things may occur simultaneously in the first and second phases as a reaction to great misfortunes: suicide and mental disease. Suicide is rarely met with as a reaction in passive types (Dostoyefsky). In order not to reach the third phase, a suffering individual must find some points of support, even illusory and weak. We think that in the case of a type like Dostoyefsky, these props were the feelings of exclusiveness and superiority by tragic living, and a feeling of delight in suffering, which may be the influence of the instinct of self-preservation in a helpless situation. To this we

must add the decrease of tension by frightening others with his sufferings and its demonstration in a most painful way. (1937, pp. 59-60)

First, psychic *hyperexcitability*, general or more differentiated (emotional, psychomotor, intellectual) provokes conflicts, disappointments, suffering in family life, in school, in professional life, in short, leads to conflicts with the external environment. *Hyperexcitability* also provokes inner conflicts as well as the means by which these conflicts can be overcome. Second, *hyperexcitability* precipitates psychoneurotic processes, and third, conflicts and psychoneurotic processes become the dominant factor in accelerated development. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 38)

It should be emphasized that individuals who have a rich psychic life, marked exclusiveness of emotions, empathy, emotional and imaginal *hyperexcitability*, may show dissociations of various kinds and levels. We can mention as examples of dissociations states of contemplation or ecstasy, mediumistic or spiritistic experiences, states known as anorexia nervosa, and any form of authentic self-perfection through positive disintegration, (e.g. the development of the inner psychic milieu, especially of the dynamism "subject-object" in oneself, the third factor, activation of the ideal of personality, tendency to ecstasy). The development of the partial death instinct which may find an outlet in extreme forms of asceticism or suicide is also an expression of this process. (1970, p. 51)

It is sometimes the case that an increased excitability of a wider field diminishes the possibility of neurological "fixation" to a specific field. At other times the contrary is true; a widespread excitability localizes psychic tension. The tendency towards neurotic localization is more common among adults while the wandering is less common. Among children and adolescents prior to puberty the prevailing tendency is towards increased widespread excitability and wandering of symptoms. The majority of adult psychoneuroses are examples of localized or structurally condensed forms of psychic *overexcitability*. Children and adolescents are characterized by an enhanced excitability which is not locked into definite structures. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 53)

The manifestation of the interplay of the psychical and autonomic factors is enhanced psychic *excitability* (sensual, emotional, imaginal, psychomotor, and intellectual) when the processes occur at a medium level of tension. When the tension is higher then we have neuroses and psychoneuroses. (1972, p. 63)

Psychic *overexcitability* in relation to oneself and the environment is always one of the basic causes of inner tensions, conflicts with oneself and with the environment. It forces one to cut paths leading to multilevel positive disintegration. (1972, p. 125)

Psychoneuroses with a predominant component of intellectual *overexcitability* are characterized by a greater systematization of experiences, and hence by a greater need of rationalization. There are also depressions, obsessions and anxieties. One has to keep in mind, however, that on this level the types of psychic *overexcitability* are invariably mixed being composed of several forms of *overexcitability*, primarily affective and imaginal. Philosophical obsessions, obsessive criticisms of scientific theories, depressions related to the disillusionment that science is not capable of answering the most fundamental problems of life, are rather frequent. No infrequently one encounters also obsessive intellectual attempts to find scientific answers to the questions of life and existence. (1972, p. 81)

The point of view represented here is in partial agreement with the opinion of Janet, that nervousness is an introductory and little differentiated stage of neurosis; but, as we already mentioned, it usually expresses the first stage of accelerated and universal development. Through different forms of mental *overexcitability* the individual is sensitized to the external and internal world, to different kinds and levels of reality. In this way, mental tension grows and takes the form which may be called "the readiness for development." (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 147)

Others constellations, such as a mixture of extraversion and introversion, a mixture of schizothymic and cyclothymic tendencies, the opposition of automatic against deliberate behavior, are seeds of many conflicts. But at the same time, together with different forms of *overexcitability* they sooner or later become multilevel conflicts, i.e. conflicts between "what is" against "what ought to be." (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 25)

Crying [at Level III] is distinctly interiorized, controlled, connected with an understanding and experiencing of a hierarchy of values, connected with the struggle to inhibit lower drives. Crying is a symptom of identifying with others more than with oneself; it is an expression of sympathy and of reflection. Crying appears at the time of entering into new, unknown problems. Crying appears during performances, concerts, reading novels, or as a reaction to observed events. Crying appears also as a result of spiritual uplifting, or at times of "sad joy" (e.g. during tragic plays or films). Crying is mainly a function of emotional *overexcitability*, and to some extent also of imaginal *overexcitability*. It often results from the pressure of empathy. Crying occurs more often in solitude than in the presence of others. (1996, p. 89)

Psychomotor OE

These are two sides of the same phenomenon, appearing in one or the other sphere depending on the mental make-up of the given individual, his age, education, or form of disorder. Most frequently the self-mutilation appears in a typical case under both forms, with predominance of one or the other. In the majority of cases, we are inclined to accept the identity of sources of self-mutilation in both spheres in the same individual. For instance, psychomotor *hyperexcitability* may be the cause of the initiation and development of nail-biting, wounding the nail-fold, scratching of the head; on the other hand, *hyperexcitability* resulting in tactless awkward behavior may lead to self-accusation and psychic self-mutilation. (Dąbrowski, 1937, p. 6)

It is known that *overexcitable* individuals with diminished repression, with a tendency to psychic disintegration (Schizoid types of Kretschmer; tetanoid types of Jaensch) have great difficulty in coordinating the main action of lower motor functions, which difficulty may, in coexistence with some irritating agent, appear as a process of self-mutilation. Moreover, the motor *hyperexcitability*, combining itself with disturbance of inhibition, causes the necessity for release which, in types described above, is often realized by finding on one's own body exciting areas which may serve as starting-points for self-mutilation. (1937, p. 10)

In this section we have discussed, in the first place, the role of the exciting agents in the origin and the development of self-mutilating tendencies. The examples cited above show that these tendencies are the result, on one hand, of various somatic irritation; and, on the other hand, of psychic *overexcitability* and tendencies to obsession. Either of these may be a predisposing and a determining factor, depending on the type, strength, and duration of its action. A strong exciting agent may be simultaneously a predisposing and a determining factor of the self-mutilating process (itching, hyperesthesia), and it may be its exclusive cause. On the other hand, the exciting agent often has only a supplementary accidental effect, and the deciding agent may be the tendency toward obsession or psychomotor *overexcitability* in ordinarily introverted types. (1937, p. 11)

Self-mutilation on the basis of psychomotor *excitability* may be prevented by:

1. Periodic psychomotor release.

(a). Sports, games, interesting discussions, interesting occupation during convalescent period in bed (hand work, interesting reading, and conversation), the quickest possible getting out of bed.

(b). Treatment by means of therapeutic gymnastics.

2. Adequate choice of profession affording active occupation, avoiding sedentary life.

3. Persuasion and gradual working up of the self-control in the psychomotor sphere.

4. Hydrotherapy.

5. Prevention of such causes of psychomotor excitability as alcoholism, diseases of the nervous system, shocks, emotional conflicts, etc. (1937, p. 95)

What are the most frequent manifestations of psychomotor *overexcitability*? Let's start with forms that are most frequent and showing the least of pathological features. In the first place we will see periodic psychomotor restlessness that intensifies under certain conditions as for example while anxious prolonged waiting (exams!), less often when awaiting fulfillment of some pleasure, the realization of which keeps getting delayed. The individual in a state of this kind of restlessness makes uncoordinated movements that seem unnecessary, without purpose, carried out excessively fast, although often insecure. Sometimes the motion complex is released in an outburst of movement. Let's take as an example a psychomotorially *overexcitable* child who is waiting for the arrival of his mother. The whole complex of visual, motor, and affective images has been prepared together with its release correlated with the [expected] time of the moment of meeting together. When the appointed moment passes the brakes keep operating for a time and keep the complex (let's say unconsciously) unchanged. (Dąbrowski, 1938, p. 6)

It is a certain kind of extension by projection. When significantly more time lapses tension increases—the brakes no longer hold but weaken and begin to let forms of release that are most sensitized, strongest, and characteristic for a given individual: the need to pace, gesticulate, sometimes vocal utterances, often unnoticed by the subject, then eventually crying, angry outbursts, or expressions of self-torment (biting nails, etc.). What happens is a kind of overloading/reloading of tension. Because sometimes there are tendencies toward [blood] vessel spasms we may be dealing with arrhythmia and dizziness. It must be emphasized that unsystematic and anxious attempts at control increase the state of psychomotor excitability. In *overexcitable* individuals activities of braking increase the psychomotor discharge, which sometimes ends in a psychomotor crisis. (1938, pp. 6-7)

As I mentioned before, in *overexcitable* individuals there is disproportion between the reaction and the stimulus. Sometimes the slightest stimulus will suffice to evoke a strong reaction: a careless shove in a crowd, an opposition in discussion, a small delay in a train's arrival—may be enough for an anger outburst. Sometimes we call such types explosive in whom the lack of control in the transfer of the stimulus results in the overtaking of the whole personality. These types are unable to release by stages and in many directions but aim for a full one time discharge. (1938, p. 7)

In many individuals of this type we encounter the phenomenon of increased psychomotor *excitability* before falling asleep, less often on awakening, and this especially in the area of mimicked and swallowing motions. I believe that this is the consequence of the diminished possibility of multidirectional discharge (lying position) and weakened conscious control over the psychomotor sphere. (1938, p. 7)

In the psychomotor sphere we encounter the phenomenon of periodic strengthening and weakening of excitability, and the time lapse between one and the next may vary; however, in this type of excitability the period of weakening is usually short and has a secondary character. (1938, p. 7)

In early childhood we observe the first signs of psychomotor *overexcitability* in the form of frequent and long-lasting spells of crying, irritation, etc. In young children we may see extended bouts of screaming, throwing oneself on the floor from anger. These outbursts are sometimes called explosions of resistance/opposition and can lead to spasms and turning blue. We suspect at the root of it the existence subconscious traumatic elements together with constitutional qualities. In preschool such children move too much, are impatient, disobedient, although they cause fewer complaints than at home because in preschool there is more opportunity for psychomotor release. Real difficulties begin with transition to systematic learning. The largest number of children receiving a negative grade for behavior are from this group. These children fidget in their seats, disturb their classmates, shoot scraps of paper and metal nibs, find thousands of reasons to leave the classroom and display an excessive changes/mobility of attention. After class, and sometimes during class, they initiate fights, and most often are engaged in them, and other psychomotor excesses. Among boys excelling in being independent, inclined toward rebellion in school, we are most often dealing with the [characterized by] psychomotorially *overexcitable*. The symptoms are particularly strong during puberty, although there is on lack of them outside of it. During puberty we often encounter in this group [P OE] frequent psychomotor release in the form of vagrancy. In street children that jump onto streetcars, among paperboys, tramps or stowaways, we encounter predominantly this type. (1938, pp. 7-8)

Youth of this type, and to a lesser degree in adults, exhibit intermittent engagement in schoolwork and professional occupation: periods of excessive intensity of work followed by periods of shorter or longer duration of weakened capacity for required effort. They lack the ability for rhythmic work but rather are characterized by bursts of activity. Their work usually goes in many directions at once, often jumping from one kind of work to another, from one subject to another. Adolescents have a tendency to change schools, young people to change jobs. (1938, p. 8)

Let's move on to manifestations of *excitability* that have the character of substitute functions arising from extended or permanent lack of possibility for psychomotor release. In this form of psychomotor *excitability* we shall consider first of all various psychomotor habits, primarily tics. We can imagine that in the composition of a normal mechanism of some action enter irritation or a set of irritations, their segregation, appearance of an idea, plan, decision, and execution. (1938, pp. 8-9)

An individual who is psychomotorially *overexcitable* suffers from lack of coordination of the time and disposition of irritations, hence irritations are not separate complexes but somewhat overlay one other. In relation to some there is segregation, while at the same time others in an uncoordinated form are allowed a new segregation, and there is no break between readiness of one complex, reaching decision and acting it out, and the same stages in another complex. Hence zones of overload and blank ones, zones of concentrated irritations and those that are diluted. From this arise tensions and sudden discharge. A new strong irritation may not find its groove and cause a premature act, not adapted, yet strengthened by the power of the irritation and by the already mentioned increased psychic tension that seeks a means of discharge and creates pathological psychic canalization. In the absence of ways of discharge, blocking of psychomotor discharge, under certain conditions of more or less adequate forms of release, predisposes toward ticks or gives rise to them. (1938, p. 9)

The state of psychomotor *overexcitability* is fatiguing, hence the need to discharge it as quickly as possible; in the absence of suitable means of canalizing psychic hypertonia, in the absence of possibilities of discharge tics may arise. While psychomotor outbursts take over the whole individual, tic symptoms have the character of localized discharges, narrowed down to only certain zones of excitability. (1938, p. 9)

In the mechanism of formation and development of tics the essential role plays the lack of coordination between the individual's psychomotricity and his kind of work, between his need and necessity of blocking, between striving for an all-points discharge and the necessity of a confined one. If the blocking is too strong and lasts too long it will cause outbursts/explosions and disaggregated states that may find expression in a tic. In many individuals I found an interesting phenomenon: tics sometimes appeared outside of periods of strong irritations, for instance in the moment of waking up, but especially when falling asleep. One could explain this in part by the weakening of control over the psychomotor domain; these conditions were the most convenient for the appearance of tick symptoms. (1938, p. 9)

Frequent getting up from work, pacing the room, drumming the fingers during work, nail biting are also a manifestation of the lack of coordination between the processes of thinking and acting, manifestation of the greater or lesser misadaptation of one kind of functions to another, of the preparing apparatus to the enacting one, and on the other hand, a substitute form, a completing of incomplete acts. In certain individuals of a spirited, energetic character, with strong psychomotor *overexcitability*, working in science or in journalism, writing a lot, it is clear that their mental work goes better when they are typing, especially with both hands, than when they are writing by hand. I believe that this can be explained by the fact that using a typewriter offers a greater psychomotor release than writing by hand. For many of this kind of individuals the best conditions of mental work are discussing ideas with others while pacing the room and typing from moment to moment. (1938, p. 10)

The difficulty/challenge of adaptation to increasingly newer conditions that are changing too rapidly has increased. Not every individual can keep up. Some functions grow out of proportion while other ones are weakened. Adaptation to the social group becomes necessary and with it dampening/blocking of actions that primitive man used to carry out immediately when he had the impulse or idea. Hence lack of psychomotor “saturation” but searching for means that would at least give the semblance of saturation. Hence also the already mentioned substitute means, such as smoking a pipe during meetings, pacing while developing ideas, which ought to be realized right away (the readiness of the neuro-muscular system), but which must be delayed. (1938, p. 10)

In the case of psychomotor *overexcitability* without a more pronounced participation of hierarchical dynamisms we observe functional hyperkineses, tics, psychomotor crises, wanderlust. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 78)

In the case of psychomotor *overexcitability* we observe more complex perseverations of movements, as for example, counting telephone poles, counting steps, fear of surprise, need for spastic expression, excessive talking, impulsive walking, taking walks to release tension, frequent movie-going, etc. (1972, p. 79)

Psychomotor *overexcitability* is a function of an excess of energy and manifests itself, for example, in rapid talk, restlessness, violent games, sports, pressure for action, or delinquent behavior. It may either be a “pure” manifestation of the excess of energy, or it may result from the transfer of emotional tension to psychomotor forms of expression such as those mentioned above. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 72)

A person of high level of psychomotor *overexcitability* will manifest great abilities toward planning, dynamic course of action and organizational abilities, while a person of low level of psychomotor *overexcitability* will manifest violent irritability, lack of control in outward expression of his crises such as acting out, physical fights and destruction. (1996, p. 74)

[Level I] Violent irritability and uncontrollable temper with easy return to equilibrium, general restlessness, impulsive actions, need for frequent changes of jobs and places, primitive wanderlust (impulse to be constantly on the go), juvenile delinquency (frequent running away from home, frequent attempts of escape from detention, stealing cars, getting into fights, etc.). (1996, p. 75)

[Level II] Ambivalences and ambipendencies bring about, from time to time, a suspension of the drivenness of activity and replace it instead by somewhat more controlled activity. (1996, p. 76)

[Level III] Psychomotor *overexcitability* comes into closer linkage with higher forms of *overexcitability* (emotional, imaginal and intellectual) and begins to be transformed and modified by them. Within the drivenness of psychomotor *overexcitability* appear inhibitions, multilevel conflicts, energetic search for channels "upward." Psychomotricity plays thus a role in the formation of a new DDC at a higher level because of the person's decisiveness. (1996, p. 76; 1977)

[Level IV] Psychomotor *overexcitability* provides the dynamics and energy for carrying out a developmental program of action. In Patanjali's Yoga Sutras we find a statement: "Success in yoga comes quickly to those who are intensely energetic" (aphorism 21, Prabhavananda and Isherwood, 1953). At this level psychomotor *overexcitability* is totally subordinated to higher forms of *overexcitability* and provides theta with "executive" power. (1996, p. 76; 1977)

[Courage at Level II] Variableness of courage as a result of the fluctuation of excitation and depression. Frequent readiness for aggressive action minimally controlled by reflection, or by the consciousness of one's tendencies of approach and avoidance. As a function of enhanced psychomotor *overexcitability* courage may be impulsive and aggressive since inhibition is not strong and only periodical. (1996, p. 123; Dąbrowski, 1977)

Psychomotor *overexcitability* appears to be a function of an organic excess of energy, or, simply, of an enhanced excitability of the neuro-muscular system. It manifests itself, for example, in rapid talk, violent games, intense athletic activities, restlessness, acting out on impulse (typical, for instance, of delinquent behavior). Enhanced neuromuscular excitability

facilitates transfer of emotional tension to psychomotor forms of expression. Emotional excitement or distress is converted into gesticulation, pacing, throwing objects, wanderlust, rapid talk, chain smoking (p. 33). (1977, p. 31)

Examples of Psychomotor OE from Dąbrowski & Piechowski (1996)

Soon I went on to grade seven – the big step to Junior High. It was then that my interest in sports particularly soccer and hockey developed. I played intramural soccer and hockey for the community team in Mites. (Subject 1)

At this point in grade nine I was somewhat of a juvenile delinquent. I was stealing cars and bikes and eventually got caught for it. (Subject 1)

Sports come to mind in my associations as I have experienced triumph in Soccer and Hockey leagues. I always have been proud and happy in remembering athletic experiences. (Subject 1)

I have experienced brief instances of that most of it being connected with something good that's happened musically. A really good gig – I feel really happy. (Subject 2)

I figure the only way to look at death is just to get as much done that you want to do in this life as possible, not at somebody else's expense but what you really want to do and then when you die you've done all you could and that's all you can do. (Subject 2)

But don't sort of sit around wasting time here because you don't have that much. (Subject 2)

Uncertainty right now is not having a job. I really hate it. I really hate not knowing exactly what is going to happen and not being able to plan for things. I really like to be able to either know what I'm going to do or if something comes up that I didn't expect, to be able to do something about it. I really hate to be in a position where I just have to sit and wait for something to work itself out. (Subject 2)

I've just learned to live with it because I'm always nervous. I don't like being that way but it just seems that to really get into things – you have to get uptight about them to be involved. (Subject 2)

I went through a stage about two years of my life where I really wasn't into anything enough to worry about it and it was just the draggiest time I've ever spent. I just thought you got to do something because you're just sitting around doing nothing. That was probably the most relaxing time for me but at the same time, it wasn't a happy time, I wasn't pleased with myself for anything. (Subject 2)

In a lot of instances you can't help but worry and get nervous about them, like the show we did last week. It was just so tense not knowing whether the tapes would come off or whether it would be ready in time. I was really nervous, I lost five pounds last week. (Subject 2)

I don't think a person can ever be successful and have all their aims accomplished. You have to keep building new things for yourself to get into and to. (Subject 2)

Hardly ever because I know what I want to do and anything aside from that, anything that conflicts with that, I get rid of or get out of the way somehow, even if it's something that I would want to do. I just say, well, your decision is this, you can't do that. I'm always happier for being able to make a decision like that. Whereas a lot of people can't make the decisions and that's where they suffer. (Subject 2)

A lot of people don't realize this and they let the fear of not succeeding stop them from even trying to do something and they just end up in a situation where they're doing something they don't want to do. Some people live their whole lives with that kind of conflict and I don't know how they possibly can. (Subject 2)

I think that if you really want to do something bad enough that you can do it no matter what it is. (Subject 2)

As soon as I resolved that one and decided that I will be a musician and that's what I'm going to be, I've been much happier and I think that most people would find their lives a lot easier and be a lot happier and probably do a lot more with themselves if they could resolve that kind of conflict. (Subject 2)

When I was almost 6 years old I was sent for my health to a children's "health home". This was for about four weeks I think. I was the youngest one there. I now wonder if it really was for my health or perhaps my nervousness that I was there. I was a nail biter. (Subject 3)

I can remember my burning hot anger at him. There were many times when I tried to kick him, screaming at the top of my voice. But he almost always managed to hold me at a distance from him. I was much aware of his superiority over me because of his physical strength. I just never could get even with him. (Subject 3)

Yet, a month later I no longer could respond to my husband's love making. I felt, I said once, like a half filled bag of flour. Shortly after I had a serious nervous breakdown and tried to commit suicide on several occasions. (Subject 3)

About the first thing that I can remember having done is splitting my brother's head open with a pocket watch. Every now and then I can visualize in my head a reproduction of the scene as seen through my eyes. I can see my brother advancing toward me, his hands are blurred so I don't know if he is carrying anything in them. I am caught in a corner of the house, outside. The sun is shining brightly time – late morning. We have just had a fight, and, true to my style, I have hit him good, and then run away, hoping that he'll calm down, before he gets a chance to pay me back. But, I ran to the wrong place. He is coming for me, but for all that I try, I do not know if he had anything in his hand. Anyway, I reach for a weapon, none around. I dig my hand in my pocket and there I feel, sweaty and smooth, my grandfather's pocketwatch. I grip it tight. (Subject 4)

The more aggressive class was the French class, and this fact, coupled with the fact that I spent my nights making battle plans for the following day's snowball fights, always seemed to surpass the fighting skills, as well as the numbers (the English always outnumbered the French) of the English class. (Subject 4)

She would not come, and I began bawling and threatening not to go if she would not. She left the table and went to her bedroom, and I continued to howl and cry. I never did go to that dance. How could I have backed down. As can be seen, I was only using the crying as a last attempt at getting my sister to come. (Subject 4)

Then, for about the first time in my life, I got mad. I went around yelling and fighting and accusing my mother until she would cover her ears and run into her bedroom crying. I would

often have fights with my father that would often come to blows. I did not do my studies. (Subject 4)

I am accredited with having cycled to Wabigoon in one day. I could have done it too, make no mistake about that, I was in excellent physical condition, had very powerful lungs and legs, and to this day, though I didn't do it, the distance I did go, in the time it took me are good enough for me that I could have done it. Whether this is false pride or not, I really do know that I could have. That is important to me. (Subject 4)

She had told me the week before about some boy who was always beating her at school. Then we had a date for a basketball game at her school, it suddenly occurred to me that the guy would be there, and that he might try something. I got together with some friends, and practiced all the fighting skills I could remember when I had taken Karate. I even had my strategy all planned out, so as to lure him into an open position for a series and combination of Karate, Kung-Fu and Judo holds that would have had the guy down in a few seconds. I should explain. The guy is six foot two, and built like a football player. (Subject 4)

The subject was: are emotions real or just taste buds for the brain. I had just had a fight with my mother, which is what prompted my writing. (Subject 4)

She wrenched her hands each in the opposite direction, and deliberately tore my little essay in half and then in quarters. The words that were coming up my throat broke into a scream and the wail of something akin to a mad dog reached my throat. After my mother had calmed herself (it shocked her), and when I was finished with my scream, I grabbed the scraps of the paper and cuddled them up to me. (Subject 4)

I countered with a tirade which lasted a full forty-five minutes, in which time tears came to my eyes, cracks were made in the plaster of the walls (and probably on my mother's face too). I had blown up, completely, had never before with such force. The only reason I stopped was because, after forty-five minutes, I started to calm down. When I was calmer it became impossible to speak – the words would come to my mouth, but after the first few words, I could not bring my line of reasoning down. All that I could do was repeatedly (3 times) shout out the first few lines of a sentence, and then I had to repeat it again. (Subject 4)

At that moment, being so ridiculously defenceless and open. I think is the closest I have ever come to shooting myself – no, that's not true. The other time with the problem of my girlfriend, was just as close, but the difference was that this would have been an impulse move. (Subject 4)

I started to steal at about this age. I only saw stealing as a way to get those things that my parents could not get me and to get things like gum and candy. (Subject 5)

I remember once having a crush on a girl and that I was very shy. I bought her a gift but could not give it to her myself. I gave it to my sister to give to her and then I ran. (Subject 5)

I remember being a bugger even in the hospital doing such things as running away from the nurses in my wheel chair, blocking the doorways to rooms so that nurses couldn't get out. (Subject 5)

When I got out the hospital I was a monster at home after being spoiled at the hospital. (Subject 5)

We went shoplifting. We hit a couple of stores but were caught with about twenty dollars of goods on us. When we were caught I cried because I was mainly thinking of what would happen to me when my Father found out. (Subject 5)

I stole cookies, ice cream, pop, pastries, you name it from our neighbourhood store and was caught twice. The first time it was by one of the cashiers and she didn't tell the manager. The second time it was by one of the stock boys and he just warned me and let me get away with it. I knew the guy and I figure he just didn't like to turn people in. (Subject 5)

I used to steal also from a store near my Junior High. One day my math teacher said I couldn't chew gum in class unless I bought enough for the whole class. At noon that day I went to the store and stole enough gum to give the whole class 4 or 5 sticks each. (Subject 5)

Then one day I was caught at the store across from the school and the principal was informed and I saw him after I was released from the store and I told him that I was forced to steal because some boys made me do it. Actually I did it because a guy wanted me to prove to him that I could get anything that I wanted. (Subject 5)

Me and my oldest sister fought the most in our family. I ran away from home once because of her and one of my other sisters followed me for about three miles before I would go back home. (Subject 5)

I started wrestling in grade nine and I was good at it. And I used this to gain prestige among my peers. (Subject 5)

In high school I started changing so rapidly that I was very frustrated by trying to stick to my new way of not lying or stealing. (Subject 5)

In grade eleven I helped do a number of extracurricular activities such as dances and plays. I received a minor service award for doing this. I really started to gain pride in myself. (Subject 5)

I also continued to wrestle in high school and won in my weight division in the high school championship and also in the city and in the provincials. I also got an award for the best form in my class of junior wrestlers. (Subject 5)

I chummed around with a guy who worked with me and a friend of his. We went to the canteen and got drunk several times and got into fights and we were fairly close in everything except when it was time to go into town and to pick up some girls and take them out and shack up with them. The two other guys would always go without me. (Subject 5)

But the next time I will know it will take more and I will get more and do the job proper. I feel though that I could easily commit suicide without the battling back and forth that I had the first time before I tried and if right now I get depressed I will do myself in. (Subject 5)

I would say I get nervous if I am worried about something. My nervousness is never very great or a cause for concern. I worry for example when I am bowling if I have two strikes in a row and wonder if I can make it three in a row and I may get a little shaky about it. (Subject 5)

One time, while the vacuum was on I crept to the kitchen and ate mandarin oranges, never stopping until the vacuum stopped, and then of course, it was too late. (Subject 6)

I felt the same way about my fingernails, which had to pass inspection every Saturday bathtime. They never did, of course, as I chewed them constantly. (Subject 6)

I carried this leaden feeling around quite often, although I have been told I was a happy, good-natured child, energetic, a compulsive talker, and always optimistic. (Subject 6)

Around 8 years of age I engaged in such silly activities as crushing colored glass into a tin can and burying it in the swamp in the fall of the year. During the following spring, I would dig it up and, very excited about my treasure, hurry home with an exaggerated tale of daring and danger. (Subject 6)

Apparently I talked so much and displayed so much enthusiasm about everything I did that I was a source of annoyance. (Subject 6)

At this time I developed several tics, a second one taking hold as soon as I mastered the first. One was blinking, another, sniffing (twice), and tapping each utensil at my plate before starting to eat and, if disturbed during my meal, having to tap and start again. (Subject 6)

Our meal times were particularly unpleasant for me as I had so much energy. My parents insisted on our starting each course at the same time, and since my father chewed more slowly than anybody I knew, I sat for "hours", it seemed, waiting to be released. (Subject 6)

Often I spent the extra time eating more than I needed, which led to a tendency to be overweight that took years to understand and partially control. (Subject 6)

There was always a depressing aura at the table, and, it seemed to me, a lot of tension. As a result, I chattered endlessly and drove others to distraction. When this finally resulted in a sharp reminder to be quiet, I reacted with great fear and more anxiety and then would attempt to transform the anger into laughter by saying something funny. (Subject 6)

My greatest joy at this time was music. I had an opportunity to take piano lessons and I approached the piano as I approached everything else, with vigor. I practised until my family begged me to stop. (Subject 6)

My sister and I had a seemingly good relationship, but seldom communicated. We went everywhere together, because we were told to, but /I teased and giggled and talked a lot. (Subject 6)

I spent a lot of my time being afraid – I was afraid of silence and I was afraid of noise. As a result, I talked a lot, trying to fill up gaps in what were, for me, moments of painful silence. (Subject 6)

If someone raised his voice at another, I flew to his defence, trying to deflect some of the hostility in my direction. To do this, I tried to introduce humour into the situation. (Subject 6)

It keeps me alert and aware. I feel nervous if I don't feel nervous for some time, and begin to wonder if someone needs something and I've failed to notice it. (Subject 6)

To me, all life is worthwhile, although at times I become impatient with the slow process of evolution. I try not to confuse myself with my ideas, remembering that a good idea will live on, whether I do or not: In the meantime, it is enough that I support it. If it is worth living for, it is worth dying for. (Subject 6)

His sister Simone remarks that the four children used to divide up in pairs. The elder pair, Simone and Antoine, were fond of violent games. They liked climbing trees and building houses in the branches where she wrote stories and he wrote verses. (Saint-Exupery)

Of all the five children he was the most wild and fearless; it was he who directed the games, tyrannizing over the others, interrupting them whenever a new idea struck him, quarreling with his rebellious brother, Francois, keeping up the quarrel even during mealtimes, until he had won his point. (Saint-Exupery)

They made a spirited trio, and particularly, the two boys – "Tonio" and Francois – who were forever scrapping and romping. "They were, one must admit, unbearable," Simone, the older sister, recalls, "but as two boys brimful of life are apt to be when there is no father around to keep them in line. They fought and obeyed no one. In the mornings their floor resounded with mad scamperings. Antoine would refuse to take his bath and wriggle himself clear of his fearful governess's grasp. Without a stitch on he'd gallop up and down, making fun of her. Or, because Francois refused to listen to his stories, saying: "Tes bete, Flonflon, t'es bete!" he would jump on him and the fisticuffs would start all over. (Saint-Exupery)

On one occasion he replied rather sharply to an instructor who had given a reprimand which he considered undeserved. On being compelled to kneel as punishment, a dictionary in each hand, he immediately rose to his feet and in exasperation threw the dictionaries into the midst of the class, then left the room, slamming the door behind him. (Saint-Exupery)

On the descent, after passing through a strange village, they noticed the sun was setting and the boys asked Simone for the time. To her horror, she found that she had lost her watch, her beautiful communion watch, somewhere along the way. Without hesitation "Tonio" offered to return to look for it while she and the young brother Francois returned on the train ... At home on their arrival there were cries of horror at the thought of the little boy alone at night on the mountain. Simone must be deprived of her dessert if the watch was not found. Very late after dinner, a carriage which had picked up the tired lad, livid with fatigue, dragging his legs, let him off at the gate. Bravely he had made the entire climb over again, searching everywhere and asking the town crier of the village to announce a reward. "But Monot, I am sorry, I didn't find it". (Saint-Exupery)

Learning that his name too was Antoine, the engine driver agreed to let the four-year-old boy ride with him in the locomotive cab. For days thereafter every scrap of cardboard in the Chateau de la Mole became a train. This discovery of the marvels of modern locomotion was quickly followed by another, and the next year every rock around the chateau was transformed into an automobile, which Antoine straddled as though he were riding a horse. (Saint-Exupery)

Saint-Exupery's interest in mechanical objects seems to have been aroused at a very early age, for his music teacher Anne Marie Poncet remembers him as being a bricoleur – a born tinkerer, fascinated by boilers and pistons. He would spend hours drawing diagrams of imaginary engines, then pester the Cure, who had once taught mathematics, to find out if he thought they were all right. Still a child, he hooked up wires and boxes and built himself a rudimentary telephone. But his most ambitious "invention" was a flying machine he put together by stretching a pair of old sheets over a frame of bamboo strips, attached to the handlebars of his bicycle. (Saint-Exupery)

Wright's prestige was still close to its zenith when the young Antoine entered the College de Sainte-Croix, and we have Roger de Smety's word for it that he made several trips to the historic airstrip (now marked by a monument) at Auvours. His first cousin, Guy de Saint-Exupery (son of Antoine's uncle Roger), who was one class ahead of him at Sainte Croix, claims that he spent hours trying to devise a stabilizer – which for a boy of ten is unbelievable. "His enthusiasm was inexhaustible. He used to show me his designs, launching into long explanations which meant nothing to me, but which left me spellbound by their impetuous assurance". (Saint-Exupery)

Throughout his life Saint-Exupery was demanding, immoderate, unsatisfied, never contented with things as they are. Even as a schoolboy he was constantly contriving ideas for any kinds of engines and mechanical things. He would sketch his inventions and would explain, and force his classmates to look, listen and admire, even though they would have much preferred to go on with the game the young inventor had interrupted. When they showed their annoyance, Antoine would flare up and sometimes use his fists. (Saint-Exupery)

Gaultier, who sat for two years on the same school bench, recalls him as "round-faced with a turned-up nose, smiling and at the same time surly, ill-combed; his hair in disorder, the stiff collar of his uniform and his tie as often as not askew – in a word, the untidy student who, like so many others, has ink-spots on his fingers." His schoolmates called him Tatane-derived phonetically from "Antoine" – a nickname he minded less than Pie-la-lune, later given to him for his upturning "sky-aimed" nose and the moonstruck reveries he could lapse into when daydreaming. (Saint-Exupery)

"He was a nice fellow, yes, liked by everybody, but not that much noticed among the rest. He was above all a dreamer. I remember him, chin in hand, gazing at the cherry tree beyond the window. We called him, Pique-la-Lune. I have the impression of someone modest, of someone who was original without being bookish. All of it mingled with occasional explosions of joy, of exuberance." (Saint-Exupery)

The classroom discipline was strict and he was regularly punished for his lackadaisical ways, the ink blotches on his fingers, his lack of concentration during study hall, and the unbelievable sloppiness of his desk, so crammed with books, notebooks, and assorted papers that the lid would scarcely shut. (Saint-Exupery)

I implore you with all my heart to persuade General Chassin to get me into a fighter squadron. I'm buried alive here, the atmosphere is unbearable. Good God, what are we waiting for! Don't see Daurat until you've tried everything else to get me into the fighters. If I don't get into the fighting, I'll have a breakdown. I have a lot to say about what's happening in this war, and I can say it only as a combattant, not as an onlooker. It's my only chance to express myself, as you know. (Saint-Exupery)

Sensual OE

In the case of sensual *overexcitability* the developmental tensions, i.e. internal and external difficulties, may push a given individual towards conflicts between his primitive sensual and sexual tendencies, and his sexual needs of higher level. This may take the form of hysterical conversion, localized neuroses, nervous stimulation, or sexual "frigidity" during intercourse. We may observe an excess of indirect sensual needs such as for touching as a way of compensating for the feeling of guilt related to sexual frigidity. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 79)

Sensual *overexcitability* is a function of a heightened experiencing of sensory pleasure. It manifests itself as need for comfort, luxury, esthetics, fashions, superficial relations with others, frequent changes of lovers, etc. as with the psychomotor form it also may, but, need not be, a manifestation of a transfer of emotional tension to sensual forms of expression of which the most common examples are overeating and excessive sexual stimulation. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 72)

In children sensual *overexcitability* manifests itself as a need for cuddling, kissing, clinging to mother's body, early heightened interest in sexual matters, showing off, and need to be with others all the time. (1996, p. 72)

[Level I] Sensualism in everyday contacts—"epidermal" attitudes of like and dislike, excessive kissing, caressing and hugging (children as well as adults), excessive eating, especially sweets, frequent nibbling, capriciousness in foods, laziness, frequent masturbation at the slightest stimulation. (1996, p. 75)

[Level II] Periods of some reflection resulting in certain amount of attenuation of primitive sensualism and sexualism. At times, through short-lived astonishment or disquietude in relation to one's sensuality, some inhibition. In sexual needs egocentrism begins to weaken and yields to some personal consideration for sexual partners. (1996, p. 75)

[Level III] Strong linkage of sensual *overexcitability* with emotional and imaginal. This leads to hierarchization of sensuality through inner conflicts, inhibition, greater control, critical self-evaluation and deepened syntony (i.e. greater empathy). There is growing introvertization. Inclinations toward demonstrativeness and exhibitionism become sublimated and refined. (1996, p. 75; Dąbrowski, 1977)

[Level IV] At this level sensuality never appears in isolated forms but is controlled and transformed by higher forms of *overexcitability*. This manifests itself in esthetic sensitivity, in responsiveness to the beauty of nature, in high level of dramatization such as perceiving movement and contrast in emotional attitudes and relationships—a sense of human drama, in the inclination for concreteness in relation to events, places, people and relationships. Sensual *overexcitability* adds to the warmth and cordiality in expressing empathy. (1996, p. 75; 1977)

Autosuggestibility often results in excessive self-admiration (especially in case of sensual *overexcitability*). (1996, p. 83)

Sensual *overexcitability* appears to be a function of heightened experiencing of sensory pleasure, which may be manifested as a need for comfort, luxury, stereotyped or refined beauty, fashions, varied sexual experiences, numerous but superficial relationships with others. Overeating or excessive sexual stimulation are the most common examples of transfer of emotional tension to sensual forms of expression. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 32)

Examples of Sensual OE from Dąbrowski & Piechowski (1996)

A happier remembrance was that of going to a show on Saturday afternoons and for some reason I can always remember seeing one with Elizabeth Taylor in it and I thought she must be one of the most beautiful women in the world. (Subject 1)

Success as far as money goes isn't in my personal value system for success doesn't include money. I want to have enough money that I can live and be able to buy what I need and live comfortably, not necessarily luxuriously, just comfortably. A lot of people tie the two together and say if you've got lots of money you're successful. I think that they're wrong and I think that they eventually find out they're wrong. I think a lot of people are really unhappy for it. (Subject 2)

My mother was not a warm person. Spontaneous hugs I cannot remember. She always kissed us good night, but I don't have pleasant memories about these good night kisses. (Subject 3)

The feelings I felt when I was a boarder, toward my family anyway, are hard to explain. When I was at school, I wished I was at home with my family. I wanted to have someone to tuck me away and give me a kiss before I went to bed at night. I still have no memories of anyone in my family from that time, but I thought I cared about them. Yet, when I was at home, I wished that I was back at College where everyone didn't treat me like a child. (Subject 4)

At night, I derived pleasure from laying on my back with a cloth handy, for use against investigation possibilities, and urination on my abdomen and letting it trickle and flow all over my flesh. I like it mainly because it felt warm. I would even go so far as to spread it all over my body, face included, with my hands. As if this isn't bad enough, one night I ejaculated, and the feeling derived the first time is one of sheer pleasure. (Subject 4)

This feeling pleased me, but I thought I had to urinate all over before I could do it. I did this every night for about six months before I learned from both personal experience and books on the subject how I could do it. Clarification: after the first few tries, I had got it down to being able to do it everytime I tried with the urine and all. The thing I liked about it is hard to explain. After a while a lot of the first pleasure I lost doing it every night and sometimes twice in the same night. (Subject 4)

It seemed to be a fun thing, and as I don't think I could ever go out and ball a chick, I just stayed around in my bedroom and masturbated. It probably also relates to the fact that I had to find another way of getting at my mother, as I will show you later. In any case, I continued doing it every day, twice a day more often than not wherever I could, be it in a bathroom at home or at school. Even downtown. (Subject 4)

One more thing – dreams I used to have, and daydreams I used to force myself to have around grade six, were falling down long tubes, half filled with urine, and landing in a big cavern where beautiful women in bikini and harem costumes would tie me up and bury me up to my neck in excrement (shit). Then they would go through erotic dances all around me, and sit on my head. There was always an eerie glow in the cavern and though I couldn't say for certain what color it was, I have always associated it, by the shades and the nature of the cavern as being orange, like a lava flow. This is possibly because of the excrement like nature of the lava flow you see in movies (which are a little too hot for the nature of my dream). (Subject 4)

Anyway, she is the first girl I have ever kissed, not passionately, but just a little smack on the lips. To use a modern expression, I was high for the next couple of days. (Subject 4)

We had petted and necked very heavily and had layed in bed together both in the nude and touched each other very dearly in all areas and I thought this meant a lot to me and to her but apparently it did not mean too much to her. (Subject 5)

One time, while the vacuum was on I crept to the kitchen and ate mandarin oranges, never stopping until the vacuum stopped, and then of course, it was too late. (Subject 6)

When I started school I remember having more fears. My mornings were difficult, for my clothes had to exert the same pressure on both sides of my body. One stocking had to be exactly as tight as the other, or I couldn't function. Dressing was a ritual for me, and an ordeal for my mother. (Subject 6)

Often I spent the extra time eating more than I needed, which led to a tendency to be overweight that took years to understand and partially control. (Subject 6)

What will remain of all I loved? I am thinking as much of customs, certain intonations that can never be replaced, a certain spiritual light. Of luncheons at a Provencal farm under the olive trees; but of Handel too. As for the material things, I don't care a damn if they survive or not. What I value is a certain arrangement of these things. Civilization is an invisible boon; it concerns not the things we see but the unseen bonds linking these together in one special way and not otherwise... (Saint-Exupery)

But oh, Leon Werth, I like to remember drinking a Pernod with you on the banks of the Saone, while biting into a sausage and a good loaf of country bread. When I recall that afternoon, I have a feeling of plenitude. No need to tell you, since you feel things as I do. I was very happy. I'd like to experience that whole afternoon again. Peace is not something abstract, nor is it the end of danger and cold, those things don't bother me. But peace – peace means contentedly eating bread and sausage with Leon Werth on the banks of the Saone. And I am sad when I think the sausage no longer has any taste... (Saint-Exupery)

At a younger age he was very fond of chocolate-covered truffles and would write detailed instructions to his mother what kind she should get him and in quantity. (Saint-Exupery)

He was affected by the colors around him. (Saint-Exupery)

He took special pleasure in occasions for refined meals. (Saint-Exupery)

In the luxury of his new room. (Saint-Exupery)

Intellectual OE

[Limited DP] In the case of enhanced intellectual *excitability* we observe excessive questioning, excessive analyzing, isolation, introvertization, weak emotional contact with the environment, in other words a marked asyntony. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 78)

In the case of intellectual *overexcitability* on this level we observe an "intrusion" of affective and imaginal tendencies into intellectual activities. The intellectual processes thus become more complex and enriched. In psychoneurotic processes there are perseverations as to the "negativity" of the intellect, fears of synthesis, search for synthesis, fears of intuition, and a need of intuition. There are obsessions of responsibility and obsessive fears of one-sidedness. (1972, p. 79)

Intellectual *overexcitability* in contrast to the first three does not distinctly manifest the transfer of emotional tension to intellectual activity under specific forms. This does not mean that intellectual and emotional processes of high intensity do not occur together. They do, but they do not appear to take on such distinct forms. Intellectual *overexcitability* is manifested as a drive to ask probing questions, avidity for knowledge, theoretical thinking, reverence for logic, preoccupation with theoretical problems, etc. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 72)

[Level I] Intellectual activity consists mainly of skillful manipulation of data and information ("a brain like a computer"). Intelligence rather than intellectual *overexcitability* serves as an instrument subservient to the dictates of primitive drives. (1996, p. 78)

[Level II] The functions of intelligence become uncertain and at times suspended by greater emotional needs. Internal opposition, ambivalences and ambtendencies create a fair chance of disconnection of the linkage between intelligence and primitive drives. This creates the possibility of incipient opposition against the ruling power of primitive instincts. Such an opposition, in the course of progressing development, creates the possibility of multilevel internal conflicts. We observe erudition which can be extensive and brilliant but without systematization and evaluation of knowledge, there is no felt necessity to penetrate into the meaning of knowledge, to analyze in order to uncover the "hidden order of things," or to arrive at a deeper synthesis. Exceptional abilities in many fields can be, nevertheless, one-sided. (1996, p. 78)

[Level III] Intellectual *overexcitability* intensifies the tendency toward inner conflicts and intensifies the activity of all dynamisms of spontaneous multilevel disintegration. It enhances the development of awareness and of self-awareness. It develops the need for finding the meaning of knowledge and of human experience. Conflict and cooperation with emotional *overexcitability*. Development of intuitive intelligence. (1996, p. 78)

[Level IV] Intellectual *overexcitability* in close linkage with emotional and imaginal operates in a united harmony of drives, emotions, and volition. The DDC is more closely unified with personality (the level of secondary integration). Intellectual interests are extensive, universal, and multilevel. Great deal of interest and effort in objectivization of the hierarchy of values. Inclinations toward synthesis. Intellectual-emotional and intellectual-emotional-imaginal linkages are the basis of highly creative intelligence. (1996, p. 78)

The functions of cognition are related to but different from the concept of intelligence. High intelligence can be totally divorced from other aspects of behavior. It is possible that this would apply only to convergent thinking but not to divergent thinking (Guilford, 1967), but it is also possible that divergent thinking may draw its strength from confined forms of imaginal *overexcitability* but none from higher emotions may be found to operate without contact with personality development. Intellectual *overexcitability* (p. 71 and 76) is a special endowment for development of active, penetrating, and creative cognition. (1996, p. 100; 1977)

Intellectual *overexcitability* is manifested in the persistence to ask probing questions, avidity for knowledge, analysis, theoretical thinking, reverence for logic, preoccupation with theoretical problems. Here are two examples: "The farthest back that I can remember was when I had my third birthday. I received a desk that day and learned to say 'three' instead of 'free'. I can still picture that scene in my mind." "I most like to concentrate on the 'why' of things instead of on the 'how' of things. Because of this I hope that I have some creativity within me." (Dąbrowski, 1977, pp. 32-33)

Examples of Intellectual OE from Dąbrowski & Piechowski (1996)

Who were these two people who were my parents? (Subject 3)

Most of my moments of great joy experiencing have been when another person, in an atmosphere of Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship, a love relationship on a very high and "complete" level, particularly over the last four years or so. (Subject 3)

I can remember when my grandfather was dying. I have no recollection of him before that, I was about five years old. I didn't know he was dying, and I was just snooping around the house. I came to a door which, as far as I knew, had always been closed for as long as I can remember. I opened the door, out of curiosity. The room was painted green and the shades were drawn. A little light was filtering in, but none from the door. There was a white bed in the far corner of the room. It seemed like a long way off, oddly enough, not only in distance. The distance was in actuality about seven or eight feet. But there was something still, utterly quiet and almost unsettling about the room. As though it were in an entirely different world. I looked on the bed, and there was an old man, balding, lying on it. He was lying on his back with the covers pulled up to his chest, but his back was held up by his pillow. His arms were lying, tight against his side, on top on the covers. The queerest thing about the whole place, was that everything was perfectly still. I felt puzzled, as I don't recall ever having seen this man before in my life. (Subject 4)

Another small memory is, one morning, when I was about four or five, I was afraid of the dark. I left my bedroom, it was about five o'clock in the morning, and made my way to my parents bedroom. I remember now why I was scared. I had seen a horror movie that day about this lady in some haunted castle. She woke up in the middle of the night, and all the empty suits or armor were plodding around. One tried to break into her bedroom. They were all moving slowly, and awkwardly, like robots. She avoided the one trying to get her, and ran into the hall. The armor that was there instantly noticed her and began moving toward her. She ran and hid in a vault, the door being of thick stone. The T.V. screen was black and silent, and then, a sound of armour on rock was heard, from inside the vault. My mother turned off the T.V. just then, as it was the first horror movie that I had ever seen in my life, and she was worried about me. I don't know how I felt. Anyway, when I went into my parent's bedroom that morning, I was scared. I wanted someone to protect me in case a suit of armour tried to break into my bedroom. (Subject 4)

I still went. I woke my mother and father and asked them if I could sleep with them. I remember that they had their arms around each other and smelled heavily of sweat. They weren't wearing pyjamas. (Note: interesting thing, and that will come later – I know it may seem like an unsavoury thought, but I just thought of it now – who knows to what depth teenager's mind may sink, and how innocent is the mind of a child). The aforementioned may not be the case, but anyway, my parents both told me to get the hell back to bed and quit bothering them. Then they both went back to sleep. I didn't know what to think, here I was, asking for protection, and they were refusing me. I felt hurt and annoyed. (Subject 4)

I had picked up a fair knowledge of history, I could recite the Gettysburg Address when I was in grade one. This I think stemmed from every kid's natural liking of war and action, mixed with my desire to be better than everyone else – I had to know. (Subject 4)

The more aggressive class was the French class, and this fact, coupled with the fact that I spent my nights making battle plans for the following day's snowball fights, always seemed to surpass the fighting skills, as well as the numbers (the English always outnumbered the French) of the English class. (Subject 4)

While I was racking my brain for some way of proving myself, it struck me that I could pass myself as a historical genius by memorizing a few little known facts. (Subject 4)

I went upstairs to the library, and drew out a book on the battle of Quebec, 1759. The battle for Quebec was fought on September 13 and I was ready for that day – I went around the College telling everyone I knew and didn't know, what anniversary it was that day. By the end of the day, my hopes had been realized. People were coming to me, even teachers, and asking what the anniversary was. I told them every detail, dates, times, casualty figures, tactics, political repercussions, everything. Everyone nodded in mute fascination, that a little grade seven could know so much. I was proud, fiercely proud of what I had done. I can think of no other time in my life when I was so proud and happy. (Subject 4)

Then it happened, the inevitable. Next morning, on my way to breakfast, several people stopped me and asked me what the anniversary was today. My heart sank. I scrambled through my brains, searching. Then I remembered. One of the generals of the aforementioned battle, Montcalm, had died the morning after I passed this out to content and appease their thirst for my knowledge, left my tray and ran as fast as I could, indeed I never recall ever running as fast, to the library where I spent the rest of the morning desperately searching for facts and dates. I memorized a few, and then returned for lunch prepared for the time being. (Subject 4)

I was a pretty calculating kid from there on, and I anticipated that soon people would begin asking me what happened on such and such a date. It was then that I resolved to learn everything there was to know about history, I dropped sports, friends, studies, everything, and spent all my time in the library. (Subject 4)

I learned quite a bit and in three months I was already more knowledgeable in most aspects of history (Social Studies) than most of the grade twelves. It gave me a great feeling of warmth and pride, though not condescension that I could know more than they. (Subject 4)

I am wondering if I am not endowing myself with powers of thinking and calculation, at least not conscious ones anyway, as regards how I regarded being considered a lower student when I first came to college. I believe now that up to a little while ago, I thought yes, but never really thought

about thinking, or never realized that I did think. I think it was more of an animal way of thinking, in that it was all for the moment. Maybe I am mistaken – I think not. (Subject 4)

I suppose one of the reasons for my blowing up was the fact that I knew I should have seen it moving that way as well as the fact that no one consulted me before-hand, which I thought of as being unjust, as I was most certainly involved, though only to a point. (Subject 4)

I think that the only reason the tables have been turned is due to a slight misinterpretation of what would ordinarily be quite an innocent statement. I was thinking faster than I was talking, I guess, because when I think of it as I am typing this out it seems to me that my father could not be so stupid as to say what he said in the context that I understood him in. Nor can I see how I could have come to the question which I thought he answered without having a long discussion, or without him giving the prepared answer. (Subject 4)

I must have asked why won't you take me in, when he turned to my mother and asked her if they should tell me the real reason. This would be fitting the role he was then playing as he would have been trying to put the blame on my mother. As it was, it backfired on him, and I accepted it as meaning that there was another reason behind the separation. (Subject 4)

All this time, I felt like a supersleuth, trying to get down to the root of a seemingly insolvable problem. I felt content with myself, and sort of let myself settle for a little while after I found out the truth. (Subject 4)

I keep telling myself that I should do something while at the same time arguing against it, while at the same time realizing that I am getting nowhere, while at the same time realizing that I don't want to go anywhere, while at the same time relating all these things together. It irritates me, in that I can seem to realize everything without getting anywhere, and that the realization itself prevents me. I find it difficult even to write this, and it irritates me even more that I cannot explain fully the feelings. (Subject 4)

Around the same time we were taking psychology and I fixed upon Positive disintegration as the reason for what was happening. Double think here again. I realized that I was probably developing but the fact that I realized it seemed to spoil it, while the realization of the two seemed to confuse me even more as to the use of realization, and what hope there was for me. (Subject 4)

But it was the fact that I thought about it, and reasoned it out that pushed further into a doubt about the validity of anything and everything, in that if I could reason everything, what true emotion could there possibly be. (Subject 4)

In this way, though I still care for her, I cannot admit loving her, because I have reasoned love out: doublethink again. If I know I don't love, yet inside really feel as though I do, how can I look at both and realize I do, without doing something about it. (Subject 4)

Another problem is that whatever I do, I criticize, and thus detract from whatever true feeling I might have. (Subject 4)

Whenever I think. I usually type it out, and then I ask someone what they think. I have only been doing this since the middle of February, and I like it because it pushes off some of the burden of doublethink, in that I don't have to keep following it around until it never stops, but I just give out the thought and forget about. (Subject 4)

The subject was: are emotions real or just taste buds for the brain. I had just had a fight with my mother, which is what prompted my writing. (Subject 4)

Whenever something happens, usually the whole class finds out the next day, because I tell them. I tell them my problems, if not my achievements, in complete honesty but this brings about a reversal in honesty. By being honest, I become dishonest because I just throw my problem around, and don't do anything about it. (Subject 4)

Problem 1) How can I begin to think positively, while still being able to look at all sides of the picture, as well as my motives and my aims? This problem brings up a lot of questions – Do I really care for my girlfriend, or am I just holding onto her to prove that I can feel, or that I am capable of love – Do I really love her? Does such a thing exist? Next, in relation to my friends. Do I really care about the friends I have at College, or is it just that I am nice to them so that they will be nice to me? What good am I doing by trying to analyse and review every situation, when I know that no matter what I see I will do nothing about it? What is the alternative? How do I progress? (Subject 4)

I quit going to church in grade seven, and though I honestly don't believe in him, the question is still there as to whether he exists or not. It never really bugged me, until February and March of this year. (Subject 4)

I went on a private expedition to wipe out any doubts that I had about him out of my mind. Of course I failed, because if there is a God, he is beyond the scope of reason anyway. The odd thing about it is that, while for two months I was discussing continually about God, all the reasoning in favor that was any good, came from me. To myself anyway, I built it up to the point where I could prove neither. (Subject 4)

Whenever there is something that should make me sad – I go into a discussion with myself – though I always win out "for" being sad – it takes me so long that by the time – I think it's too late. (Subject 4)

He was in a position of power in that unit because there was no one else who was above him that he didn't have under his thumb and he did not want to lose this to me who would not let him control me if I got my commission. So he rode me and convinced the officers of most of the corps that I was a troublemaker and should be kicked out but I kept my rank and corps association by joining another unit, that he had no influence in, as a medic. (Subject 5)

I have no one I can really talk to my own age group because they are not interested in the kind of talk that I like. I have never talked with kids my age because I have always been away for the summers except this last summer. I feel that I can get along better with adults than with kids my own age because I can talk on their level and they talk to me about things that interest me. I can talk to adults those who are older than me and my age group. But I have never formed friendships with adults because at times I feel like acting my own age. (Subject 5)

I then took Catholic conversion lessons but did not end up joining because of the infallibility of the pope and I do not think that any human being is infallible. (Subject 5)

I also get very mad at most of our youth today in that they want to destroy what we have as a society but they have not planned how to replace what they destroy and this is foolish because if they destroyed what we have without having something to replace it with we would be in complete confusion. I tried to tell some kids one day that before you destroy a system you have to look at all its good points and replace it with something that is at least equally as good. (Subject 5)

I have lots of inner conflicts. They confuse me a lot of times but I try to resolve them. Sometimes I am very disturbed by them and sometimes not. For example is sexual relationship out of marriage right or wrong. Or is sex just for the sake of sex and the need for it right? (Subject 5)

I argue with myself whether or not life is worth living or if life has any point to it. (Subject 5)

There was a boy on our street who seemed different than the other children. He was big, but he acted like a child. My parents cautioned us not to tease him, for he had had an accident, and he had a steel plate in his head. The leaden feeling settled in again and I asked many questions "What does a steel plate do? Is it heavy? How terrible!" (Subject 6)

The precariousness of life frightened me. Life seemed so fragile, so delicate. I tried to understand why we were born, if it was only to wait in agony for death. (Subject 6)

Another friend was struck down by spinal meningitis. He has died, said my mother. Teddy, why Teddy? What did he do? He was a nice boy, he just wanted to live. I thought of Teddy, gentle, kind Teddy, and, my mind filled with head. Teddy. Why Teddy? No answers that would satisfy. You could just be quietly living, and death could creep up on you and then you were gone. I couldn't accept it. Not for Teddy and not for me. I wanted to back time up so Teddy could make another move, escape those germs. (Subject 6)

I recall, when I was seven years old, my mother restricting my reading of *The Swiss Family Robinson* to thirty pages a day because I read books too quickly and she thought I was skipping pages. The restrictions seemed so unnecessary that I disregarded them, saying I was reading only thirty pages, but actually reading the book twice in the time allotted. (Subject 6)

My passion for books was never satisfied as we had no library in the small town, and the school library was very small. Consequently, I read *Anthony Adverse*. and *The Sun is my Undoing* before I was 12, followed shortly by Karl Marx's works. (Subject 6)

Although the first two books were forbidden to me, as soon as my parents went out, I read them! This crime added to my constant anxiety and compounded and confused my fears. Every time my name was spoken sharply, I thought I had been found out, and I would startle and tremble inside for a long time. (Subject 6)

If I add to this the fact that, while boosting him up on my sister's shoulders for a piggy back ride, I "accidentally" (deliberately) pushed him too hard causing him to go right over, and fall, cutting his face, I now see why I had such mixed up feelings. My real guilt was mixed up with my assumed guilt, and I felt responsible for everything that happened to him. (Subject 6)

Friends of our family lost a two-year old youngster. The man, who had always been stem and decisive, broke down completely. The woman, emotional, excitable, was strong. What was happening? Were we all the opposite of what we appeared to be? (Subject 6)

When I found myself in a situation that was painful, or boring, I did the same thing, and I began to wonder where "I" was. First I went through the process of wondering if "I" was located in my head or my heart. Then it extended to wondering if "I" was in my finger or my toe. I was convinced that I could be mutilated without damaging the real "me". Surely "I" was the "whatever it was" that hung in the corner of the room. Who then was that other person? (Subject 6)

I believe I have inherited a tendency towards manic-depression, which I have learned to control, to a large degree, by prevention. However, I suspect I will never be entirely free of this tendency. A sudden emotional shock over which I have no control triggers off the inner balance mechanism and I am fighting a downhill struggle. The best solution is to ride with the wave of depression. This I discovered after reading an analysis on how delicate seashells reach the shore of the ocean unbroken – riding with the wave being the secret. (Subject 6)

I used to long for certainty, absolutes. What a shock when I realized how superficial absolute values were, what a relief to find relativity of values. And then, again, lost! (Subject 6)

And what a pleasant surprise to find some certainty, some absoluteness right in the middle of the uncertainty, as relativity gave way to harmony with absolute structure – resembling, for me, all the possible variations on the seven note musical scale. (Subject 6)

"Antoine loved nature", Odette de Sinety recalls, "and he could spend minutes at a time watching a moth or a butterfly." (Saint-Exupery)

Of all the five children he was the most wild and fearless; it was he who directed the games, tyrannizing over the others, interrupting them whenever a new idea struck him, quarreling with his rebellious brother, Francois, keeping up the quarrel even during mealtimes, until he had won his point. (Saint-Exupery)

Saint-Exupery's interest in mechanical objects seems to have been aroused at a very early age, for his music teacher Anne Marie Poncet remembers him as being a bricoleur – a born tinkerer, fascinated by boilers and pistons. He would spend hours drawing diagrams of imaginary engines,

then pester the Cure, who had once taught mathematics, to find out if he thought they were all right. Still a child, he hooked up wires and boxes and built himself a rudimentary telephone. But his most ambitious "invention" was a flying machine he put together by stretching a pair of old sheets over a frame of bamboo strips, attached to the handlebars of his bicycle. (Saint-Exupery)

Wright's prestige was still close to its zenith when the young Antoine entered the College de Sainte-Croix, and we have Roger de Smety's word for it that he made several trips to the historic airstrip (now marked by a monument) at Auvours. His first cousin, Guy de Saint-Exupery (son of Antoine's uncle Roger), who was one class ahead of him at Sainte Croix, claims that he spent hours trying to devise a stabilizer – which for a boy of ten is unbelievable. "His enthusiasm was inexhaustible. He used to show me his designs, launching into long explanations which meant nothing to me, but which left me spellbound by their impetuous assurance". (Saint-Exupery)

Throughout his life Saint-Exupery was demanding, immoderate, unsatisfied, never contented with things as they are. Even as a schoolboy he was constantly contriving ideas for any kinds of engines and mechanical things. He would sketch his inventions and would explain, and force his classmates to look, listen and admire, even though they would have much preferred to go on with the game the young inventor had interrupted. When they showed their annoyance, Antoine would flare up and sometimes use his fists. (Saint-Exupery)

The classroom discipline was strict and he was regularly punished for his lackadaisical ways, the ink blotches on his fingers, his lack of concentration during study hall, and the unbelievable sloppiness of his desk, so crammed with books, notebooks, and assorted papers that the lid would scarcely shut. (Saint-Exupery)

I am quite proud of the success of my ideas on the education of thought. We accept everything but that. We learn to write, to sing, to speak well, to excite oneself emotionally but never to think! And we are led by words which mislead even the feelings. But I want education human not bookish. (Saint-Exupery)

We do not discover truth; we create it. The truth is what we express with clarity. (Saint-Exupery)

The creative truths are invisible. They are initially rejected then becoming established they cease to be evident: they become self evident. (Saint-Exupery)

"The truth is not that which is more or less demonstrated, but that which is more or less effective in its role of being real. In itself nothing is true or false." (Saint-Exupéry)

I am a fervent believer of the truth of poetry. (Eddington has helped me when he spoke of the different symbolic constellations). The poet is no more futile than the physicist. Both reexamine truth but those of the poet are more urgent since it is a matter of his proper conscience. (Saint-Exupéry)

"The great physician is not the one who discovers by reasoning a clever master key (pedagogic), which explains all the particular diseases. But he is rather one who has the intuition of the inner unity." (Saint-Exupéry)

Painlevé. I believe that sophism consists in saying: 'How can a sage of such stature and capable of such great synthesis involve himself in public life rather than close himself in his office? – but this is what it should be saying: 'It is because that man is universal, he does not shut himself in his office, but involving himself in public life he observes everywhere the structures – that he is capable of such great synthesis. (Saint-Exupéry)

What will remain of all I loved? I am thinking as much of customs, certain intonations that can never be replaced, a certain spiritual light. Of luncheons at a Provençal farm under the olive trees; but of Handel too. As for the material things, I don't care a damn if they survive or not. What I value is a certain arrangement of these things. Civilization is an invisible boon; it concerns not the things we see but the unseen bonds linking these together in one special way and not otherwise ... (Saint-Exupéry)

Thus, if a man pulled his house to pieces, with the design of understanding it all he would have before him heaps of bricks and stones and tiles; nor would he be able to discover therein the silence, the shadows, and the privacy they bestowed. (Saint-Exupéry)

Imaginational OE

We will now briefly discuss the phenomenon of "illusion" which we often encounter in nervous and psychoneurotic individuals. Illusion is a tendency to modify the perceived object. This tendency involves lively activity and even creativeness of imagination, it involves poetic and artistic conceptions, and even sometimes eidetic elements. This is a phenomenon very closely bound to imaginational *hyperexcitability*, and to aspirations for high development and modification of low unilevel reality. This is also connected with very strong emotional *hyperexcitability*, with poetic and elevated moods. (Dąbrowski, 1970, pp. 40-41)

In the case of predominance of imaginational *overexcitability* the psychoneurotic processes are also expressed in depression existential anxieties and obsessions, empathy, etc., but perhaps with lesser intensity of symptoms than in the case of emotional *overexcitability*. (1972, p. 81)

Imaginational *overexcitability* in its "pure" form manifests itself through association of images and impressions, inventiveness, use of image and metaphor in verbal expression, strong and sharp visualization. In its "impure" form emotional tension is transferred to dreams, nightmares, mixing of truth and fiction, fears of the unknown, etc. Imaginational *overexcitability* leads to an intense living in the world of fantasy, predilection for fairy and magic tales, poetic creations, or invention of fantastic stories. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 72)

[Level I] Imagination is in the service of sensualism and impulsiveness. It is manifested in confabulation, facile mendacity, identification with such externally defined roles as for instance, the office of the president or "I am the boss." It is also manifested in acting out such roles with theatrical gestures to enhance the effect. Mesmerism of rally and revival speakers belongs here as well. (1996, p. 77)

[Level II] Productive and seemingly fertile creativity, primitive suggestibility (magic, witchcraft, spiritism), success in acting on stage but not as the highest and universal art. Unselective taste for fantasy and adventure stories. Occasionally intense visions of the future, egocentric fantasy (self-delusion) and anxiety states. Frequent dreams and daydreaming, interest in dream symbolism, especially sexual. (1996, p. 77)

[Level III] Imaginational *overexcitability* becomes more closely associated with emotional and intellectual forms. There is differentiation of the "lower" from the "higher" in imagination and creativity. Dreams and symbolic contents are distinctly multilevel. Dreams and visions of the ideal. Creative instinct makes contact with the instinct of self-perfection. (1996, p. 77)

[Level IV] The multilevel characteristics of imaginal *overexcitability* described for level III become intensified at this level. They serve as tools of conscious development of personality; they become more fully engaged in the realization of transcendental needs. (1996, p. 77)

In its "pure" form, imaginal *overexcitability* manifests itself through association of images and impressions, inventiveness, use of image and metaphor in verbal expression, vivid and often animated visualization. In its less pure form, emotional tension is transferred to dreams, nightmares, mixing of truth and fiction, fears of the unknown, etc. Imaginal *overexcitability* leads to an intense living in the world of fantasy, predilection for fairy and magic tales, poetic creations, or invention of fantastic stories. One subject, asked about daydreams and fantasies gave this response: "I dream most of the time about situations involving myself and other people. I may know the people, know of them, or I may make them up." Note that here the stress on people is also a sign of emotional *overexcitability*. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 32)

Examples of Imaginal OE from Dąbrowski & Piechowski (1996)

I can always remember when going downstairs an eye looking at me from a shelf in the dark which I know today to have been a jar of onion pickles which only looked like an eye. I was always intrigued but never really afraid of this for some reason. (Subject1)

We had time for making up our own plays and perform these. This I loved immensely. My best performance was that of a witch in a fairy tale, a very wicked and evil witch. I did a very good job of it and took everyone by surprise with my performance. I enjoyed it tremendously. My whole personality was completely transformed into this wicked character, voice, mannerism, everything (I still could do it!). (Subject 3)

The atmosphere was so haunted, creepy sort of. (Subject 3)

I have had many dreams about my Jewish girlfriend who was led away to Germany. The theme of these dreams is somewhat like this: Hennie has returned. She hopes to find me. I know she had returned, but have lost her address or forgotten to look her up. I spent some time with her, but then I sort of drop her. She feels very alone back in Holland, needs a friend, but I no longer give her my friendship. I feel uneasy about it, but let it go at that. When I wake up after these dreams I always feel very disturbed and sometimes I have cried. (Subject 3)

A group of gentiles (non-Jews) lead me through a long and narrow corridor. I want to stall, escape, for I know I am being taken to the stake to be burned. I ask permission to go to the washroom, just stalling for time. (Subject 3)

I often went out by myself on my bike, almost as if wanting to stress this sense of aloneness. At the same time I then could enjoy deeply the places I rode through, and even now I can bring such places to my mind with ease: the city park full of melancholy on a fall afternoon at dusk, or a spot in the country on a very hot, perspiring hot day, sitting near one of the canals, or a small lake. (Subject 3)

Even during such moments I can remember to have experienced a deep sense of sadness, aloneness, while at the same time there was also the feeling of immense joy, a grateful sort of sensation for being me and having my experience live through me in such a vivid, intense kind of way. (Subject 3)

During that time I had once the following dream: the dream began with a large chess board. The board was the only image of the dream at that moment – or perhaps I myself was that chess board. Then one of the pieces – I think now that it was the knight – (which we call in our country "horse") appeared at the side of the board, growing larger and larger until it had covered the whole chess board, and then all was black, dark black. I then woke up and felt very upset and frightened, although I then did not understand the meaning of the dream. (Subject 3)

When playing chess as a child I was always very worried about the knight of the other player, nervous really. The moves of the knight, I then felt, were so unpredictable, and I always was relieved when I could eliminate these pieces from "the game". (Subject 3)

With high hopes, and again with immensely high expectations of making a great go of things, we moved into a small two room house. (Subject 3)

Slowly you begin to say: "Lay off the Goddess image." Slowly you begin to accept the anxiety phantom. Oh, yes, it still appears. Often in the early mornings, when four of the children have gone to school and then it's all there, staring at me. The work, more work. You don't know where to start, feel it as much more than you can manage. Then the shakiness in the stomach is back and you dawdle for a few minutes until you have gathered some courage and get to work, and eventually the phantom moves away. (Subject 3)

In the world of images. (Anxiety can overcome a person somewhat like a sudden fog. It slows one down, it makes it awkward to go about one's business normally. (Subject 3)

Or from a grassy area one suddenly steps out into a muddy day-like substance. Each step becomes more difficult, all becomes awkward. (Subject 3)

Or a steel reinforced brick wall. You are surrounded, can't escape, but there is a couch. How comfortable to lie down here and to go to sleep, to forget about the wall. (Subject 3)

Or like being caught in a room with creepy slimy green ghost-like whiny creatures, screaming at you-fear-fear-fear, coming closer and closer, all phantoms of course, but still... (Subject 3)

Strangely enough, I did not live these moments through totally. I experienced them more as an observer, and sometimes I sensed that my acting of being shocked, indignant, angry, were not completely genuine. I just could not grasp what was happening. I was bewildered, yes, but never truly felt deeply upset. In a poem I described myself once: ... the silent observer, And felt no pain. (Subject 3)

When I feel pressured and in need of a battery recharging I occasionally try to visualize that scene near the ocean. (Subject 3)

I like to see much contrast in art works, painting for instance, the light and the dark, the gay and the somber. Vincent Van Gogh's works appealed to me even when quite young. There is for instance the painting of the dark birds over the light wheat field. I could understand this painting already quite well when in my early teens. (Subject 3)

When I feel "low" I seldom would describe it as great sadness, rather call it feeling miserable. Sadness, great sadness, has a connotation of utter helplessness all being dark and no light to be seen anywhere. Sad is truly a darkish grey word. (Subject 3)

I suppose, so far, the best ones won and kicked the rest into some sloppy corner where they are still sitting looking on, licking their wounds probably. (Subject 3)

About the first thing that I can remember having done is splitting my brother's head open with a pocket watch. Every now and then I can visualize in my head a reproduction of the scene as seen through my eyes. I can see my brother advancing toward me, his hands are blurred so I don't know if he is carrying anything in them. I am caught in a corner of the house, outside. The sun is shining brightly time – late morning. We have just had a fight, and, true to my style, I have hit him good, and then run away, hoping that he'll calm down, before he gets a chance to pay me back. But, I ran to the wrong place. He is coming for me, but for all that I try, I do not know if he had anything in his hand. Anyway, I reach for a weapon, none around. I dig my hand in my pocket and there I feel, sweaty and smooth, my grandfather's pocketwatch. I grip it tight. (Subject 4)

My parents tell me that I threw the watch at my brother, hitting him in the head. I gave him twenty-three stitches. When my brother returned from the hospital, I can visualize this too, I was sitting in the kitchen. He walked in and sat down across the table from me. He just sat there staring. I bowed my head, not out of shame, but with a kind of "I wish I hadn't done it" feeling-I don't even know why I wish I hadn't done it, I just do. For me then, and even now, it doesn't seem like a question of guilt for having hurt him, but more of a feeling of uselessness and waste for what I had just done. (Subject 4)

I dreamt that I was all bundled up in a college football type fur coat, and sitting on top of a flagpole. The view that I would get was from the top, looking down at an angle towards the front of my head, but it was all distorted, as though looking through a closeup lens. That is, the area closest to me was overly large, while the perspective seemed to slip away too quickly and bent in towards the ground. I could not see the ground, it was black and blurred. I remember feeling confused and a little perturbed at the dream, because I didn't know what to think about it. Even today, if I'm not doing anything, it comes back to me, not as a dream but just as a memory. I still can't figure out what I was doing. (Subject 4)

I can remember when my grandfather was dying. I have no recollection of him before that, I was about five years old. I didn't know he was dying, and I was just snooping around the house. I came to a door which, as far as I knew, had always been closed for as long as I can remember. I opened the door, out of curiosity. The room was painted green and the shades were drawn. A little light was filtering in, but none from the door. There was a white bed in the far corner of the room. It seemed like a long way off, oddly enough, not only in distance. The distance was in actuality about seven or eight feet. But there was something still, utterly quiet and almost unsettling about the room. As though it were in an entirely different world. I looked on the bed, and there was an old man, balding, lying on it. He was lying on his back with the covers pulled up to his chest, but his back was held up by his pillow. His arms were lying, tight against his side, on top on the covers. The queerest thing about the whole place, was that everything was perfectly still. I felt puzzled, as I don't recall ever having seen this man before in my life. (Subject 4)

Another small memory is, one morning, when I was about four or five, I was afraid of the dark. I left my bedroom, it was about five o'clock in the morning, and made my way to my parents bedroom. I remember now why I was scared. I had seen a horror movie that day about this lady in some haunted castle. She woke up in the middle of the night, and all the empty suits or armor were plodding around. One tried to break into her bedroom. They were all moving slowly, and awkwardly, like robots. She avoided the one trying to get her, and ran into the hall. The armor that was there instantly noticed her and began moving toward her. She ran and hid in a vault, the door being of thick stone. The T.V. screen was black and silent, and then, a sound of armour on rock was heard, from inside the vault. My mother turned off the T.V. just then, as it was the first horror movie that I had ever seen in my life, and she was worried about me. I don't know how I felt. Anyway, when I went into my parent's bedroom that morning, I was scared. I wanted someone to protect me in case a suit of armour tried to break into my bedroom. (Subject 4)

Before going though, I had thought a bit on how I was going to kill them if they did. I was going to use my superhuman strength, my parents always told me I was a strong tough kid. (Subject 4)

I went back to my own bed and spent the next few conscious minutes planning to sock the head off the first suit of armour to walk through the door, and to finish off the others in like fashion. (Subject 4)

Suddenly, my mother walked out of the back yard dragging the dog, who apparently didn't want to go, and led him across the street to two people who were standing near a car. I can remember the model too. It was a 1958 Ford. My mother handed the leash to the woman, who led the dog into the car. The two people, whose faces I can never picture, but that just seemed to have smooth skin instead of facial features, got in the car and drove off. (Subject 4)

The more aggressive class was the French class, and this fact, coupled with the fact that I spent my nights making battle plans for the following day's snowball fights, always seemed to surpass the fighting skills, as well as the numbers (the English always outnumbered the French) of the English class. (Subject 4)

I was always trying to be nice to the teachers too. I always tried to be nice, friendly and helpful. In grade two, my teacher trusted me enough to leave me in charge of a class while she went out. I took down the names of everyone who so much as inhaled too deeply, and then went around collecting bribes to take the names off the list. (Subject 4)

I began to have delusions about myself from movies that I had seen on T.V., where the children try to bring the family together again, and invariably succeed. It may sound little sick, but I began to think of myself as a martyr. (Subject 4)

One more thing-dreams I used to have, and daydreams I used to force myself to have around grade six, were falling down long tubes, half filled with urine, and landing in a big cavern where beautiful women in bikini and harem costumes would tie me up and bury me up to my neck in excrement (shit). Then they would go through erotic dances all around me, and sit on my head. There was always an eerie glow in the cavern and though I couldn't say for certain what color it was, I have always associated it, by the shades and the nature of the cavern as being orange, like a lava flow. This is possibly because of the excrement like nature of the lava flow you see in movies (which are a little too hot for the nature of my dream). (Subject 4)

I had a racing bike (still do), so I went on cycling excursions to Dyment and Wabigoon. Something I was ashamed to tell anyone though is that I never really cycled to those places at all. I would just go out onto the highway till I came to the nearest town, and then get onto a train for wherever I had said I was going. (Subject 4)

I am accredited with having cycled to Wabigoon in one day. I could have done it too, make no mistake about that, I was in excellent physical condition, had very powerful lungs and legs, and to this day, though I didn't do it, the distance I did go, in the time it took me are good enough for me that I could have done it. Whether this is false pride or not, I really do know that I could have. That is important to me. (Subject 4)

It didn't matter how much I lied about my achievements, all that mattered was that people believe me, I would even get mad if they doubted what I said. (Subject 4)

For the first few weeks, I could think of no one else, and it stayed like that until I thought it must seem like a comic book type romance. (Subject 4)

She had told me the week before about some boy who was always beating her at school. Then we had a date for a basketball game at her school, it suddenly occurred to me that the guy would be there, and that he might try something. I got together with some friends, and practiced all the fighting skills I could remember when I had taken Karate. I even had my strategy all planned out, so as to lure him into an open position for a series and combination of Karate, Kung-Fu and Judo holds that would have had the guy down in a few seconds. I should explain. The guy is six foot two, and built like a football player. (Subject 4)

Anyway, she is the first girl I have ever kissed, not passionately, but just a little smack on the lips. To use a modern expression, I was high for the next couple of days. (Subject 4)

A dream I had about a week ago-I'm not even sure if it was a dream, but I had just woken up, hardly awake, when I fell back to sleep for a few seconds. Actually, I'm not sure how long it was but it seemed extremely short. Anyway, I went through about two periods of my classes, as though it was real life, and everyone I would put a little trust in, would betray me, I even forget how, but even the person I probably trust the most at College, my English, Lit., Social, Psychology teacher betrayed me. I was horrified at the moment, but I still kept trusting people, and still kept getting stepped on. It was all very real. (Subject 4)

I suddenly got mad at myself-maybe I wrote my anger to sound interesting-or to sound sane to the reader. Either way-I don't know. I often have dreams of dying-cycling on my bike-breaks don't work-I fly over the handlebars and impale myself on a picket fence. (Subject 4)

I have 4 personalities-at home-at school-with strangers-with myself-I have several "Avalon Hill Battle Games"-seeing as I know of no one (which is a lie) who would like to play them-I play alone-I develop another personality for when I play the enemy's play (turn). This person (myself) being the enemy is completely evil-he is formless, black and heaven knows what all. Often when I am tired, he seems to come back to me-haunts me-try to take over until only by a conscious and hardfought struggle I win (Do I)? Who wins these struggles? -Me or me and how do I tell who wins-I am never so frightened as when I fight "Him"-it scares the hell out of me. (Subject 4)

I remember that I was afraid of the dark and that one night my aunt was babysitting us and I wanted the light on in my room that night and she locked me in our cellar in the dark. I hated her for it and remember being very frightened. (Subject 5)

I remember my father when I was young being a cruel, drunken bum who cheated on my mother, beat us kids and hurt my mother and made her cry. I remember once my father came home and had a fight with my mother and he kicked her across the legs with his shoes and made her legs all black and blue. I remember my father as always hitting my mother. (Subject 5)

I have not gone out with another girl since I broke up with the other girl. I often dream that I marry this girl and that she puts me down and ends up breaking up with me. (Subject 5)

I have ideas which I am not sure would work but I sure would like to give them a try. Ideas such as if I had the backing to buy out a number of business and run them strickly at cost so as there was only enough to keep in business but with the idea of lowering the total prices of material in the country. I would like to see the government of the country take over more control of the business of the country and run them so that the profits stayed in Canada as a first step to enable us to be in a position to help other countries. (Subject 5)

I did phone the suicide bureau that night and they had me talk to a person from the Salvation Army but he was the soap opera type and I didn't feel like talking to him. Not saying that he may not have done some good for someone else but he could not help me. (Subject 5)

I was really sad today when I read in the newspaper of a boy who was burned to death with people standing around who could do nothing about it. (Subject 5)

Utopia is like an ideal to me. I would like in some way to make my life useful to others and do things for the gratification of knowing myself that in some way I have made someone's life better or happier for them. (Subject 5)

I respected and feared the water, and was terrified of the cliff. (Subject 6)

The sight of the angry lake filled me with dread. I could see nothing but anger and doom in that black water. (Subject 6)

One day I saw that young man riding down the hill, smiling so happily like a child, his white shirt billowing out behind him, like a sail. My breath caught in my throat, for his white shirt and his smiling face, were so "impossible" when he was doomed by a steel plate in his head. (Subject 6)

Fear was my constant companion, and I imagined small incidents into big ones. There was a tone sounded on the radio to signal the beginning of a certain program. It seemed furtive and menacing. (Subject 6)

I had dreamed that our house was on fire, and, when I wakened, the image remained, although there was no fire. I was panic-stricken, and could even after, bring that scene clearly to my mind. (Subject 6)

When I came home from school, the washing machine was on, and the swish-swish of the clothes in the water seemed to be saying "You can do better – you can do better." Even when I covered my ears, the machine hounded me. (Subject 6)

There was a fire escape at school, a metal cylinder with slide inside. In case of fire, students were to ride down this slide. Now I had added worries. The thought of going down that slide filled me with terror. I was in a classroom on the first floor and it was unlikely I would have to go down that slide, but I lived in fear of being sent upstairs to the principal's office in case a fire broke out while I was there. (Subject 6)

I regarded bodily injury with a fear bordering on panic – my sister gave herself a nosebleed with a baseball bat swung too enthusiastically and everyone on the street thought that I had been injured, as I did all the crying. (Subject 6)

A boy in my classroom broke his leg that year (Grade I), and when I heard this, I ran home crying and couldn't be consoled, no matter how much I was comforted. Later, when Bobby returned to school, I was overjoyed to see he still had his leg for I thought it had broken right off. My relief was so great, that I felt ecstatic. (Subject 6)

One incident regarding my dominating other children remains active in my memory. There were two children across the street whom I envied because they looked so serene. In an effort to upset them, I shouted to them to run for their lives, that the plane flying overhead was a German plane and we would all be killed. They ran, screaming to their mother. (Subject 6)

Around 8 years of age I engaged in such silly activities as crushing colored glass into a tin can and burying it in the swamp in the fall of the year. During the following spring, I would dig it up and, very excited about my treasure, hurry home with an exaggerated tale of daring and danger. (Subject 6)

The more my mother frowned, the more I exaggerated until I got so I couldn't recall myself what was truth and what was fiction. That frightened me, and I would resolve never to enlarge a story again until the next time. (Subject 6)

Even a minor accident, in which he slipped on the stairs and knocked himself out, left a picture of his limp little body that is burned into my brain. If I think about it, it comes clearly and can still upset me. (Subject 6)

In one case, after being cautioned to watch him (he was two, and I was nine) while my parents had a nap, I didn't watch him closely enough and he pulled out the stick holding up a window. The window came down forcibly, severing the end of his middle finger. I will never forget my frantic parents, my father with bare chest, holding my brother, his hand bleeding. My mother found the end of his finger. I couldn't bear their agony. No one punished me or even looked angrily at me. It was a house full of pain. (Subject 6)

At about this time (10 years) I began to write poetry, pouring my heart into poems of tragedy and love, with no moderation. Life, in those poems, was either very ecstatic or very tragic. (Subject 6)

She went in and found the remaining four members of the family, the parents and two teen-age children, lying on the bed, holding each other, and crying. I never forgot that. It haunted me day and night. I almost wished we had a tragedy that would allow us, as a family, to hold each other close. (Subject 6)

People who are unhappy attaching themselves to powerful people, like barnacles to a ship, and then being shocked and angry when the ship sinks. (Subject 6)

When I regained consciousness after a week in a coma, many flowers surrounded my bed. At first I thought I was dead. Then I saw a single rose. It had just been brought in from outdoors, and was covered with dew. It was quivering with life, and life became for me, not the rose, but the dew it exuded. I knew that life was not me, my body, but the energy it generated. I was merely a sponge. My choice would be to soak up precious life moisture, selfishly, or squeeze it out to aid others. (Subject 6)

My constant companion. It comes ever closer as my joy increases for when I realize fully how fortunate I am to have an opportunity to live, all that is directly opposite also stands out very clearly, skeletal, sharply outlined, cadaverous. (Subject 6)

And what a pleasant surprise to find some certainty, some absoluteness right in the middle of the uncertainty, as relativity gave way to harmony with absolute structure – resembling, for me, all the possible variations on the seven note musical scale. (Subject 6)

The five-year-old boy, so golden haired that he was sometimes called "le roi soleil," laboriously dragging around a tiny green satined armchair, so that he could sit down by his mother's side the moment she found a seat. "Maman, Maman, racontez-moi une histoire." and the harried mother would find herself obliged for the twentieth time, to repeat the story of Joseph and his Brothers or of Rebecca and the Well. (Saint-Exupery)

He would open the casket and say to his mother or his nurse, "Madame, here are the chests where I have laid the dying sunsets to rest." (Saint-Exupery)

"Tell me Paula", the little Antoine would say to their Tyrolean governess, "what was it like when you were a bear?" (Saint-Exupery)

He had a great intensity of feeling for all animal life. He would never dream of killing an animal, and if he saw a bird hopping about, he would say, "Now what do you suppose he's thinking about right now?" (Saint-Exupery)

Of the great pleasures of his childhood was the adoption and loving care of animals. He raised white rats, a salamander and birds which, to his great despair died one by one. He also had a Russian rabbit for which he had constructed a tiny straw house complete with bedroom and dining room. "On the ground floor of our house in the country – which was big – there was a hall that seemed immense ... I had always been afraid of that hall, perhaps because of the feeble light of the lamp that hung in the middle of it and scarcely drew it forth from the darkness...The hall was panelled high up, and the panelling creaked, which was another reason for my fear. (Saint-Exupery)

"The creaking of the panelling was the first warning I received of heavenly anger. I could see in the shadow the great reproving panels. Not daring to explore further, I climbed up on a console table, and there, resting against the wall and letting my legs hang, I sat with beating heart like every shipwrecked sailor before me on his reef in midsea. (Saint-Exupery)

Learning that his name too was antoine, the engine driver agreed to let the four-year-old boy ride with him in the locomotive cab. For days thereafter every scrap of cardboard in the Chateau de la

Mole became a train. This discovery of the marvels of modern locomotion was quickly followed by another, and the next year every rock around the chateau was transformed into an automobile, which Antoine straddled as though he were riding a horse. (Saint-Exupéry)

Saint-Exupéry's interest in mechanical objects seems to have been aroused at a very early age, for his music teacher Anne Marie Poncet remembers him as being a bricoleur – a born tinkerer, fascinated by boilers and pistons. He would spend hours drawing diagrams of imaginary engines, then pester the Cure, who had once taught mathematics, to find out if he thought they were all right. Still a child, he hooked up wires and boxes and built himself a rudimentary telephone. But his most ambitious "invention" was a flying machine he put together by stretching a pair of old sheets over a frame of bamboo strips, attached to the handlebars of his bicycle. (Saint-Exupéry)

According to his sister Simone, he was always drawing plans for motors and mechanical inventions which he insisted on showing to other children, much to their annoyance. Heartbroken by their indifference he insisted so strenuously that they finally listened. Invention gushed from him like a boiling spring. This is a motor, that is a telephone, this is a locomotive, that is an airplane, mounted on a bicycle. "And when I shall fly away on my new machine, the entire crowd will cry: Long live Antoine de Saint-Exupéry". (Saint-Exupéry)

Gaultier, who sat for two years on the same school bench, recalls him as "round-faced with a turned-up nose, smiling and at the same time surly, ill-combed; his hair in disorder, the stiff collar of his uniform and his tie as often as not askew – in a word, the untidy student who, like so many others, has ink-spots on his fingers." His schoolmates called him Tatane-derived phonetically from "Antoine" – a nickname he minded less than Pie-la-lune, later given to him for his upturning "sky-aimed" nose and the moonstruck reveries he could lapse into when daydreaming. (Saint-Exupéry)

"He was a nice fellow, yes, liked by everybody, but not that much noticed among the rest. He was above all a dreamer. I remember him, chin in hand, gazing at the cherry tree beyond the window. We called him, Pique-la-Lune. I have the impression of someone modest, of someone who was original without being bookish. All of it mingled with occasional explosions of joy, of exuberance." (Saint-Exupéry)

The classroom discipline was strict and he was regularly punished for his lackadaisical ways, the ink blotches on his fingers, his lack of concentration during study hall, and the unbelievable sloppiness of his desk, so crammed with books, notebooks, and assorted papers that the lid would scarcely shut. (Saint-Exupéry)

Night fell and the flames rose. Prayerfully we watched our mute and radiant fanion mount resplendent into the night. As I looked I said to myself that this message was not only a cry for help, it was fraught also with a great deal of love. We were begging water, but we were also begging the communion of human society. Only man can create fire: let another flame light up the night: let man answer man! (Saint-Exupery)

I was haunted by a vision of my wife's eyes under the halo of her hat. On her face I could see only the eyes, questioning me, looking at me yearningly. I am answering, answering with all my strength! What flame could leap higher than this that darts up into the night from my heart? (Saint-Exupery)

One cannot buy the friendship . . . of a companion to whom one is bound forever by ordeals suffered in common. There is no buying the night flight with its hundred thousand stars, its serenity, its few hours of sovereignty. It is not money that can procure for us that new vision of the world won through hardship those trees, flowers, women, those treasures made fresh by the dew and color of life which the dawn restores to us, this concert of little things that sustain us and constitute our compensation. (Saint-Exupery)

Emotional OE

We shall pass now to a large chapter of self-mutilation in connection with the feeling of guilt and the need for purification by punishment. In emotionally *overexcitable*, inadequately reacting individuals, harm to someone often results from excessive sensitiveness, lack of control, misunderstood reproaches, or misjudged relationships. Anxiety, and a difficulty in making decisions, does not allow him to admit the guilt and to explain the misunderstanding. Therefore, self-mutilation (and atonement for sins) becomes the easiest way of purification to free oneself from the strong mental tension. (Dąbrowski, 1937, p. 23)

Special sources in a particular phase of the development of asceticism are found in the Hindus. The Hindus are described as mild, cold, and passive. As a matter of fact, in the majority of cases they are nervous, emotionally and sexually *overexcitable*, and frequently impulsive. The mildness, calmness, and passivity is to a great extent the result of a turbulent mode of living and of a training and a philosophy of life grown out of experience and suffering. India was a country which afforded an abundance of such experiences: misery, starvation, malaria, and earthquake mercilessly sweeping away each year thousands of people, numerous victims of venomous snakes, the striking and humiliating antagonism of the castes (hunger of pariahs and their pitiful treatment in contrast with the wealth and power of the princes). (1937, p. 36)

Individuals whose lives are predominantly inner, introverts and schizoids, have ordinarily little emotional plasticity. Their emotional relationship with others is usually very deep and thus their disappointment and disillusionment more easily destroy their mental unity. Emotional *overexcitability*, ambition, and self-consciousness are the factors which prevent them from occupying themselves in the daily tasks because they brood over their mistakes. An unbearable state is created not only because the given individual has lost, for instance, a person with whom he was strongly connected emotionally but also because he himself has made such a mistake that the object of the emotion was not in keeping with an emotion of high moral value. In such a state, aversion and hatred may be turned against oneself as the cause of these mistakes. Sometimes psychic injury has such a force that it irreparably destroys the mental integrity. Emotionally *overexcitable* individuals, unable to create a philosophy explaining their past sufferings, often end by suicide. The impulse of self-destruction may begin with physical or psychical self-mutilation and end in suicide. (1937, p. 47)

Self-mutilation produces similar traits in emotionally *hyperexcitable* individuals through distressing experiences, submission to pessimistic moods, meditation about death and the uselessness of life, etc. The early creation in the child of an ability to form wider association and the formation of an inclination in a definite direction, depending on his interests and capacities, would be valuable in weakening the tendency towards an exclusively inner life and strengthening

the life in the family group. In such people, the formation of an active basis for life and of a faculty to fight the evil in himself and others is possible. (1937, p. 96)

In the conclusion of our deliberation we gain the conviction that voluntary and non-pathological forms of self-mutilation, useful for self-control and the harmonization into a higher type of personality, are a very important mechanism of self-education, of the completion of sublimation of a way to a philosophy of life, based on the ennobling value of suffering. In emotionally *overexcitable*, introverted individuals, this is one of the noblest forms of adaptation to life after having experienced hardships, an expression of the protest against injury, suffering, and death. (1937, p. 101)

This kind of excitability is characterized by a far wider broadening of the affective sphere than the sensual, imaginal, and psychomotor. Affectively *superexcitable* individual is characterized by an ability to react affectively in response to stimuli acting on a different area and a tendency toward augmented affective reactions much stronger than the affective stimuli. (Dąbrowski, 1938, p. 13)

In individuals with emotional *superexcitability* we see an early awakening of affective life. Affective children show very early attachment to those closest to them and exclusivity toward them, but dislike toward strangers. And further, tendency to cry, be envious, and at times be angry. Early attachments of an exclusive character are not sexually based, but rather stem from character and express the need to find security, defense. Such children usually have a difficult time adjusting to situations outside the family. The first months of school, and even preschool create for the child very many strong experiences. Above all, as a consequence of receiving an overload of impressions when discharge is made difficult and in face of strong tendency toward being touchy and resentful, in such children we encounter loss of appetite, insomnia, strong agitation. (1938, pp. 13-14)

Adolescence is usually delayed; *overexcitable* types are characterized by a prolonged period of dreaming, infantile symptoms. On the one hand, in social contacts and among friends there is shamefulness, and on the other hand too great a trust, excessive exclusivity, lack of selectivity and the principle "this or no other." Fearfulness expresses itself in social contacts by embarrassment in dancing, talking. There is an inability to compete for a person, who has become the object of one's affection, inability to assert oneself and fight, but frequently courage and great ability to protect and surround with care the person one is close to. A normal level of intelligence combined with affective *overexcitability* produces touchiness and resenting that increases as a result of life experiences, steers toward excessive self-analysis, reverie, meditation, flight from social contacts. Hence we often observe in this type of individual isolation from the

group, inclination toward solitariness. Not infrequently, these tendencies move the individual on a path beneficial for mental health, that is toward flight into nature. (1938, p. 14)

Taking into account the strength of emotional reactions and especially their duration, we distinguish two main types of affective excitability. An individual of one type reacts quickly to an irritating stimulus, shows weak brakes and is affectively explosive that puts him in close connection with the type of psychomotor *overexcitability*. An individual of the second type reacts equally strongly, but the reaction lasts much longer, extends over days, and sometimes over weeks and months, and bores a lasting, deep trace. The first is usually an extrovert, the second an introvert. (1938, p. 14)

The so-called psychopathological symptoms—delusions, anxiety, phobias, depression, feelings of strangeness of oneself, emotional *overexcitability*, etc.—should not be generally or superficially classified as symptoms of mental disorder and disease since the further development of individuals manifesting them will often prove their positive role in development. (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 103)

We see in this case a fairly early stage of positive disintegration with emotional *overexcitability*, ambivalences, and the initial formation of the psychic internal environment. There is the gradual construction of the disposing and directing center, hindered by the child's inhibition but supported by her determination to handle new situations despite anxiety, her strong feeling of obligation, and her ambitions. This conflict, increased by her need to meet a new situation, presents a crisis in development. (Dąbrowski, 1967, p. 197)

In the case of emotional (affective) *overexcitability* we observe emotional crises with not much awareness, inhibitions or aggressions, primitive fearfulness. We observe also phobias, affective perseverations, hypochondriacal and neurasthenic reactions. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 78)

Enhanced emotional *overexcitability* takes the expression of a need for humility, asceticism, depressions, existential anxieties, affective obsessions in relation to responsibilities. (1972, p. 80)

In introverted thinking types the loss of equilibrium is expressed in a warfare of opposing tendencies: absoluteness and inconsiderateness in: relation to others on the one hand, and on the other – fears and affective *overexcitability*. In introverted feeling types we encounter as the most severe disorder neurasthenia as a consequence of a conflict between excess of affect and intellectual needs (on the one hand fearfulness and inhibition, on the other creation of systems of thought, tendency toward polemic and argumentation). Both irrational introvert types (intuitive

and sensing) as their typical disorder develop perseverations, of images and thoughts as a reaction to their extreme ability for perception and fantasy. (1972, p. 237)

Psychoneurotic processes stemming from emotional *overexcitability* take the form of depressions related to feelings of inferiority, of shame and guilt, fears of responsibility, fears of death. Suicidal tendencies and suicides are not infrequent. Psychoneuroses based on enhanced excitability of imagination are often characterized by deficiency of the reality function on a low level (everyday needs and occupations) but its strength on a higher level (life of inspiration, ideas, creativity and experience of other dimensions of reality), imaginal obsessions, richness of dreams, ideas, inventions, creativity, which in the eyes of others usually have an "unreal" character. (1972, p. 79)

We may take hysteria as another example. On the lowest levels it exhibits symptoms of characterological disturbances, overactive playing of a role, self-demonstration, pathological lying and tendencies to swindle, etc. On a higher level of hysteria we have somatopsychic disturbances with hysterical conversion and such symptoms as hysterical paralysis, hysterical anesthesia of certain parts of the body, uncontrolled emotional outbursts, etc. On the highest level of hysteria we have emotional *overexcitability*, with overactive playing of a role on a high level, with empathy, universal and deep identification, with the tendency to contemplation and ecstasy. The characteristic symptoms of hysteria of this level can be found in many saints. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 160)

Emotional *overexcitability* is a function of experiencing emotional relationships. The relationships can manifest themselves as strong attachment to persons, living things, or places. From the developmental point of view presented here intensity of feelings and display of emotions alone are not developmentally significant unless the experiential aspect of relationship is present. This distinction is very important. For example, when a child is refused candy he may throw a temper tantrum just to show his anger. Or, he may go away sad thinking he is not loved. (Dąbrowski, 1996, pp. 72-73)

In the first case we have a display of emotion alone, in the second a relationship. The manifestations of emotional *overexcitability* include inhibition (timidity and shyness), excitation (enthusiasm), strong affective memory, concern with death, fears, anxieties, depressions, feelings of loneliness, need for security, concern for others, exclusive relationships, difficulties of adjustment in new environments, etc. Relationships of friendship and love are developed usually with very few persons, or only one person. For an "emotional" person as defined here such exclusive relationships often are the only source of meaning in life. (1996, p. 73)

The functions described in this chapter are, at higher levels of development, derivatives of emotional *overexcitability*. This is particularly true of high capacity for enthusiasm, emotional ties, low threshold of frustration, loneliness, awareness of death and of its interpersonal consequences. (1996, p. 110)

Intensified experiencing of exclusive relationships of love and friendship is the quintessence of highly developed emotional *overexcitability*. Feelings of loneliness, suicidal thoughts, existential anxieties, and anxieties over death of others are its frequent manifestations along with the joy and love generated in intimate relationships. (1996, p. 110)

For example, a person of high level of emotional *overexcitability* displays a great deal of inner psychic transformation, a rich hierarchical inner psychic milieu and strong control by inhibition. Such a person is sensitive. A person of low level of emotional *overexcitability* will be distinctly irritable and insensitive to others, egocentric, poorly reflective, of little insight and empathy. His inner psychic milieu will be ahierarchical. (1996, p. 74; Dąbrowski, 1977)

[Level I] Aggressiveness, irritability, lack of inhibition, lack of control, envy, unreflective. Periods of isolation, or an incessant need for tenderness and attention, which can be observed, for instance, in mentally retarded children. (1996, p. 76)

[Level II] Fluctuations, sometimes extreme, between inhibition and excitation, approach and avoidance, high tension and relaxation or depression, syntony and asyntony, feelings of inferiority and superiority. These are different forms of ambivalence and ambivalence. (1996, p. 76)

[Level III] Interiorization of conflicts, differentiation of a hierarchy of feelings, growth of exclusivity of feelings and indissoluble relationships of friendship and love. Emotional *overexcitability* appears in a broader union with intellectual and imaginal overexcitability in the process of working out and organizing one's own emotional development. The dynamisms of spontaneous multilevel disintegration are primarily the product of emotional overexcitability. (1996, pp. 76-77)

[Level IV] Emotional *overexcitability* in association with other forms becomes the dominant dimension of development. It gives rise to states of elevated consciousness and profound empathy, depth and exclusivity of relationships of love and friendship. There is a sense of transcending and resolving of one's personal experiences in a more universal context. (1996, p. 77)

Emotional *overexcitability* is a function of experiencing emotional relationships. The relationships can manifest as strong attachment to persons, living things, or places. From the point of view presented here, intensity of feelings and display of emotions alone are not developmentally significant unless the experiential aspect of relationship is present. This distinction is very important. For example, when a child is refused candy, he may throw a temper tantrum to show his anger. Or he may go away sad, thinking he is not loved. In the first case, we have only a display of emotion and, perhaps, an object relationship, in the second, a human relationship. The manifestations of emotional *overexcitability* include inhibition (timidity and shyness), excitation (enthusiasm), concern with death, strong memory of feelings (affective memory), fears, anxieties, depressions, feelings of loneliness, need for security, concern for others, exclusive relationships, difficulties of adjustment to new environments. Relationships of friendship and love are developed with usually very few persons or only one. For an "emotional" person, as defined here such exclusive relationships may be the only source of meaning in life. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 33)

Intensified experiencing of exclusive relationships of love and friendship is the quintessence of highly developed emotional *overexcitability*. Feelings of loneliness, suicidal thoughts, existential anxieties, and anxieties over death of others are its frequent manifestations along with the joy and love generated in intimate relationships. Two of the functions described here serve as verbal stimuli: Solitude and Loneliness, and Suicide. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 162)

Examples of Emotional OE from Dąbrowski & Piechowski (1996)

After Grade 8 I went to town for Grade 9 and that was really good but I got really homesick. It was really good getting out to something different and I came back home for Grade 10 and took correspondence because I really wanted to stay at home. (Subject 2)

My mom made it possible for me to come to the city for high school. That was probably one of the most terrible times of my whole life because it was just such a shock, a cultural shock. The city is so different especially from anything I'd ever experienced. It's different enough for small town kids but I wasn't even a small town kid. (Subject 2)

A really terrible experience for me was when I was about 13. I discovered that my father was cheating on my mother and that really put me through a lot of really heavy changes because I respected my father so much and it really destroyed that kind of thing for me for a while. (Subject 2)

I just thought that it was just the worst thing that could ever be possible and since then I've learned to realize that it doesn't really mean that he never loved my mother or the rest of us like I thought it did at the time. But it took a long time to be able to live with that and when I found out that my mother knew anyway and that she was able to live with it, it was a lot easier. (Subject 2)

I have been terribly lonely. I think that's probably one of the strongest things I've ever experienced. When I came to the city to go to high school I had to leave home sort of for the first time and all my friends and stuff and I didn't know anybody here. I was really tremendously homesick and it was probably the worst thing I've ever had to go through. I don't really regret it now because it made me sort of independent, but I know I would not wish it on anybody. (Subject 2)

The sense of immense helplessness and smallness of the six year old little girl is something I have never forgotten. (Subject 3)

I can remember my burning hot anger at him. There were many times when I tried to kick him, screaming at the top of my voice. But he almost always managed to hold me at a distance from him. I was much aware of his superiority over me because of his physical strength. I just never could get even with him. (Subject 3)

We had time for making up our own plays and perform these. This I loved immensely. My best performance was that of a witch in a fairy tale, a very wicked and evil witch. I did a very good job of it and took everyone by surprise with my performance. I enjoyed it tremendously. My whole personality was completely transformed into this wicked character, voice, mannerism, everything (I still could do it!). (Subject 3)

In other circles of children, with my brother and his friends I felt often somewhat aloof and on the outside. I sort of felt that I lacked their daring and glibness, and then I felt quite miserable, isolated. (Subject 3)

I have had many dreams about my Jewish girlfriend who was led away to Germany. The theme of these dreams is somewhat like this: Hennie has returned. She hopes to find me. I know she had returned, but have lost her address or forgotten to look her up. I spent some time with her, but then I sort of drop her. She feels very alone back in Holland, needs a friend, but I no longer give her my friendship. I feel uneasy about it, but let it go at that. When I wake up after these dreams I always feel very disturbed and sometimes I have cried. (Subject 3)

Years later, as a patient in a Mental Institute (I was then about 26 years old), I was given an injection of some "truth serum" (sodium pentothal) and was asked to comment on the war years. I then began to talk about the above episode and then discovered my very upset, but repressed, reaction to what my father did to save his life. In order to save his own life, he, so I had felt, had been instrumental in leading other fellow Jews to their death. For me, who had looked up to my father very much, this was a traumatic discovery, one which I had suppressed all these years, until that moment at the Institute. I cried for a long time that afternoon which gave me much relief. (Subject 3)

Even during such moments I can remember to have experienced a deep sense of sadness, aloneness, while at the same time there was also the feeling of immense joy, a grateful sort of sensation for being me and having my experience live through me in such a vivid, intense kind of way. (Subject 3)

I was 17 years old when I had my first kiss. I was a bit frightened of this boy who for a long time had cared about me a great deal. (Subject 3)

He was so very gentle and understanding about my reluctant ways. I still can feel my gratitude about the beautiful and most tactful way in which he introduced me to this first tender experience. (Subject 3)

During that time I had once the following dream: the dream began with a large chess board. The board was the only image of the dream at that moment – or perhaps I myself was that chess board. Then one of the pieces – I think now that it was the knight – (which we call in our country "horse") appeared at the side of the board, growing larger and larger until it had covered the whole chess board, and then all was black, dark black. I then woke up and felt very upset and frightened, although I then did not understand the meaning of the dream. (Subject 3)

When playing chess as a child I was always very worried about the knight of the other player, nervous really. The moves of the knight, I then felt, were so unpredictable, and I always was relieved when I could eliminate these pieces from "the game". (Subject 3)

Much of my living and thinking during these months were towards the time of his return home. I wanted to be to him all he might hope for. (Subject 3)

Once the business was bought and I had my first baby I became very depressed, overwhelmed by the isolation and my new responsibilities. When the baby was six months old I tried to commit suicide. (Subject 3)

All seemed to tighten up in me when thinking of my mother's visit. I had extreme difficulty doing my housework and cried a lot, wanted to sleep all the time. (Subject 3)

I can recall the times I had set out to end it all. I knew I just was no good, incapable, just too inadequate to cope. "They would be better off without me." That sensation of not being able to cope, feeling too small in the face of my responsibilities, that sensation I experienced again and again in most desperate ways. "What others could I could not", and therefore the only way out seemed suicide. (Subject 3)

Whereas only three years ago much of me was still more a vegetable than woman, now this has changed and I am deeply grateful that at last I have learned to drink from the cup which has so much to offer me. I have experienced a new kind of spontaneity which I treasure immensely, and which amongst others, have made my relationship with my children and with others so much richer and more meaningful. (Subject 3)

I can still easily bring to mind the feeling of being overwhelmed by what was expected of me (by myself in particular) as a teacher. (Subject 3)

When the baby was 3 months old, I cut my wrist in a suicidal attempt. I can well recall the tense and horrible feeling in my stomach at that time. All was tight and in tense knots. Again then I felt I could not cope. (Subject 3)

My mother was coming to visit us some years later. Anxiety. I felt I was not as capable as I should be, not coping. She would find nothing she could admire me for. Again a period of depression. I stopped doing my work, a giving up, suicide attempts. (Subject 3)

Most of my moments of great joy experiencing have been when another person, in an atmosphere of Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship, a love relationship on a very high and "complete" level, particularly over the last four years or so. (Subject 3)

Another small memory is, one morning, when I was about four or five, I was afraid of the dark. I left my bedroom, it was about five o'clock in the morning, and made my way to my parents bedroom. I remember now why I was scared. I had seen a horror movie that day about this lady in some haunted castle. She woke up in the middle of the night, and all the empty suits or armor were plodding around. One tried to break into her bedroom. They were all moving slowly, and awkwardly, like robots. She avoided the one trying to get her, and ran into the hall. The armor that was there instantly noticed her and began moving toward her. She ran and hid in a vault, the door being of thick stone. The T.V. screen was black and silent, and then, a sound of armour on rock was heard, from inside the vault. My mother turned off the T.V. just then, as it was the first horror movie that I had ever seen in my life, and she was worried about me. I don't know how I felt. Anyway, when I went into my parent's bedroom that morning, I was scared. I wanted someone to protect me in case a suit of armour tried to break into my bedroom. (Subject 4)

I still went. I woke my mother and father and asked them if I could sleep with them. I remember that they had their arms around each other and smelled heavily of sweat. They weren't wearing pyjamas. (Note: interesting thing, and that will come later – I know it may seem like an unsavoury thought, but I just thought of it now – who knows to what depth teenager's mind may sink, and how innocent is the mind of a child). The aforementioned may not be the case, but anyway, my parents both told me to get the hell back to bed and quit bothering them. Then they both went back to sleep. I didn't know what to think, here I was, asking for protection, and they were refusing me. I felt hurt and annoyed. (Subject 4)

I ran back to my bedroom and buried my head under my pillow, trying to deny what I had just seen. I wouldn't even admit that my mother had just sold the dog. I kept telling myself that it wasn't true. When I asked my mother about it that night, she said that it had been for the dog's own good, and that I should take it like a man. I agreed with her, and said that it didn't make any difference anyway, as long as the dog was happy. After I left the table, I went up to my bedroom and cried. (Subject 4)

I was collecting a bribe, when the teacher walked in the back door, sneaked up behind me, observed as I collected the bribe and laid down the rules of the bargain, and then asked me what I was doing. I paled, then the blood rushed to my head and I went back to my seat. Nothing came of the affair, and the teacher probably forgot about it the same day too, but I really felt guilty and ashamed of what I had done. (Subject 4)

Some of it was fear, but I also felt as though I had betrayed someone, and I felt as though I must have hurt the teachers deeply – partly because I thought everyone thought highly of me. In any case, I then avoided as much as possible getting too friendly with the teacher, to the point where

I could be given a position of trust. Instead, I just concentrated on making everyone look up to me. (Subject 4)

When I first came in, I was scared and nervous. Everyone was bigger than I was. This, of course, made a difference to me, in that I was treated as a small kid by everyone else. (Subject 4)

The book I read that summer was on General Isaac Brock, commonly known as the saviour of Canada. I was really taken by the story, became proud of being Canadian. (Subject 4)

I went upstairs to the library, and drew out a book on the battle of Quebec, 1759. The battle for Quebec was fought on September 13 and I was ready for that day – I went around the College telling everyone I knew and didn't know, what anniversary it was that day. By the end of the day, my hopes had been realized. People were coming to me, even teachers, and asking what the anniversary was. I told them every detail, dates, times, casualty figures, tactics, political repercussions, everything. Everyone nodded in mute fascination, that a little grade seven could know so much. I was proud, fiercely proud of what I had done. I can think of no other time in my life when I was so proud and happy. (Subject 4)

Then it happened, the inevitable. Next morning, on my way to breakfast, several people stopped me and asked me what the anniversary was today. My heart sank. I scrambled through my brains, searching. Then I remembered. One of the generals of the aforementioned battle, Montcalm, had died the morning after I passed this out to content and appease their thirst for my knowledge, left my tray and ran as fast as I could, indeed I never recall ever running as fast, to the library where I spent the rest of the morning desperately searching for facts and dates. I memorized a few, and then returned for lunch prepared for the time being. (Subject 4)

I was a pretty calculating kid from there on, and I anticipated that soon people would begin asking me what happened on such and such a date. It was then that I resolved to learn everything there was to know about history, I dropped sports, friends, studies, everything, and spent all my time in the library. (Subject 4)

I learned quite a bit and in three months I was already more knowledgeable in most aspects of history (Social Studies) than most of the grade twelves. It gave me a great feeling of warmth and pride, though not condescension that I could know more than they. (Subject 4)

Then my first report card had lousy marks – it didn't look right, and I began to wonder if people might begin to suspect. I therefore spent a little less time in the library, and a lot more time on my studies. The effect made me even more proud. (Subject 4)

The feelings I felt when I was a boarder, toward my family anyway, are hard to explain. When I was at school, I wished I was at home with my family. I wanted to have someone to tuck me away and give me a kiss before I went to bed at night. I still have no memories of anyone in my family from that time, but I thought I cared about them. Yet, when I was at home, I wished that I was back at College where everyone didn't treat me like a child. (Subject 4)

She would not come, and I began bawling and threatening not to go if she would not. She left the table and went to her bedroom, and I continued to howl and cry. I never did go to that dance. How could I have backed down. As can be seen, I was only using the crying as a last attempt at getting my sister to come. (Subject 4)

Then, for about the first time in my life, I got mad. I went around yelling and fighting and accusing my mother until she would cover her ears and run into her bedroom crying. I would often have fights with my father that would often come to blows. I did not do my studies. (Subject 4)

Everything seemed to have turned upside down, and I felt almost as though I was running for my life. It is a difficult thing to explain, but it reminds me of running in fear of something. As though there is a force in your chest heaving and trying to blow itself out of your head. (Subject 4)

I began to have delusions about myself from movies that I had seen on T.V., where the children try to bring the family together again, and invariably succeed. It may sound little sick, but I began to think of myself as a martyr. (Subject 4)

I began to hate my mother, and I had never hated any one before. The cynical way in which she talked to my father and the way she would always cry and run away when I started to yell at her and accuse her of ruining their marriage seemed to prove and consolidate all that my father had told me. (Subject 4)

The hate I felt for my mother reached its apogee then and there, but was immediately shattered when I pressed my father further. (Subject 4)

All this time, I felt like a supersleuth, trying to get down to the root of a seemingly insolvable problem. I felt content with myself, and sort of let myself settle for a little while after I found out the truth. (Subject 4)

I shunned my father entirely, and developed for him the most intense hate I have ever felt for anyone in all my life. He was beneath contempt, and I treated him in the most sarcastic manner I could whenever I did see him. (Subject 4)

I keep telling myself that I should do something while at the same time arguing against it, while at the same time realizing that I am getting nowhere, while at the same time realizing that I don't want to go anywhere, while at the same time relating all these things together. It irritates me, in that I can seem to realize everything without getting anywhere, and that the realization itself prevents me. I find it difficult even to write this, and it irritates me even more that I cannot explain fully the feelings. (Subject 4)

About the beginning of grade eleven I began looking in mirrors, in fact every chance I got. I'd stare, frown, try to look handsome, talk to myself in the reflection, until around November. When I looked into a mirror I would start to feel hot, and tired, and I would, after a little staring suddenly grab my face with both hands and begin to massage it hard and fast as though I was trying to get in. (Subject 4)

Around the same time we were taking psychology and I fixed upon Positive disintegration as the reason for what was happening. Double think here again. I realized that I was probably developing but the fact that I realized it seemed to spoil it, while the realization of the two seemed to confuse me even more as to the use of realization, and what hope there was for me. (Subject 4)

For the first few weeks, I could think of no one else, and it stayed like that until I thought it must seem like a comic book type romance. (Subject 4)

It was only after I started to think it phony that I actually started to believe I loved her. I had known girls before, I wasn't a slow kid for that, but I had never kissed one before, never petted, never hugged. Only talked to. I had had crushes, but this wasn't a crush. It seemed too deep and personal to be. (Subject 4)

It was only when a little seed of distrust, she wasn't home one night when I phoned, appeared, that I began to distrust everything. I doubted the world, I doubted myself, I doubted her, I doubted God, all in a round about doublethink way, until that same night, I had a heavy think on suicide. (Subject 4)

But it was the fact that I thought about it, and reasoned it out that pushed further into a doubt about the validity of anything and everything, in that if I could reason everything, what true emotion could there possibly be. (Subject 4)

In this way, though I still care for her, I cannot admit loving here, because I have reasoned love out: doublethink again. If I know I don't love, yet inside really feel as though I do, how can I look at both and realize I do, without doing something about it. (Subject 4)

Another problem is that whatever I do, I criticize, and thus detract from whatever true feeling I might have. (Subject 4)

On the way to the school she said that he would be there, but I shrugged it off as though I didn't care whereas I was really shitting bricks by this time. (Subject 4)

We walked in, he wasn't there yet, but I had all my muscles tense, waiting. We sat in the bleachers and the game began. Then guess who walked in. She saw him as he came up to the bleachers and pointed him out to me. It's okay, I'm ready for him, was my answer. She asked me to explain, and I did, including what were the intended meeting points of fist and foot as well as their desired effect. To my surprise she took offence that I should ever have thought of that, and then she told me she was having a date with him the following night. That really shook me up, mostly talked to myself the rest of the night. Feeling sorry for myself. (Subject 4)

Anyway, she is the first girl I have ever kissed, not passionately, but just a little smack on the lips. To use a modern expression, I was high for the next couple of days. (Subject 4)

Everywhere I turned, it was back to November and December, only worse, because I knew I wanted to hurt her, but thought I would never do it, the thought seemed enough to me. I realized I was searching for an excuse again, to split up and so not be hurt. I even debated how to do it so that I was hurt, and not her. (Subject 4)

The subject was: are emotions real or just taste buds for the brain. I had just had a fight with my mother, which is what prompted my writing. (Subject 4)

She wrenched her hands each in the opposite direction, and deliberately tore my little essay in half and then in quarters. The words that were coming up my throat broke into a scream and the wail of something akin to a mad dog reached my throat. After my mother had calmed herself (it shocked her), and when I was finished with my scream, I grabbed the scraps of the paper and cuddled them up to me. (Subject 4)

I could feel a frustrated hatred building up in me against the fucking bitch that was my mother. (Subject 4)

I countered with a tirade which lasted a full forty-five minutes, in which time tears came to my eyes, cracks were made in the plaster of the walls (and probably on my mother's face too). I had blown up, completely, had never before with such force. The only reason I stopped was because, after forty-five minutes, I started to calm down. When I was calmer it became impossible to speak – the words would come to my mouth, but after the first few words, I could not bring my line of reasoning down. All that I could do was repeatedly (3 times) shout out the first few lines of a sentence, and then I had to repeat it again. (Subject 4)

At that moment, being so ridiculously defenceless and open. I think is the closest I have ever come to shooting myself – no, that's not true. The other time with the problem of my girlfriend, was just as close, but the difference was that this would have been an impulse move. (Subject 4)

About my little sister being retarded, I felt nothing except the disappointment that I could no longer have a little, little sister to play with. (Subject 4)

As regards that thought of suicide and near attempt, previously mentioned (not blow-up), it was a sudden outburst of emotion, everything that I can think of love, lust, hate, anger, frustration, affection, contentment and satisfaction, emptiness, all at the same time. I hope to be able to get you the poems, essays, etc., that I wrote during that time. (Subject 4)

Corny as it may seem the saddest I have ever been is when I lost my dog – It was given away – something that has bugged me ever since – not even my parents' separation bugged me as losing that dog. (Subject 4)

In grade 10 – having gone to school for four years here – I "met" for the first time one of the students; I'd been told he was dumb – his nickname was "Cuber". It was May – near the end of the school when I decided to find out what he was like – to my surprise he was just as interested as I was in everything that I was – he was, however, a boarder and had to go home for the summer – the rates went up for – boarders and he didn't come back. I'm sick and mad with myself when I remember that I didn't bother to meet him until 4 years had elapsed. He was the best friend I ever had. Maybe I say that because I hardly knew him and that I always like to think of him as my best friend – maybe I knew he wasn't coming back and stalled till the last minute so I could feel sorry for myself. It's my fault I never knew him – no one else's but I always try to find an excuse for myself. (Subject 4)

Great sadness has little meaning for me – or so I like to think – when my parents separated I almost went into shock – I therefore take great pains to avoid people with whom I might strike up a deep relationship – as long as I keep to myself – I can't get hurt – but it does hurt me being by myself all the time. (Subject 4)

If I am never really joyously happy – what's it going to be like if I should get depressed – thus I try to stay in the medium – seemingly never happy or sad – and it bugs me. (Subject 4)

When I was 9 yrs. old I wanted a knapsack for Christmas. None of my presents seemed big enough for one – I was really depressed then I opened the package and it was there, folded over tightly – that was about the greatest joy I've ever experienced. Two extremes so close together – maybe that's why I don't trust it. (Subject 4)

Death seems intriguing to me – no cares – no worries – just slipping into an empty void – nothingness – (perfection). You don't give a damn and neither does anyone else. (Subject 4)

One of the earliest things I can remember is one day my Dad came home and he and my Mother started arguing. My Mother called me over and asked me to say whether or not my Dad had lipstick on his collar I had said that he had and he (my Father) took a cup (ceramic) and tossed it at me. I ran away from him and he missed me but I remember it as being a very frightening experience and at the time I did not know what it was all about. (Subject 5)

I remember that I was afraid of the dark and that one night my aunt was babysitting us and I wanted the light on in my room that night and she locked me in our cellar in the dark. I hated her for it and remember being very frightened. (Subject 5)

I remember when my father was extending the garage and I cannot remember exactly what I had done but I know that it was not any reason for him to hit me the way he did. He busted a heavy ruler over my hands and left welts on them. My mother consoled me and told me that he was just being unreasonable. I hated my father. (Subject 5)

I remember once my brother had done something bad but not that bad and my Dad chased him with a gun which was loaded and to me he would have shot him if he had caught him. My sister phoned the police and when they came my brother was back home and my father denied what my sister had told them and she (my sister) was too frightened of my father at that time to say anything to the police. She got a severe beating for doing that. I hated my father. (Subject 5)

I remember my father when I was young being a cruel, drunken bum who cheated on my mother, beat us kids and hurt my mother and made her cry. I remember once my father came home and had a fight with my mother and he kicked her across the legs with his shoes and made her legs all black and blue. I remember my father as always hitting my mother. (Subject 5)

I had a best friend at the place we lived when I was young. We moved when I was about eight years old. I did not want to leave and felt that I would never see my best friend again. We moved across the city. But to me that was a long way. (Subject 5)

I was a liar, a thief and really a bugger when I was this age and for some time to come. (Subject 5)

I remember once having a crush on a girl and that I was very shy. I bought her a gift but could not give it to her myself. I gave it to my sister to give to her and then I ran. (Subject 5)

I also had another crush on a girl at that age. I used to phone her and talk to her but would not give her my name. Then one day I went to her house to walk her to school but she had already left. Then that night on the phone I told her where I sit in school and she knew who I was. The next day at school some boys came up to me and told me I had better stop bothering her. I felt as if there was no one who liked me. (Subject 5)

I was more frightened about what would happen to me when my Father found out. When my Mother got home she was scared and rushed me to the hospital. I did not feel any pain although I felt a burning sensation slightly all over my body and I wanted some cool air to be blown over me on the way to the hospital. When we got to the hospital people started looking at me and nurses were in a hurry to get a doctor to look after me. When the doctor got to me he gave me a shot and I got drowsy. I remember my Mother crying and being all upset. (Subject 5)

It was awhile before I could go back to school but when I did my teacher helped quite a bit with catching up on the work I missed and I passed that year with average marks. I really liked that teacher and recall as being one of the truly great people I have ever met. (Subject 5)

During high school I got just above average marks but was not well liked by the kids around me. (Subject 5)

We went shoplifting. We hit a couple of stores but were caught with about twenty dollars of goods on us. When we were caught I cried because I was mainly thinking of what would happen to me when my Father found out. (Subject 5)

It shook me up getting caught because I was thinking of the narrow escape I was getting from a severe beating from my Father. (Subject 5)

The principal told me that I had to tell him who the boys were before the day was over. I was worried all through classes that I was going to get suspended from school. Finally I went to the principal before the end of the day and told him the truth that I did it on my own accord. (Subject 5)

Me and my oldest sister fought the most in our family. I ran away from home once because of her and one of my other sisters followed me for about three miles before I would go back home. (Subject 5)

It was in grade nine that I started changing in my attitudes towards lying and stealing. After the incident where I phoned my mother and asked her not to tell my father. (Subject 5)

In high school I started changing so rapidly that I was very frustrated by trying to stick to my new way of not lying or stealing. (Subject 5)

In grade eleven I helped do a number of extracurricular activities such as dances and plays. I received a minor service award for doing this. I really started to gain pride in myself. (Subject 5)

They announced my awards over the P.A. system at school and it gave me a great pride to sit back and revel in glory. (Subject 5)

But I never got on a real friendly basis except with one person. This friend and I were real close and could talk to each other and always count on each other. I am still involved in a close relationship with him but not as close as it used to be.

I was very proud of being in the cadets and once I really got involved with them I think that this may have had something to do with the change in my personality. (Subject 5)

Once however one guy would not go and the other decided to take me along to pick up his girl friend and a friend of hers for me. I was really mixed up inside when we went because this would have been my first time. (Subject 5)

When we got to his girl's house I found out that her friend could not make it. In a way I was relieved but also sad. (Subject 5)

This guy who I have been calling my friend took me for twenty bucks at the end of the summer saying he would mail me the money. I believed him. (Subject 5)

I fell in love with a girl I met in the militia and we went together for about a year while I was in the militia. She was the only girl I had ever gone out with. We developed a real close relationship and we were planning to get married but that did not last. She wanted to put it off a while and I was sort of willing to. (Subject 5)

But then she started to go out with another guy whom she started seeing regularly. This hurt me very deeply as I felt that I and she were very close together. (Subject 5)

We had petted and necked very heavily and had layed in bed together both in the nude and touched each other very dearly in all areas and I thought this meant a lot to me and to her but apparently it did not mean too much to her. (Subject 5)

That night, the night that my girlfriend betrayed me as I see it, I tried to commit suicide. (Subject 5)

I was shy with people when I got between the stage of knowing them slightly and knowing them well. (Subject 5)

I have not gone out with another girl since I broke up with the other girl. I often dream that I marry this girl and that she puts me down and ends up breaking up with me. (Subject 5)

He still emotionally hurts my Mother. But at least I don't add to the trouble by entering the fight. (Subject 5)

I am very lonely at my place because it is a small room smaller than a normal bedroom. I have no sink or room in my room for all my stuff. I cannot invite anyone up to my room for all my stuff. I cannot invite anyone up to my room because it is not big enough for two people at once. (Subject 5)

I feel that those who are older than me wouldn't form a friendship with me because I am younger than them. (Subject 5)

I tried to have a birthday party when I was 13 but the only one that came was the son of one of my mother's best friends and I think that he had to come. (Subject 5)

When I was 18 I went to the Catholic church and I was for the first time really interested in church because of the participation of the congregation in the mass. (Subject 5)

I also get very mad at most of our youth today in that they want to destroy what we have as a society but they have not planned how to replace what they destroy and this is foolish because if they destroyed what we have without having something to replace it with we would be in

complete confusion. I tried to tell some kids one day that before you destroy a system you have to look at all its good points and replace it with something that is at least equally as good. (Subject 5)

I do not like them because of one very bad experience with one after my first attempt at suicide. I had to go see him as a matter of legality but I was in his office about ten minutes. He asked me what was wrong and I started talking and in about ten minutes he told me that there was nothing wrong with me and if I wanted help to see one of the counsellors at the university. (Subject 5)

He had me talk about my beliefs and fears and feelings and he mostly listened and he asked how I wanted him to help me and I told him I did not know. That was just before the Christmas break and I did not go back to see him again. (Subject 5)

I moved into the place of my brother but I felt very guilty about it because he could not afford to have me live there because his wife had not finished training as an R.N. and he was paying off his car and a \$10,000 loan which he made for my father. (Subject 5)

My Father never did pay him back for this loan. Also (my mother made me feel very low because she took it as being against her that I moved out of the house and I moved back also to please her and get her off my mind as she made me feel guilty about the whole thing. (Subject 5)

To get back to my recent attempt at suicide I took 310 mg. of librium which I figured would do me in but good but I woke up 15 hours later feeling high. I did this because I felt useless as a person in the world and that I would make no difference in the world even if I was perfect. (Subject 5)

I get very upset and uptight about any mistake on the wards no matter how small. (Subject 5)

I am very confused a lot of times in that I feel there is a lot that I could do but then there are the times that I feel I am useless and they get me down no matter how many good things I have done. (Subject 5)

I would also like to find a girl and form a relationship with her so that I could have someone who needs me and someone who I could use to meet my needs. (Subject 5)

I forgot to mention that my Mother told me that I was supposed to die that night that I was burned and that my regular doctor's colleague stayed with me that night and that it was only that I made through that night by a miracle and that I should have died and this is one of the main reasons why I chose the field of medicine as my life career. I do not feel that I owe it to anybody to do this but I feel that it is without doubt one of the most overall rewarding fields that a person could work in to serve other people. (Subject 5)

To me this has changed over a period of time. I used to get depressed when I was really sad and think that life was not worth living. (Subject 5)

I am really sad for example when I see my Father emotionally hurting my Mother and feel that I wish that there was something I could do about it without hurting my Father. (Subject 5)

I am really sad when I hear from my Mother what kind of life my Father had when he was growing up at his home and I wish that it could have been different for his sake and for that of my Mother. (Subject 5)

I was really sad today when I read in the newspaper of a boy who was burned to death with people standing around who could do nothing about it. (Subject 5)

I wish that things like that never had to happen but I am no longer depressed to the point to think that life is no longer worth living like I used to do. Now I would like to do something about them but do not know what I can do. (Subject 5)

I am very happy when I get a good mark on an important exam. I am very happy when I get a good evaluation for my clinical experiences. (Subject 5)

I am very happy when I help someone who has a problem and they are in some way relieved of that problem. I am happy when I think that I can actually help others and they say that they can come to me. (Subject 5)

I am very happy when I give blood at the Red Cross knowing that it may help some person. (Subject 5)

Today I realize that death could come upon me any day and that would be that. I do not worry about that but think that when it is time for me to die I will wish that death never had to happen to me or to anyone. (Subject 5)

It would bother me more to see a person who inevitably going to die suffer through a long painful death than for a person to die quickly. (Subject 5)

I am very upset or moved for those he leaves behind and how they feel and what kind of position they are left in. (Subject 5)

I am often in a situation of loneliness. I do not like being alone as much as I am these days and I do not know what to do about it. I do not like to be with someone just for the sake of being with the person. I like to be with someone to enjoy being with that person. (Subject 5)

There is no real companionship among people, there is only people feeding upon other people for their own needs. (Subject 5)

The biting continued, but I always felt guilty, anxious about bath night, and sorry that my parents had a bad little girl. (Subject 6)

My father looked so incredibly sad whenever one of my faults was aired. I couldn't bear to see him suffer on account of me. (Subject 6)

Several of my friends played near the edge and I begged them to stop. When they didn't I couldn't bear to watch them, and would run away, filled with a sense of dread. (Subject 6)

The sight of the angry lake filled me with dread. I could see nothing but anger and doom in that black water. (Subject 6)

My heart felt like a lump of lead. (Subject 6)

I carried this leaden feeling around quite often, although I have been told I was a happy, good-natured child, energetic, a compulsive talker, and always optimistic. (Subject 6)

There was a boy on our street who seemed different than the other children. He was big, but he acted like a child. My parents cautioned us not to tease him, for he had had an accident, and he had a steel plate in his head. The leaden feeling settled in again and I asked many questions "What does a steel plate do? Is it heavy? How terrible!" (Subject 6)

One day I saw that young man riding down the hill, smiling so happily like a child, his white shirt billowing out behind him, like a sail. My breath caught in my throat, for his white shirt and his smiling face, were so "impossible" when he was doomed by a steel plate in his head. (Subject 6)

It was my first feeling of sadness and joy mixed together and it made a lump in my throat. (Subject 6)

I don't remember being openly defiant, but my sister, eighteen months older, was, and when she was disciplined I made a note of never doing what got her into trouble. I wanted everything to be happy and couldn't stand the tension I felt around me at times. (Subject 6)

Five years later, at nine years of age, I broke this vow, and dropped her porcelain piggy bank. However, I made a mistake; it was mine. I was overcome with relief but hated myself for my urge to hurt her – the thought then bothered me as much as the actual deed had earlier. (Subject 6)

One day my work page in school was all wrong, because I had misunderstood the directions. My sorrow was so great that it didn't ease for days. (Subject 6)

There was a fire escape at school, a metal cylinder with slide inside. In case of fire, students were to ride down this slide. Now I had added worries. The thought of going down that slide filled me with terror. I was in a classroom on the first floor and it was unlikely I would have to go down that slide, but I lived in fear of being sent upstairs to the principal's office in case a fire broke out while I was there. (Subject 6)

I felt very sorry for the older students who had classes on the second floor, and it was my goal to never pass out of Grade III (Grade IV's were upstairs). (Subject 6)

I regarded bodily injury with a fear bordering on panic – my sister gave herself a nosebleed with a baseball bat swung too enthusiastically and everyone on the street thought that I had been injured, as I did all the crying. (Subject 6)

A boy in my classroom broke his leg that year (Grade I), and when I heard this, I ran home crying and couldn't be consoled, no matter how much I was comforted. Later, when Bobby returned to school, I was overjoyed to see he still had his leg for I thought it had broken right off. My relief was so great, that I felt ecstatic. (Subject 6)

One incident regarding my dominating other children remains active in my memory. There were two children across the street whom I envied because they looked so serene. In an effort to upset them, I shouted to them to run for their lives, that the plane flying overhead was a German plane and we would all be killed. They ran, screaming to their mother. (Subject 6)

[...my mother.] She instructed me to march across that street and apologize to the children's mother. This I did, reluctantly, pausing under a vine covered arched gateway to enjoy looking at growing leaves one last time before certain death. (Subject 6)

I observed that the children were standing in the middle of the room eating bread and jam. Bread and jam right smack in the middle of the front room. What freedom! What a life! Now I knew why these children looked so serene. I left the house knowing I must not associate with those children again, or my envy would get the best of me and I would hurt them again. (Subject 6)

At this time (1942–43) I became aware of the fact that many men had gone to war, and my father had not. I asked him why, because my friends said he should, and he talked to me about the enemy and said that the enemy was made up of little girl's daddies, and that he couldn't hate them enough to kill them, although he hated the war. I never forgot that, for neither could I then hate an enemy I did not know. (Subject 6)

It was raining one morning and we had no raincoats or hats. My grandmother, whom I loved dearly, put a brown paper bag on our heads to protect us from the rain. We thought this old-fashioned, but didn't argue. A block away from her home, my sister threw her paperbag hat to the

ground. I didn't want to wear it, but couldn't do as she did. Instead, I returned crying home to my grandmother, saying I was sick and couldn't go to school. (Subject 6)

There was a fire in a home down the street. We knew the family. They had a baby. As I watched, transfixed, the mother came running by, crying "My baby, my baby, save my baby." Apparently the neighbours had been watching the sleeping baby while the mother went downtown, and faulty wiring had caused a fire. I was out of my mind with anxiety, running in a circle of fear. We were sent on to school by neighbours, where during music class I cried so much that I was sent home. (Subject 6)

Friends had lost a retarded youngster. Because I wasn't at school at that time, I was taken along to the funeral. Everyone was crying, but my mother said it was best because the child was so retarded it didn't know it was alive. That's what I wanted to be – so retarded I didn't know I was alive so I wouldn't be so worried about how I was going to die. (Subject 6)

Another friend was struck down by spinal meningitis. He has died, said my mother. Teddy, why Teddy? What did he do? He was a nice boy, he just wanted to live. I thought of Teddy, gentle, kind Teddy, and, my mind filled with head. Teddy. Why Teddy? No answers that would satisfy. You could just be quietly living, and death could creep up on you and then you were gone. I couldn't accept it. Not for Teddy and not for me. I wanted to back time up so Teddy could make another move, escape those germs. (Subject 6)

Although the first two books were forbidden to me, as soon as my parents went out, I read them! This crime added to my constant anxiety and compounded and confused my fears. Every time my name was spoken sharply, I thought I had been found out, and I would startle and tremble inside for a long time. (Subject 6)

The more my mother frowned, the more I exaggerated until I got so I couldn't recall myself what was truth and what was fiction. That frightened me, and I would resolve never to enlarge a story again until the next time. (Subject 6)

There was always a depressing aura at the table, and, it seemed to me, a lot of tension. As a result, I chattered endlessly and drove others to distraction. When this finally resulted in a sharp reminder to be quiet, I reacted with great fear and more anxiety and then would attempt to transform the anger into laughter by saying something funny. (Subject 6)

I was strongly discouraged by them in the creative pieces I played, and, after some time, in spite of passing standardized grades, felt hopelessly inadequate in relation to the piano. (Subject 6)

I loved the violin passionately. Several years later, when we moved west, my new teacher placed a great emphasis on technique. This succeeded in raising many doubts about my ability and I began to feel hopelessly inadequate here too. (Subject 6)

In spite of that, the violin has remained a source of delight for me, one in which I indulge periodically. I have discovered that giving way to a desire to play the violin or listen to recordings for too long a period of time triggers off such a state of ecstasy that I do not attend too well to daily activities and so I limit my time spent in this pleasure, feeling that any extreme is somehow not for the ultimate good. (Subject 6)

My young brother was involved in a number of accidents, all of them quite serious, for which I felt responsible. The anxiety drove me into desperation. Perhaps this had something to do with my jealousy of him – maybe I imagined hurting him and then thought I somehow caused his accidents. (Subject 6)

Even a minor accident, in which he slipped on the stairs and knocked himself out, left a picture of his limp little body that is burned into my brain. If I think about it, it comes clearly and can still upset me. (Subject 6)

In one case, after being cautioned to watch him (he was two, and I was nine) while my parents had a nap, I didn't watch him closely enough and he pulled out the stick holding up a window. The window came down forcibly, severing the end of his middle finger. I will never forget my frantic parents, my father with bare chest, holding my brother, his hand bleeding. My mother found the end of his finger. I couldn't bear their agony. No one punished me or even looked angrily at me. It was a house full of pain. (Subject 6)

I had to walk with him to the doctor where, every second day or so they burned away the excess flesh. This was very painful for him, and I wasn't much help as I died inside while watching. (Subject 6)

If I add to this the fact that, while boosting him up on my sister's shoulders for a piggy back ride, I "accidentally" (deliberately) pushed him too hard causing him to go right over, and fall, cutting

his face, I now see why I had such mixed up feelings. My real guilt was mixed up with my assumed guilt, and I felt responsible for everything that happened to him. (Subject 6)

They would say "You think you're smart," and I would realize they thought I was superior and condescending. I withdrew from all participation, very unhappy. I was then regarded as a poor sport." I didn't rejoin. (Subject 6)

At about this time (10 years) I began to write poetry, pouring my heart into poems of tragedy and love, with no moderation. Life, in those poems, was either very ecstatic or very tragic. (Subject 6)

Because of his intense activity, periods during which he had little rest, my father periodically fell into a deep sleep, for several days – sometimes weeks. During this time, he ate one bowl of soup a day, and slept deeply, his pulse and respirations slowed almost to nothing. I used to go into the bedroom and look at him, afraid, because he was so still, that he would drift away in his sleep and die. (Subject 6)

I could never tell at funerals if I felt most sorry about the person who was dead or those who were still alive. (Subject 6)

She went in and found the remaining four members of the family, the parents and two teenage children, lying on the bed, holding each other, and crying. I never forgot that. It haunted me day and night. I almost wished we had a tragedy that would allow us, as a family, to hold each other close. (Subject 6)

I cried for days and couldn't stop. Finally I was able to resume my studies, but if I attempted to play the violin I couldn't practice my required work, but played haunting melodies which moved me so much that I would drop into despair again. (Subject 6)

During the year that I taught school, everything began to crumble for me. I woke during the night, or early in the morning, filled with dread. I doubted my ability to teach young children, and I was afraid they were all wasting a year under my supervision. (Subject 6)

The district was dreadfully poor, and I witnessed real need for the first time in my life. We had never had much, but we had enough to eat and enough clothes to wear, and some of these children were coming to school without adequate food or clothing. They ate sandwiches with nothing but jam on them – no protein. I couldn't eat my lunch. They walked two or three miles to school without warm clothes. (Subject 6)

My doubts multiplied, and my anxiety in relation to everything else in my life became almost too much to bear. (Subject 6)

I could not eat while these children were starving. (Subject 6)

I was sick with worry because they looked so worried. (Subject 6)

Around the same time, (age twenty to twenty-two) I would periodically lose my voice. It would happen very suddenly, and usually after a conflict situation where I had not honestly expressed my own views. At this time, it seemed dangerous to express my own views, and this was in relation to my husband. I often dreamed of shouting and shouting, but no sound coming, and people in the next room, but no way of their hearing me. (Subject 6)

Eventually I took a stand against my husband, and as I had feared, he became violent and said that he would kill me before he let me free. I told him to go ahead, because I would rather be dead than live with him any longer. (Subject 6)

The actions of my first husband at this time were so bizarre that I cannot reflect on them without shuddering with horror for what might have happened. (Subject 6)

If I lack courage, I remember John F. Kennedy who died because he refused to put up the plastic bubble top on his touring car in Dallas. I know that, had he lived, he would not have put it up on a second occasion. I compare my situation. I have only been emotionally assassinated. I am still alive. Now, will I put up that shield and protect myself, or will I get out again and meet life, even if it includes death, with my eyes wide open, daring to trust, not necessarily in the goodness of my fellow human, but in my ability to withstand that which to me is evil. (Subject 6)

When I see someone suffering because he is aware and vulnerable, when I know I can do nothing and he thinks I will not do it. (Subject 6)

I have felt so sorry for old people who are soon to die, never having lived, and young people who die and never have a chance to live. And yet children don't really understand, so perhaps they are better off. (Subject 6)

It was never easy to accept, always difficult to understand. It's getting easier. I don't know what it is, but a harmony is making itself clear, slowly. It will come as my mind unfolds to grasp it. I can wait. I want to wait. (Subject 6)

He had a great intensity of feeling for all animal life. He would never dream of killing an animal, and if he saw a bird hopping about, he would say, "Now what do you suppose he's thinking about right now?" (Saint-Exupery)

Of the great pleasures of his childhood was the adoption and loving care of animals. He raised white rats, a salamander and birds which, to his great despair died one by one. He also had a Russian rabbit for which he had constructed a tiny straw house complete with bedroom and dining room. "On the ground floor of our house in the country – which was big – there was a hall that seemed immense ... I had always been afraid of that hall, perhaps because of the feeble light of the lamp that hung in the middle of it and scarcely drew it forth from the darkness...The hall was panelled high up, and the panelling creaked, which was another reason for my fear. (Saint-Exupery)

"The creaking of the panelling was the first warning I received of heavenly anger. I could see in the shadow the great reproving panels. Not daring to explore further, I climbed up on a console table, and there, resting against the wall and letting my legs hang, I sat with beating heart like every shipwrecked sailor before me on his reef in midsea. (Saint-Exupery)

One night, his sister Simone recalls when the children were all in bed and it was past eleven o'clock, there was a knock on the door. It was Antoine, dressed in a shirt and with something which looked like a blanket, or it may have been a table cover, draped around his midriff. "I have come to read some verses," he announced to his startled sisters... "But Tonio, we're sleeping ... " "Never mind. Wake up. We're going to Mama's." "But Mama's sleeping too." "We'll wake her up. You'll see. It will be all right." Mama protested for form's sake, but Antoine had the last word. It was a long word, for the young bard kept the little circle of nodding heads and sleep-

swollen lids awake until one in the morning with the reading of his inspired stanzas. (Saint-Exupery)

A thrashing left him dry-eyed and defiant but if his mother ever refused to say good night to him, he refused to go to sleep and cried, "Maman, embrassez-moi" until she relented. (Saint-Exupery)

On one occasion he replied rather sharply to an instructor who had given a reprimand which he considered undeserved. On being compelled to kneel as punishment, a dictionary in each hand, he immediately rose to his feet and in exasperation threw the dictionaries into the midst of the class, then left the room, slamming the door behind him. (Saint-Exupery)

On the descent, after passing through a strange village, they noticed the sun was setting and the boys asked Simone for the time. To her horror, she found that she had lost her watch, her beautiful communion watch, somewhere along the way. Without hesitation "Tonio" offered to return to look for it while she and the young brother Francois returned on the train ... At home on their arrival there were cries of horror at the thought of the little boy alone at night on the mountain. Simone must be deprived of her dessert if the watch was not found. Very late after dinner, a carriage which had picked up the tired lad, livid with fatigue, dragging his legs, let him off at the gate. Bravely he had made the entire climb over again, searching everywhere and asking the town crier of the village to announce a reward. "But Monot, I am sorry, I didn't find it". (Saint-Exupery)

According to his sister Simone, he was always drawing plans for motors and mechanical inventions which he insisted on showing to other children, much to their annoyance. Heartbroken by their indifference he insisted so strenuously that they finally listened. Invention gushed from him like a boiling spring. This is a motor, that is a telephone, this is a locomotive, that is an airplane, mounted on a bicycle. "And when I shall fly away on my new machine, the entire crowd will cry: Long live Antoine de Saint-Exupery". (Saint-Exupery)

Throughout his life Saint-Exupery was demanding, immoderate, unsatisfied, never contented with things as they are. Even as a schoolboy he was constantly contriving ideas for any kinds of engines and mechanical things. He would sketch his inventions and would explain, and force his classmates to look, listen and admire, even though they would have much preferred to go on with the game the young inventor had interrupted. When they showed their annoyance, Antoine would flare up and sometimes use his fists. (Saint-Exupery)

"He was a nice fellow, yes, liked by everybody, but not that much noticed among the rest. He was above all a dreamer. I remember him, chin in hand, gazing at the cherry tree beyond the window. We called him, Pique-la-Lune. I have the impression of someone modest, of someone who was original without being bookish. All of it mingled with occasional explosions of joy, of exuberance." (Saint-Exupery)

His Jesuit teachers, beginning with Abbe Perroux, . . . had little use for his reveries and diversions, which were often rudely interrupted. Years later the memory of these humiliations was still vividly with Antoine when he wrote to his mother that "you are the only consolation when one is sad. When I was a child I used to come home with my heavy satchel on my back, in tears at being punished – do you remember at Le Mans? – and simply by taking me in your arms and kissing me you made me forget everything." (Saint-Exupery)

Segogne remembers his friend as being "timid, a bit wild, given to moodiness, now bursting with life, now morose and shut up in a world of inner meditation. He did not make friends easily, and it pained him, for he liked to be liked." (Saint-Exupery)

I cried reading your short note so full of meaning because I called out to you in the desert. I was full of anger against the departure of all men, against that silence, and I called my Maman. (Saint-Exupery)

"But it was you that I was in need of; it was up to you to protect and shelter me, and I called to you with the selfishness of a little goat." (Saint-Exupery)

"It is in part for Consuelo that I have come back, but it is through you, Maman, that one comes back. You, so weak, did you ever know that you were my guardian angel, and strong, and wise, and so full of blessings, that one prays to you, alone, in the night? (Saint-Exupery)

"I have not received a letter for fifteen days, Mother. I pass my time in building castles and am unhappy. Here where I have more time to think of you, I suffer more from this solitude." (Saint-Exupery)

"A letter from you would have been received so well here, a word from you, my dear little mother, the greatest love of my heart." (Saint-Exupery)

And still, in a few months, my dear mother, my old mother, my loving mother, I hope so much to be held in your arms near the fireplace to tell you all what I think, to discuss without contradicting, to hear you talking to me, you, who has understood all things concerning life. (Saint-Exupery)

"...the destiny of each of those I love torments me more seriously than of a chronic disease in myself. I feel threatened in my essence by their brittleness." (Saint-Exupery)

Night fell and the flames rose. Prayerfully we watched our mute and radiant fanion mount resplendent into the night. As I looked I said to myself that this message was not only a cry for help, it was fraught also with a great deal of love. We were begging water, but we were also begging the communion of human society. Only man can create fire: let another flame light up the night: let man answer man! (Saint-Exupery)

I was haunted by a vision of my wife's eyes under the halo of her hat. On her face I could see only the eyes, questioning me, looking at me yearningly. I am answering, answering with all my strength! What flame could leap higher than this that darts up into the night from my heart? (Saint-Exupery)

I implore you with all my heart to persuade General Chassin to get me into a fighter squadron. I'm buried alive here, the atmosphere is unbearable. Good God, what are we waiting for! Don't see Daurat until you've tried everything else to get me into the fighters. If I don't get into the fighting, I'll have a breakdown. I have a lot to say about what's happening in this war, and I can say it only as a combattant, not as an onlooker. It's my only chance to express myself, as you know. (Saint-Exupery)

But oh, Leon Werth, I like to remember drinking a Pernod with you on the banks of the Saone, while biting into a sausage and a good loaf of country bread. When I recall that afternoon, I have a feeling of plenitude. No need to tell you, since you feel things as I do. I was very happy. I'd like to experience that whole afternoon again. Peace is not something abstract, nor is it the end of danger and cold, those things don't bother me. But peace – peace means contentedly eating bread and sausage with Leon Werth on the banks of the Saone. And I am sad when I think the sausage no longer has any taste... (Saint-Exupery)

Excerpts Specifically Related to Children

In children and adolescents we often deal with a tendency to dramatization in order to satisfy desires "to get one's point." This tendency is based, on the one hand, on mental *overexcitability* and, on the other hand, a lack of an even and rational educational influence by the parents. Contradictions in forbidding and ordering, revocation of given commands, and excessive and unreasonable anxiety concerning the child cause a pathological transformation of the egocentric spirit in the child which directs it toward tyranny in regard to the parents. The observation of weak points of the parents' behavior is the basis for the building up by the child of an entire group of methods for attaining his desires. We are using the term "dramatization" for the description of these tendencies as a group and the term "neuropathic dramatization" in cases showing neuropathic peculiarities. (Dąbrowski, 1937, p. 16)

In children and adolescents, too much pampered and spoiled, *overexcitable*, and introverted, we find the symptoms of nervous dramatization, as described in the third chapter, appearing with the infliction of injury by more or less conscious self-mutilation in order to cause pain to parents and guardians. This is one form of torturing others by self-mutilation. (1937, pp. 83-84)

Nervous children, who have increased psychomotor, emotional, imaginative, and sensual or mental psychic excitability and who show strength and perseveration of reactions incommensurate to their stimuli, reveal patterns of disintegration. A child with psychomotor *hyperexcitability* responds far beyond what is appropriate to the stimuli of his environment, occasioning conflicts within himself and with others. So does the child with increased emotional excitability, whose individual structure contains germs of disintegration (anxiety, phobias, slight states of anguish, and emotional hypersensitivity). (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 98)

The child with imaginative *hyperexcitability* is not able to agree with his environment; he will often reach out beyond the limits of actual life into a world of dreams and fantasy. He manifests a pronounced maladaptation to reality. The child with sensory *hyperexcitability*, the exaggerated growth of the sensory sphere to the disadvantage of other spheres, may also have difficulties in adapting to his surroundings and in managing himself in conditions demanding reactions of a different kind from sensory ones. The child with mental *hyperexcitability* can also be maladapted, owing to an exaggerated search for explanations and a tendency to intellectualize problems in everyday life. (1964, pp. 98-99)

Positive disintegration renders the individual's psychic structure especially sensitive to stimuli, causing a deepening and acceleration of his development. Negative disintegration creates disharmony in the child's emotional structure without activation of tendencies to development or to creativity. Thus, in the case of emotional *hyperexcitability*, a child's susceptibility to exterior

and interior stimuli increases, and a positive development of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values is likely to take place. (1964, p. 100)

Every one of the investigated children showed considerable vegetative, sexual, affectional, imaginal, and intellectual *hyperexcitability* which constituted a foundation for the emergence of neurotic and psychoneurotic sets. Moreover, it turned out that these children also showed sets of nervousness, neuroses, and psychoneuroses of various kinds and degrees of intensity, from light vegetative symptoms, or anxiety symptoms, to distinctly and highly intensive psychasthenic or hysterical sets. The arrangements of these sets allowed very rich descriptive diagnoses, varying with each particular child. (Dąbrowski, 1967, p. 253)

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

Almost all these forms of *overexcitability* can be detected between 1 and 2 years of age and the older the child the more they are discernible. We can note these potentials in an excessive and global mobility of the child, in its sensitivity to colours, sounds, tastes, smells, in its need for affection, fondling, in silent moods, early sadness and spontaneous joy, in early syntony – even empathy – for parents and siblings, in richness of observation, in quick penetration into the world of fantasy and imagination, in early reflection about himself, about life and about death. Such reflections can appear already in children 3–4 years, old. For instance, one four-year-old girl said. "Death is a trip but it is hard to get out of the hole in the ground where they put the dead person." The same girl also asked: "How can you tell whether someone is sleeping or dead?" another five-year-old girl created for herself whole new realms of existence with leprechauns, birds, squirrels. The door to the attic was the door to these realms which appeared to have a character of sacred mysteries. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 8)

Developmental potential can also be observed in children in connection with strong special interests and abilities. If a child has enhanced intellectual *excitability* then at the age of asking questions he will not be satisfied with automatic answers but will ask a second and a third time, often forming the questions in a new way as a result of new associations. Some children are surprising by their perceptiveness of the world around them, by their childish "philosophical" outlook. Some children show early mathematical abilities in relation to mathematical-philosophical and magical problems. (1972, p. 8)

Every one of the children investigated showed considerable psychomotor, sensual, affectional, imaginal, and intellectual mental *overexcitability*. Moreover, it turned out that these children also showed sets of nervousness, neuroses and psychoneuroses of various kinds and degrees of intensity, from light functional symptoms, or anxiety symptoms, to distinctly and highly intensive psychasthenic or hysterical. (1972, p. 205)

All gifted children and young people display symptoms of increased psychic *excitability*, or psychoneurotic symptoms of greater or lesser intensity. (1972, p. 218)

Responses to a variety of stimuli may markedly exceed the value of an average response, they may last significantly longer (although this is not a necessary attribute of *overexcitability*), and they may occur with greater frequency. For instance, a child's puzzlement with causes of events expressed in frequently asked questions, in long periods of concentrated observation and thought, insistent demands for answers to his question, are manifestations of intellectual *overexcitability*. A child who is disturbed when a leaf is broken off a plant, who feels that the plant is hurt, and who often identifies with feelings of other living creatures manifests emotional *overexcitability*. In such children the anxiety over an accident or injury to their siblings or playmates is greater than over their own. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 71)

In children emotional *overexcitability* is easily observed when a child cries at the sight of a dead bird, when it becomes absorbed in thought and worry on seeing physical deformation or handicap, when it suffers insomnia or nightmares after an upsetting film, or when it is moved to be generous to others and tries to hide it. (1996, p. 73)

In children, emotional *overexcitability* is easily observed when a child cries at the sight of a dead bird, when he becomes absorbed in thought and worry on seeing physical deformation or handicap, when he suffers insomnia or nightmares after an upsetting film, or when he is moved to be generous to others and tries to hide it. Here is a response to the question on having attachments: "I have all sorts of them. I have places, pets, and persons I am very attached to. It's a very personal feeling, and it makes me feel good to think about them. They're mine, it's like a secret JOY almost." and on death: "It scares me. No, may be not death but the idea of forever. I think of it and it scares me and I have to find someone to be with. It's fear that raises terror I feel all over my body." (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 33)

OE as Positive for Development

This view indicates that the present classification of mental symptoms and many of the generalizations about them are not satisfactory for the complex, multivarious problems of mental health. The classification and generalizations may suffice for the psychiatrist who deals only with patients coming to him in the psychiatric clinic, but they are inadequate to the handling of problems of prevention, difficulties in child development, problems of education, and minor problems of nervousness and slight neurosis. The “pathological” disorders of impulses, of rationality, and of personality can be, on the one hand, the symptoms of serious illness, noxious for an individual and for society, but on the other hand they may well be—in the author’s opinion—and usually are a movement toward positive development. In fact, these disturbances are necessary for the evolutionary progress of the individual to a higher level of integration. Increased psychomotor, sensual, imaginative, and intellectual *excitability* are evidence of positive growth. These states are frequently found in individuals at times of their greatest psychological development, in highly creative persons and those of high moral, social, and intellectual caliber. (Dąbrowski, 1964, pp. 13-14)

It will be shown in this work, on the basis of the author’s clinical experience and research, that certain psychic elements, such as various forms of *overexcitability*, germinal elements of the inner milieu, or nuclei of creative abilities, are essential for the formative process leading to the achievement of personality and must come with hereditary endowment. It is usually emphasized that the most important period determining the shaping of personality is the period when the infant “tries his own forces” against the outer environment. However, one must realize that a period even more important than that of early infancy is the period of “awakening” that brings about the development of the inner psychic milieu and its main dynamisms. (Dąbrowski, 1967, p. vi)

Based on the author’s conceptions of the positive role of nervousness as well as neuroses and psychoneuroses in the development of man, it is evident that, with this conception, the method of psychotherapy composes an integral part of the personality shaping methods. If we assume that the various forms of inadaptability to the internal environment (educational difficulties), manifestations of psychic *hyperexcitability* (nervousness), and the numerous forms of neuroses and psychoneuroses constitute indispensable developmental processes, then—extending the thus far accepted meaning of the term psychotherapy and treating it as a method of education and self-education in difficult developmental periods, in conditions of great tensions and conflicts in the external environment and in the internal environment—we will be able to understand properly the above-given conception of psychotherapy. (1967, p. 188)

The Manichaeian dualism is solved by loving God as the highest good; skepticism is leveled by the introduction of the hierarchy of values and by the unification of free will with the will of

God; sensual instincts transform into an enhanced sensitivity to beauty; affectional *hyperexcitability* transforms into a love of God and neighbor; imaginal *hyperexcitability* develops into a prospection in relation to goals. New attitudes and achievements lead to the discovery of the way to ecstasy. Secondary integration is thus attained. Ceasing to be the servant of contradictions and destroying nothing natural, but appraising and feeling them from the spiritual point of view, St. Augustine transformed his sexual drive into a love of beauty, transformed the species instinct into compassion, pity, sensitivity, and active love of his neighbor, thus creating a mature, self-conscious affectional attitude. (1967, p. 224)

In the first kind of development we usually observe an average level of intellectual functions and some degree of emotional underdevelopment. In the other kind of development we usually observe above average abilities, emotional richness and depth, as well as inclination to psychoneurosis. The individuals who manifest the second kind of development are from their childhood maladjusted, talented, experiencing serious developmental crises. They show a tendency toward mental *hyperexcitability*, toward dissolution of lower levels in their drive toward higher levels. Hence, they exhibit disturbances and disharmony in their internal and external environment, the feeling of "otherness," strangeness. In this group we can find bright children, creative and outstanding personalities, men of genius, i.e. those who contribute new values. (Dąbrowski, 1970, pp. 29-30)

The presence of infantile traits in the psychic make-up of adults is generally considered an inferior and negative condition. Yet in creative adults we very often encounter the presence of some infantile traits like *overexcitability*, nervousness, animistic and prelogical thinking, together with some neurotic traits. These traits are almost always present in the personality structure of eminent and creative men. They can be easily detected in their works. (1970, p. 19)

In creative men of talent and genius one encounters much stronger states of mental disequilibrium than in normal people; for example, emotional and imaginal *overexcitability*, states of high tension, strong inhibitions and profound anxiety and other traits of neurotic character. (1970, p. 19)

As we have already stated mental *hyperexcitability* is the basic component of developmental and creative potentials. Creativity, ingenuity, empathy, identification, autonomy and authenticity cannot develop without this foundation. Mental *hyperexcitability* constitutes one of the most important factors in the rise of the inner psychic milieu and of the tendency to transcend one's psychological type and the biological life cycle. In this way mental *hyperexcitability*, and especially emotional and imaginal *hyperexcitability* are one of the most important factors in the drive towards realization of higher forms of mental life. (1970, pp. 49-50)

The developmental role of inner conflicts and crises, emotional and imaginal *hyperexcitability*, disruption of primitive functions and structures, generally speaking, the positive nature of the processes of mental disintegration is emphasized and explained in the framework of a developmental perspective. Special consideration is given to the phenomena of surpassing the biological life cycle and transformation of the psychological type. (1970, pp. 116-117)

Psychic *hyperexcitability*, traits of mixed psychological type (which are, at the same time, the nuclei of the inner psychic milieu), intuition, strong interests and talents, all provide a basis for the slow development of tendencies towards transcending man's biological life cycle. This process is expressed by gradual elimination of automatic, rigid, instinctive stereotypes, and replacing them with dynamisms which are more creative, more individual, more exclusive, more supratypological. (1970, p. 32)

The coexistence in the developmental potential, for example, of emotional, imaginal, and intellectual *hyperexcitability*, or coexistence of introvert and extrovert, schizothymic and cyclothymic traits, enables one to transform his basic psychological type, that is to say, it permits the elaboration of a much more complex, multidimensional and rich typological characteristic. (1970, p. 31)

Another example would be the existence of needs for activity and organization on the part of an individual already characterized by emotional and psychomotor *hyperexcitability*, sensitivity, subtlety, richness of emotional experience and a tendency toward emotional exclusiveness. It is from such potentials that arise the nuclei for the development of higher emotional attitudes, nuclei for transcending one-sided structures, for the development of authenticity, empathy, self-awareness and self-control. (1970, p. 32)

Innate developmental potentials may be more general or more specific, more positive or more negative. General excitability, nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, general interests and aptitudes are examples of general and positive potentials. Specific forms of *hyperexcitability* such as emotional, imaginal or sensual *hyperexcitability*, as well as specific interests or aptitudes, such as musical, choreographic or mathematical aptitudes, constitute specific and positive potentials. Constitutional psychopathy, nuclei of involutionary psychosis, hereditary forms of mental retardation are examples of general negative potentials. Aggressiveness, criminal inclinations, constitute specifically negative potentials. (1970, pp. 33-34)

All the phenomena discussed above, that is to say, positive psychic *hyperexcitability*, low frustration threshold, maladjustment, are marks of the process of positive disintegration, i.e. the process of psychic loosening, disintegration and even possible breakdown. In some cases disintegration has a negative character leading to psychotic dissolution. But in the vast majority of cases, the phenomena of disintegration point to a very great developmental potential. They form the basic dynamisms of mental growth, of sensitivity and creativity; they indicate the possibility of rich positive development which an individual could be capable of. (1970, p. 39)

A person manifesting an enhanced psychic *excitability* in general, and an enhanced emotional, intellectual and imaginal excitability in particular, is endowed with a greater power of penetration into both the external and the inner world. He has a greater need to see their many dimensions and many levels, to think and reflect upon them. These forms of *overexcitability* are the initial condition of developing an attitude of positive maladjustment to oneself, to others, and to the surrounding world. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 65)

The attempts to bring human individuals with nervous tension and psychoneurotic symptoms back to the former, primitive, ordinary homeostasis betray a serious misunderstanding. Prefrontal lobotomy which seemed to promise a surgical cure to mental disturbances brought the patients to a state of vegetative "stability." This treatment removed psychic *hyperexcitability*, disquietude and creative elements. The patients achieved tranquility, a better appetite and biological adaption at the expense of positive development, creativity and authenticity. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 15)

There are no epoch-making philosophical works without serious disintegrative experiences of those who created them. Although the present writer admits the possibility of nondisintegrative ways of development, he wishes to state that in the course of his studies the alleged counterexamples, after a closer examination, proved to be apparent. Therefore, the conclusion seems to be well justified that mental development, especially in its accelerated form, does not take place without emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* which, by itself, presents disequilibrium and disharmony in the internal and less often external environment. We seem to be unable to fully develop and achieve cultural growth without inner conflicts and maladjustment to ourselves and to our surroundings none of which are phenomena of an integrative nature. (1973, p. 41)

The capacity for accelerated, creative development is, as a rule, associated with mental *overexcitability*, neuroses and psychoneuroses. It is characteristic that neither nervousness (mental *overexcitability*, especially emotional imaginal and intellectual) nor neuroses nor psychoneuroses are observable in psychopathy or in cases of medium, or serious mental retardation. However, one reservation must be made. There are instances of a high level of one-sided development in the domain of technology or exact sciences, without psychoneurosis and

without the development of the "global man," that is to say, without the growth of emotion and higher drive. (1973, p. 42)

In our discussion here we will be especially concerned with another kind of mental tension. It arises from distinct or accelerated processes of mental development from above average sensitivity, from internal and external conflicts, from creative attitudes, from the will to transform one's own psychological type, etc. Mental tension of this kind is usually associated with various forms of mental *hyperexcitability*, with excessive sensitivity, with maladjustment to external and internal conditions, with a search for something new and of a higher level of reality. (1973, p. 118)

Positive mental tension is creative tension characteristic for positive and accelerated mental development, usually associated with internal and external conflicts, with mental *hyperexcitability*, and often with psychoneuroses. (1973, p. 120)

Our question is whether a psychological type can be transformed in the sense of sublimation and acquisition of qualities of other, sometimes even opposite, types. In the present writer's opinion such transformations are not only possible, but belong to the area of well established facts. This is the case particularly in such individuals who possess a favorable endowment for accelerated development and the growth of the inner psychic milieu, as well as, mental *hyperexcitability*, distinct nuclei of interests and abilities or even talents. So endowed individuals, in cases of "collision" with the external environment, develop a conscious and autonomous attitude toward themselves and toward the environment. Through the process of positive disintegration they develop a multilevel inner psychic milieu which is the basis for a hierarchization of values, for self-consciousness and self-control. (1973, p. 137)

Without mental *overexcitability* or nervousness the individual has no possibility of "getting out" from the rigid dependence on the biological life cycle which ends in senile deterioration. He has no possibility of transgressing this cycle or transgressing his own psychological type. at the same time the mental structure of individuals not showing symptoms of nervousness lacks the conditions necessary for the development of the inner psychic milieu. Consequently the process of positive disintegration cannot occur. First of all, the individual would have no possibility for the development of an hierarchical differentiation of levels of mental functions, autonomy and authenticity which are indispensable for mental development leading to the full development of personality and transcendence of the biological life cycle. (1973, pp. 147-148)

In what way do psychoneuroses play their defensive, prophylactic and immunizational role against serious mental illness? First of all, creative and developmental dynamisms, combined with hard experiences and hard conditions of life, as well as, a high degree of sensitivity, of affective and imaginal *excitability*, allow this escape to and shelter in a world of a different reality, in a world of different aspirations and experiences. (1973, p. 162)

In our opinion, mental *overexcitability* in most instances has a positive role in development; although it may cause a great deal of difficulties, both for the patient and his environment. In unfavorable constellations mental *overexcitability* may take the form of increased irritability, violent reactions, protracted conflicts with the surroundings. If it is adequately recognized, it may become the basis for a general process of growth of sensitiveness, and especially its emotional, moral and aesthetic forms. It also may contribute to the formation of the inner psychic milieu, of an autonomous hierarchy of values, and the creative development of special interests and talents. (1973, pp. 172-173)

It would be associated with mental *overexcitability* the sense of increased emotional, sensory psychomotor, imaginations, and intellectual excitability. It would link itself with internal and external conflicts connected with the above-mentioned forms of *overexcitability*. Finally it would link itself with inhibitions towards one's own impulsiveness, unmotivated ambitions, and excessively egocentric attitudes. Mental health would, thus, presume the ability to "loosen" and even "break" one's own primitive narrow and rigid mental structure. It would presume the capacity for positive disintegration and secondary integration through transgression of the biological life cycle and of one's own psychological type. This, in turn, would be linked with the development of a higher level of inner psychic milieu and its main dynamisms. Thus, it would be also linked with the autonomous and authentic needs of a clear realization of the personality ideal. (1973, p. 176)

The individual develops his potential simultaneously in intellectual, instinctive, emotional, aesthetic and moral areas. Such development manifests strong and multiple forms of *overexcitability*. But above all it distinctly manifests the individual's awareness and conscious engagement in his own development. Here the autonomous developmental factors carry out the most extensive process of psychic transformation. Development proceeds fairly uniformly although not without intense crises, on a global front encompassing all functions and all dynamisms. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 22)

Accelerated development tends to transcend the general maturational pattern and exhibits some, or even a strong, degree of maladjustment to it. It is characterized by strong psychic **overexcitability** which give rise to nervousness, frequent disintegration of functions, psychoneuroses, social maladjustment. But with all this there is an accelerated global process of psychic transformation of cognitive and emotional structures and functions. (1996, p. 22)

Accelerated development is an expression of developmental differentiation, certain degree of autonomy from biological laws, creativity of universal character, and transformation of the innate psychological type. Here we observe above average abilities in many areas, emotional richness and depth, and multiple and strong manifestations of psychic **overexcitability**. In individuals so endowed one may observe from childhood difficulties of adjustment, serious developmental crises, psychoneurotic processes, and tendency toward disintegration of lower levels of functioning and reaching toward higher levels of functioning. This however, does not occur without disturbances and disharmony with their external environment and within their internal environment. Feelings of "otherness" and strangeness are not uncommon. We find this in gifted children, creative and prominent personalities, men of genius, i.e. those who contribute new discoveries and new values, (Dąbrowski, 1970, pp. 29-30). (1996, p. 22)

The position presented here is that a multilevel emotional conflict, or multilevel emotional-cognitive conflict is the sine qua non condition of development. Let us take, for example, the forms of **overexcitability**. Strong emotional and strong intellectual **overexcitability** lead to a powerful conflict between a personal, feeling and relationship-oriented intuitive approach to life and a probing, analytical, and logical approach. Inevitably the two will clash many times in the course of development before a resolution of the conflict is achieved. If strong imaginal **overexcitability** comes into play the conflict may spread even further. When sensual **overexcitability** enters the picture there arise conflicts between pleasure-orientation which even in its refined esthetic form touches only the surface of experience, and the more rigorous and profound demands of empathy, self-denial, moral principle and need for self-perfection. There may be a violent and enduring conflict between lower level needs of comfort and sensual satisfaction and the higher needs of reflection, solitude and attenuation of sensual desires which are now regarded as interference. (1996, p. 24)

Psychic **overexcitability** in each of its forms is displayed either in all-inclusive or confined forms. For instance, in an all-inclusive form emotional **overexcitability** may seize the whole psyche in a stream of a psychoneurotic process such as general depression or anxiety. In its confined form, it is displayed, for instance, as phobias. In such reactions as neurasthenia or hypochondriasis, emotional **overexcitability** is also in its confined form. Psychomotor **overexcitability** in the all-inclusive form manifests itself as a general restlessness, sudden movements, explosions of anger or screaming. There may be psychomotor crises, which although similar in display to the above, reach deeper into psychic life, even to the unconscious

and the sub-conscious, last longer and have a poorer prognosis. Confined forms of psychomotor *overexcitability* appear as ticks and hyperkineses. The all-inclusive forms of *overexcitability* are more conducive and receptive to developmental transformations. (1996, pp. 73-74)

At lower levels of development *overexcitability* is more often confined than all-inclusive, and more often it occurs in isolation from other forms. The characteristics of a low level of development as being primitive, of little consciousness (reflection) and control, ahierarchical, egocentric, selfish and non-creative, apply also to the manifestations of *overexcitability*. The characteristics of a high level of development are the very opposite. (1996, p. 74)

Developmental Potential

We have already touched several times, albeit superficially, on the topic of the three factors in the development of man. The first of these factors involves the hereditary, innate constitutional elements which are expressed in the developmental potential, in a more or less specific way, and are already recognizable in a one year old child. They can often be clearly perceived in a child from one to three years of age. The early differentiation of such a potential could not be explained, despite its plausibility, by environmental factors. Within a family that is cultural and well educated, that manifests love and responsibility for the children, we cannot explain the differences in emotional or imaginal *hyperexcitability*, the differences in mixed typology, the differences in interests and talents among the children by reference to environmental influences only. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 33)

The developmental instinct can be clearly seen in what we call accelerated development and especially in the development of eminent personalities. It is recognized by an early appearance of developmental nuclei. Usually, the potential for accelerated development is marked by the presence of multiple forms of *overexcitability*, of nuclei of positive disintegration and of the inner psychic milieu, as well as of special abilities, talents and interests. (1970, p. 27)

Psychic *hyperexcitability* is one of the major developmental potentials, but it also forms a symptom, or a group of general psychoneurotic symptoms. We have already described the significance of this symptom for development as well as its creative aspect. (1970, p. 40)

An increased psychic excitability encompasses enhanced excitability of affect, imagination, psychomotor and sensual reactions, and intelligence (intellectual excitability). From these develops a wider spectrum of feelings, an increased field of consciousness, and a greater and more complex pattern of excitation and inhibition. Psychic *overexcitability* is one of the recognizable components of the developmental potential (cf. p. 6). (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 65)

The forms of expression of psychic *overexcitability* described above are those that do not have a strong developmental potential. Those that do take on more complex forms. When the developmental potential is strong then a new and very important factor comes into play, namely hierarchization. This is the beginning of the development of a multilevel inner psychic milieu. (1972, pp. 78-79)

The nuclei of positive hereditary endowment, in the form of psychic *overexcitability*, (cf. Chapter 1) nuclei of multilevelness, general and special abilities and talents, etc., determine, on the one hand, accelerated development through positive disintegration, and, on the other hand, build protective and prophylactic forces in the form of mental and emotional plasticity, hierarchization of levels of reality and levels of values, and the need for the realization of personality and its ideal. (1972, pp. 136-137)

Nervousness, neuroses, and especially psychoneuroses, bring the nervous system to a state of greater sensitivity. They make a person more susceptible to positive change. The high psychic structures gradually gain control over the low ones. The lower psychic structures undergo a refinement this process of inner psychic transformation. This transformation is the fruition of the developmental potential which makes these states possible and makes possible their further development. The components of the development potential like enhanced *overexcitability*, nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, and special abilities and talents play here an active role. Through multilevel disintegration there occurs positive evolution, making possible the achievement of a high level. (1972, p. 160)

Of course, the nuclei of the instinct of self-perfection already appear in the first symptoms of the developmental potential in psychic *overexcitability*, especially emotional, in the nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, in the nuclei of transgression of one's psychological type and in the dynamism of inner psychic transformation. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 28)

Accelerated development depends on such hereditary potential as mental *hyperexcitability*, nuclei of the inner psychic milieu and nuclei of distinct interests and aptitudes which, in collaboration with favorable influences of the environment and autonomous dynamisms, bring about nervous tension and positive development through psychoneuroses. (1973, pp. 151-152)

Psychoneurotics possess the potential for mental – especially emotional, imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability* – as well as, the nuclei of the inner psychic milieu and, consequently, they exhibit the potential for transcendence of the biological life cycle and of one's own psychological type, as in the case of an introverted individual gaining extravert qualities. Psychoneurotic dynamisms, with which this developmental potential is closely associated, leads

the individual into a new reality which may be dramatic or even tragic: they foster the breaking of rigid, narrow automatisms and forms of everyday life. (1973, p. 162)

The five forms of *overexcitability* are the constitutional traits which make it possible to assess the strength of the developmental potential independently of the context of development (Piechowski, in press). They can be detected in small children, already at the age of 2-3 (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 8-9). These five forms are described in a different section. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 16)

Developmental potential is strongest if all, or almost all forms of *overexcitability* are present. The three forms, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional, are essential if a high level of development is to be reached. The highest level of development is possible only if the emotional form is the strongest, or at least no less strong than the other forms. Great strength of the psychomotor and the sensual forms limits development to the lowest levels only. (1996, p. 16; Dąbrowski, 1977)

One-sided development. Individuals endowed with special talents but lacking multilevel developmental potential realize their development mainly as a function of their ability and creativity. Such creativity, however, lacks universal components. Only some emotional and intellectual potentials develop very well while the rest remains undeveloped, in fact, it appears lacking. There is often disproportionate development of certain forms of expression of emotional, sensual, or imaginal *overexcitability*. It may be manifested for instance as excessive identification with others to the point of losing one's identity but which lacks the more mature and balanced aspects of relationships, or as great fascination with the whole range of the world of real life or the dream or occult world but without any sense of discrimination. This may give rise to copious creative outpourings in writing, painting, movie making or scientific endeavor but it will lack the universal context of human experience, knowledge, and objective hierarchy of values. (1996, p. 21)

The developmental transitions are from integration to disintegration and from unilevel structures to multilevel structures. It was stated that the feasibility and the extent of these transitions is a function of the developmental potential; its components, the three factors and the five forms of *overexcitability*, were identified. It would seem this is all that is needed. However, the developmental potential is defined as the original endowment necessary to reach a given level of development. This does not mean that it is sufficient. It appears as a logical necessity to postulate an organizing factor which can gradually bring order out of the chaos of the clashes and conflicts provided by the multivariate components of the original endowment. This organizing factor might be distinct from it. This certainly is a difficult problem and one which cannot be readily

resolved. But the use of a concept of a 'developmental instinct' addresses to this problem. (1996, p. 25)

Having discussed the concepts of multilevelness and positive disintegration, it seems best to proceed to a description of two pentatonic sets on which rests the theory of positive disintegration. The first set is made of five levels of development, the second, of five forms of psychic *overexcitability*. The second set constitutes the essential components of the developmental potential to be presented in Chapter 5. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 18)

Developmental potential is defined as the original endowment which determines what level of development a person may reach if the physical and environmental conditions are optimal (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 31; Piechowski, 1974). Developmental potential (DP) has certain defining characteristics which allow us to detect its presence and measure its strength. The defining characteristics of DP are forms of *overexcitability* and dynamisms. Table 2 attempts to show how these terms are those characteristics which are observed or inferred in the process of development. The lower part is labeled "DP" to refer to the components of the developmental potential, namely, dynamisms and forms of *overexcitability*. (1977, p. 57)

It would be hard to find recognizable manifestations of dynamisms early in development, as in small pre-verbal children. Thus, at the beginning of development, the above equation must reduce to $DP = oe$; the pentatonic set of forms of psychic *overexcitability* is what we must look at if we want to assess developmental potential early. However, appropriate methods first have to be developed. (1977, p. 60)

The definition of the developmental potential as a fixed endowment which determines the levels of development a person may reach usually evokes the reaction that this puts a rigid ceiling on everyone's development except for the most abundantly blessed. But one must look at the last part of the definition, which states, "if the physical and environmental conditions are optimal" and try to appreciate what actually can happen when the conditions of psychological growth are, indeed, optimal. This is rarely the case, however. Under the heading, "Secure attachment and the Growth of Self-Reliance," Bowlby (1973, Chapter 21) reviewed a number of studies in which the relation between personality development and family experience was examined in detail. An example is provided by the case of Ralph in Peck and Havighurst's (1960) study of character development. At the age of 17, Ralph appears to have an unusually strong sense of fairness and justice, liking for others, and confidence in himself. On the other hand, he is not very imaginative, does not burn with curiosity, but, rather, likes to have normal, ordinary fun like those around him. From our point of view, Ralph would appear to have a quite limited developmental potential. Yet compared with others, he comes across as a wonderfully mature and responsive human being. Peck and Havighurst put him in their highest category: rational-

altruistic. In this case, Ralph's family conditions were indeed optimal, where the parents provided a climate of affection, trust, encouragement, interest, and order. Thus, rather than interpret DP as a limitation, it might be worthwhile to ponder how severely limiting the environment often is. It is also worth pointing out that it will be easier to uncover the manifestations of DP and cultivate them if one knows what to look for in terms of specific expressions of different kinds of **overexcitability**. And, lastly, it will not do to blame parents for what they do not know how to provide; rather, parents must be trained, educated, and assisted throughout the years of child rearing. (1977, pp. 60-61)

The concept of developmental potential is introduced out of logical necessity to account for individual differences in the extent of development. This concept is not offered as an abstraction, however elegant, but is associated with observable traits - the five forms of **overexcitability** and their derivatives, the dynamisms – which allow one to assess its composition and strength. These traits are the key to an explanation of development through positive disintegration. (1977, p. 71)

Negative Developmental Potential

In a significant number of cases of isolated forms of sensual or psychomotor **overexcitability** (i.e. when there is no admixture of other forms of **overexcitability**), in cases when the nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, wider interests and abilities, and sharp awareness of one's own developmental path are lacking, we are dealing with a negative potential which is not helped by the influence of the environment, but on the contrary, is harmed by it. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 11)

It is difficult to speak of a negative psychoneurotic potential because a negative developmental potential covers the borderline of psychoneurotic nuclei, psychopathy, psychosis and even mental retardation. When enhanced psychomotor and sensual **overexcitability** is combined with strong ambitions, tendencies to showing off and lying, it constitutes a nucleus of psychopathy with some neuropathic components. This is a potential for the development of characteropathy, or, better, of hysterical psychopathy. (1972, p. 11)

A hereditary endowment with only one-sided form of the developmental potential, e.g. special skills or abilities which pertain to one activity only but are not combined with different kinds of emotional **overexcitability** or a wide range of interests, for instance a special talent for playing chess, a keen memory for facts and dates but not for deeper understanding of history, a sharp intelligence for an objective quantitative research career in science but lacking the ability to put the interpretation of the findings in a wider context, or even to see its philosophical implications. Consequently adaptation to a hierarchical conception of reality and values (multilevel disintegration) is poor, being not global but narrow. Inner psychic transformation and self-

control are also weak, while there may be some creative ability, however the sensitivity to internal and external stimuli is very high. (1972, pp. 171-172)

In these two forms of increased *excitability* (e.g. psychomotor and affective) among retarded children, we note the following:

1. reactions to primitive stimuli (other stimuli are not used in child's development); 2. reactions easily noticeable externally;
3. satisfaction with primitive experiences;
4. lack in transformation of psychic excitability;
5. lack of any symptoms of increased intellectual *excitability* and imagination;
6. if the last is exhibited, it is only in the area of primitive, concrete, or magical thinking of an undeveloped and non-creative type. (1972, p. 179)

We are not interested here in this kind of problem. Our question is the following: Is there any possibility of transformation of such psychological types as introverted and extraverted, cyclothymic and schizothymic; types of various kinds of mental *hyperexcitability*, such as emotional, imaginal, sensual, psychomotor or intellectual. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 136)

Developmental potential may be negative. When enhanced psychomotor or sensual *overexcitability* is combined with strong ambition, tendencies toward showing off, lying, and cheating, then it constitutes a nucleus of psychopathy and characteropathy (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 11). (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 16)

Dynamisms as Derivatives of OE

The sense of guilt arises during the process of multilevel disintegration because it is the expression of a dissatisfaction of the disposing and directing center with some lower activities in the psychic internal environment. Everyday experience and clinical observation have shown that psychoanalytic theories concerning the origin and development of guilt are not justified in many cases. This feeling appears in and is often closely related to strong emotional structure showing great sensitivity in moral and social areas. That is, the individual who has very distinct capabilities of positive development and responsibility is likely to suffer feelings of guilt. This kind of emotional structure is much stronger in nervous and in neurotic individuals. Intelligent and emotionally *overexcitable* children with a high level of reflection and self-observation often show external and internal conflicts accompanied by the feeling of guilt. (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 37)

The third agent manifests itself in its initial phase during childhood. We may observe in a child's conduct simple and direct symptoms of his discontent with himself and his behavior; we note that the child seeks forgiveness for incurring displeasure. Manifestations of a child's independence of his surroundings and a growing *excitability* of a mixed type, with imaginative, psychomotor, emotional, and sensorial components, testify to the germination of the third agent. That is, symptoms of childish nervousness (which are forms of disintegration) express to some extent the activities of the third agent. All that influences the beginning of an accepting and rejecting attitude toward stimuli of the internal and external environment, and the placing of a high value on one inner trait and a negative value on another may be considered embryonic forms of the third agent. (1964, p. 55)

Disquietude can arise with low, medium or high psychological tension. What is the source of disquietude? It appears to be based, to a great extent, on psychic *hyperexcitability*, particularly of the emotional and the imaginal type. Since it develops an attitude of prospection, emotional and imaginal *hyperexcitability* gives rise to uneasiness about the future. Disturbing affective experiences, frustrations, disappointments, and suffering experienced in the past excite uneasy thoughts about the future. Those feelings constitute an important part in the lives of individuals endowed with favorable developmental nuclei. (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 40)

What is the source of the phenomenon of positive maladjustment? It arises from psychic *hyperexcitability* particularly emotional, imaginal, and intellectual, from the nuclei of the inner psychic milieu, and from the instincts of creativity and self-perfection. (1970, p. 39)

Among older youths the majority of creative abilities was displayed by individuals with a very advanced development (i.e. multilevel disintegration) of their internal psychic milieu. We have assessed in these individuals their enhanced emotional *overexcitability* and initial activity of such dynamisms like subject-object in oneself, the third factor, forms of periodical self-control. At the same time we have found the following characteristics in their somewhat unexpected constellations: excessive sensitivity and subtlety, withdrawal from too easily made unselective social contract, richness of the associative apparatus, strong need for evaluation, strong artistic imagination and tendency for fabulation, difficulties in concentrating, tendency to be easily tired, and typical psychosomatic reactions such as ease of becoming motionless while retaining awareness, temporary disorders of inner feeling (coenesthesia), sensation of possible split of the "physical" and the "psychical" self, or "picking up" disagreeable traits of other persons by touch (through handshake, for instance). (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 218)

The essence of creativity and of the creative instinct will not be extensively discussed here. We shall only briefly review some of the circumstances associated with the formation and growth of this instinct. It arises and develops under the following conditions: the operation of the dynamisms of astonishment with the environment and with oneself, disquietude with the environment and with oneself, sensory and emotional sensitivity and foremost, an abundance of imagination and fantasy, and – usually – increased intellectual *excitability*. (Dąbrowski, 1973, p. 25)

The creative instinct, alone, or together with dynamisms of the same level, is in expression of a "psychological awakening," of increased imaginal, emotional, psychomotor, sensory, and intellectual *excitability* combined in a group of varying breadth. The creative instinct, per se, does not usually contain hierarchical, evaluative elements. It is only the coupling of this instinct with other higher level dynamisms that links it with the need to develop an autonomous personality and its ideal. (1973, pp. 25-26)

With regard to the relation of the instinct of self-perfection to neuroses and psychoneuroses, it is clear that the genesis of this instinct is bound closely, and in positive correction, with mental *hyperexcitability* (nervousness) and psychoneuroses. Psychoneuroses, as we know, play the fundamental role in the development of unilevel and multilevel disintegration, in the separation of the "more I" and "less I," in the growth of consciousness and in the development of autonomy and authenticity. In the self-perfection of the individual such psychoneuroses as anxiety neurosis, depressive neuroses of an existential type, play a fundamental role. (1973, p. 31)

Distinct creative tendencies, tendencies toward self-perfection, that is to say, tendencies toward transformations, toward accelerated development are, as a rule, associated with mental structures of those people who have a definite positive hereditary endowment favorable to accelerated development. They usually coincide with mental *hyperexcitability*, especially that of an emotional or imaginal nature, with disharmony, with the processes of mental "loosening." These kind of mental states occur when there is the process of growth of hierarchization of values, precision of the personality, ideal, formation and growth of the inner psychic milieu and its dynamisms particularly the third factor, "subject-object" in oneself, inner psychic transformation, autonomy and authenticity. (1973, p. 35)

In preceding chapters we mentioned the problem of the participation of loosening and disintegration in the processes of mental development. Now we are going to briefly discuss the problem of the so-called positive disintegration. We refer here to the general processes of medium or great intensity, like mental *overexcitability*; conscious, external and, especially internal conflicts; states of dissatisfaction with oneself, etc. It does not seem that authentic creativity of a high level is possible without the activity of neurotic and psychoneurotic

dynamisms. There is no great drama, great poetry, religious mystery (which after all, present the original experiences of their authors) without significant elements of suffering, disruption, depression and inner conflicts. (1973, p. 41)

The second kind of attitude has emotional and intellectual roots. It arises from genuine emotional and imaginal *excitability*, from empathy and identification, from consciousness and self-consciousness, and from prospection. This is the attitude exhibited by such individuals as: Socrates, Lincoln, Father Kolbe, Dr. Korczak, etc. The limits of responsibility are determined here by syntonny, by conscious love and prospection, the level and scope of which grows in proportion to all-around mental development and is increasingly associated with the drive toward realization and readiness to sacrifice. Individuals of this kind feel responsible for the realization of justice and for the protection of others against harm and injustice. Their feelings of responsibility extend almost to everything. Their attitude is the exact opposite of the attitude expressed in Wyspianski's drama "The Wedding": "Let there be war everywhere in the world, if only our village is secure and quiet." (1973, pp. 96-97)

Both in the states of nervousness (i.e., in the states of mental *overexcitability*), as well as, in an overwhelming majority of psychoneuroses we can find distinct positive and creative dynamisms. a similar viewpoint is represented by Choisy, Jude and Enachescu. (1973, p. 172)

The five forms of *overexcitability* undergo extensive differentiation in the course of development. One of its products are developmental dynamisms, i.e. the intrapsychic factors which shape and direct development. Emotional and imaginal *overexcitability*, in cooperation with the intellectual play the most significant role in their formations. A more precise definition and resolution of the relationships between the three sets of factors and the five forms of *overexcitability* awaits future analysis. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 16)

Hierarchization of internal conflict and development opens a channel for resolution and direction of developmental tensions. When this channel is not open, as in unilevel disintegration, the tensions lead to severe psychosomatic illness, psychosis, or suicide. The power of the dynamisms of spontaneous multilevel disintegration is mainly a function of the power of emotional *overexcitability*. (1996, p. 35)

Enhanced excitability, especially in its higher forms, allows for a broader, richer, multilevel, and multidimensional perception of reality. The reality of the external and of the inner world is conceived in all its multiple aspects. In consequence, *overexcitability* plays a fundamental role in the development of dynamisms, their tension, their seeking for channels leading "upward," their positive maladjustment and transformation not only of the inner milieu but also of the external milieu. (1996, p. 74)

[Excitation, Level IV] The dynamisms of inner inhibition are very strong, as is the readiness to eliminate any "*excitability*" from sources of lower levels. There is a program of methods and means of developing excitation on higher level with simultaneous inhibition of dynamisms of medium or low level (i.e. borderline of levels II and III, and early III). It is well known that the state of meditation brings about inner quietude, calm awareness of one's weaknesses, calm equilibration of what has been achieved in the struggles of everyday life. This inner calm can be considered a meditative inhibition which strengthens our achievements. In rare moments one may be given the chance to reach to very high levels of reality. In such moments appear new insights which in some way stimulate us "upwards." This stimulation as an immediate result of the experience is full of positive and serene tension. It is a calm excitation coming "from above." We could call it a contemplative excitation. (1996, p. 80; 1977, p. 113)

Movement from "what is" to "what ought to be" opens a channel for resolution and direction of developmental tensions. When this channel is not open, as in unilevel disintegration, the tensions lead to severe psychosomatic illness, psychosis, or suicide. The power of the dynamisms of spontaneous multilevel disintegration is mainly a function of the power of emotional *overexcitability*. (Dąbrowski, 1977, pp. 40-41)

The five forms of *overexcitability* undergo extensive differentiation in the course of development. as shown in Table 2, the three forms – imaginal, intellectual, and emotional – are essential for the formation of autonomous developmental processes. The autonomous processes are represented by multilevel dynamisms. These are the processes in which the individual begins consciously to participate in and direct his own development. These processes depend on the presence, early in development, of the three essential forms of *overexcitability*. (1977, p. 60)

The forms of *overexcitability* and the dynamisms are regarded as the moving forces of development: *overexcitability* being the original equipment and dynamisms the propellant derivatives. If the forms of *overexcitability* and the dynamisms are actually the only significant forces of development, then the assessment of their strength should yield an assessment of the strength of the developmental potential. A test of this hypothesis is described in Volume 2. Frequency counts of the two components obtained from autobiographical material were plugged

into the simple equation $DP = d + oe$ and compared with values obtained in clinical assessment. The obtained agreement was quite good. (1977, p. 60)

Other constellations of traits such as mixture of extraversion and introversion or the opposition of impulsive and careless vs. deliberate and thoughtful behavior are the seeds of many conflicts. Together with different forms of *overexcitability*, the conflicts sooner or later become multilevel, that is, between "what is" against "what ought to be." The dynamisms of level III receive their names from different types of cognitive (astonishment, positive maladjustment) and emotional conflicts (shame, guilt, disquietude, inferiority, dissatisfaction). The dynamisms of level II are named for conflicting fluctuations of feelings (ambivalences) and actions (ambitendencies). The intensity of conflicts reflects the strength of these dynamisms, but the strength of development depends on the greater strength of the multilevel dynamisms. (1977, p. 65)

Enhanced excitability, especially in its higher forms, allows for a broader, richer, multilevel, and multidimensional perception of reality. The reality of the external and of the inner world is conceived in multiple aspects. Consequently, *overexcitability* plays a fundamental role in the development of dynamisms, their tension, their seeking for channels leading "upward," their positive maladjustment and transformation not only of the inner milieu but also of the external milieu. Lesniak (1974) carried out an extensive study of perceptanalytic referents of psychic *overexcitability*. (1977, p. 106)

Functions described in this chapter are, at higher levels of development, derivatives of emotional *overexcitability*. This is particularly true of high capacity for enthusiasm, emotional ties, low threshold of frustration, loneliness, awareness of death and of its interpersonal consequences. (1977, p. 146)

[Level III Altruism] Distinct hierarchization of altruistic feelings is based on an increasing awareness of one's own attitude and on significant sensitivity in evaluating oneself or others with increasing identification, greater sensitivity, and empathy toward others. The important sources of these feelings are astonishment with oneself, disquietude with oneself, and feelings of shame and guilt. Strong inner conflicts generated by emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* provide the basis for multilevel and multidimensional development of one's relations with others leading to growth of empathy, compassion, self-sacrifice, etc. (1977, pp. 165-166)

Inner Transformation

Transformation and development in the individual with imaginative *overexcitability* often occur. Indeed, a person of this type has the potential for considerable development. Through positive disintegration he will deepen his imagination and at the same time enlarge his sensitivity to the external world of nature and of social life. He will develop tendencies to evaluate and limit his impetuous, incorrect observations. As he enlarges his sense of reality, he will increase the degree of organization of his psychic structure. This form of transformation will permit him to build a heterogenic psychic structure in which intellectual, psychomotor, emotional, and sensory elements will help to deepen his imagination. (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 72)

Psychomotor tendencies are inhibited and transformed. There is a cooperation between affective, imaginal, intellectual and psychomotor components of *overexcitability*. It is expressed in a zeal for organization, planning and programming. There is a need for deeds which may give rise to psychomotor obsessions of existential and organizational nature; or to tendencies to create great works. This is a psychoneurotic trait of an excess of activity developed on the basis of "internal psychomotricity." Saint Paul and Saint Theresa of Avila are good examples of this inner pressure for deeds on a large scale. (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 80)

The nuclei of the inner psychic milieu provide for its development into a multilevel structure. These nuclei appear together with abilities to transform different forms of psychic *overexcitability* into multilevel processes, and even to transform talents not only by making them richer and deeper but by combining them with the instinct of self-perfection. (1972, p. 130)

The interlocking relationships between different developmental nuclei integrated into one vector of a developmental instinct play an essential role in the transformation of external and internal stimuli into stimuli operating on many levels. These couplings determine a closely woven activity of different forms of enhanced excitability, especially emotional, imaginal and intellectual; they also determine how to make use of the positive aspects of sensual and psychomotor *overexcitability* by subordinating them to the other three higher forms of *overexcitability*. (1972, p. 130)

When the psychomotor and sensual *overexcitability* come under the control of the other three forms of *overexcitability* they lose their isolated character and leave their single plane of operation. Affective, imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability* have a higher potential for the evolution of multilevel dynamisms. Thus psychomotor *overexcitability* is transformed into a strong dynamic ability of planning and carrying out one's goals, while sensual *overexcitability* develops into a hierarchical sensitivity acting towards seeking delights on higher levels of

experience (many mystics show strong sensuality transformed by the power of their emotions and striving for self-perfection). (1972, pp. 130-131)

In the course of development the basic form of *overexcitability* becomes more complex by intrusions from other forms of *overexcitability*. Thus in spontaneous multilevel disintegration a basic form of psychomotor or sensual *overexcitability* becomes enriched by appearance of components of enhanced *overexcitability* of affect, imagination or intellect. Likewise in the course of development a given psychoneurosis loses its "pure" character and becomes more complex by admixture of other psychoneuroses, as for instance hysteria becomes enriched by psychoneurotic infantilism, or neurasthenia by psychasthenic reactions. The stronger the hysterical sets, the weaker the symptoms of other psychoneurotic sets. The inverse is also true. Hysteria occurs to a great extent irrespective of one's age. (1972, p. 216)

The interaction between different forms of *overexcitability* leads to important developmental consequences. It was said earlier that the psychomotor and the sensual forms by themselves cannot promote development to a higher level. However, in combination with the other forms such as emotional, intellectual and imaginal, they can be transformed and raised to a higher level. Thus, for instance, emotional *overexcitability* (provided it is all-inclusive and sufficiently developed) introduces controlling, inhibiting factors to psychomotricity and sensuality. Imaginal *overexcitability* enriches them by elements of fantasy, humor and prospection which tends to diffuse and control the primitive drive aspect of enhanced psychomotricity and sensuality, by transferring the energy of the impulse to a different and broader territory. (Dąbrowski, 1996, p. 74; Dąbrowski, 1977)

[Altruism, Level III] Distinct hierarchization of altruistic feelings is based on an increasing awareness of one's own attitude and on significant sensitivity in evaluating oneself or others. This leads to increasing identification with others and greater sensitivity and empathy toward others. The important sources of these feelings are astonishment with oneself, disquietude with oneself, and feelings of shame and guilt. Strong inner conflicts generated by emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* provide the basis for multilevel and multidimensional development of one's relations with others leading to growth of empathy, compassion, self-sacrifice, etc. (1996, p. 127)

Enhanced and subtly differentiated emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* allows the highest level of artistic expression in understanding and representing the suffering as well as the joy experienced by man. In the creative process, the artist, poet, musician intuitively rises to this highest level although he, himself, may not have reached it in his own development. But such individuals as Saint Francis of Assisi or Ramakrishna combine childlike nature with the highest

level of development, guided only by their personality ideal – for Saint Francis represented by Christ, for Ramakrishna by Divine Mother Kali. (Dąbrowski, 1977, p. 183)

Examples from Clinical Practice and Biographical Material

This mechanism is illustrated by the case of 18-year-old Miss 11-1, a nervous idealist, very intelligent and highly sentimental, quick tempered and *overexcitable*. M showed in childhood a moderate tendency to hyperkinesis, nail-biting, scratching of the nailfold, and a tendency to excessive enthusiasm and periodic depression. No hereditary stigmata were found. M fell in love with one of her acquaintances and decided to marry. Some time later, it turned out that the chosen one had deceived her. Within a few hours after learning this, she gave herself to the least acceptable and even physically repulsive of her suitors, after which she committed suicide. We deal here with an emotional shock caused by a sudden disappointment. The realization of one's own conflicting tendencies toward the object of one's emotions and toward one's ego produces a reaction in young, impulsive, introverted girls a state of depression and doubt concerning the value of the deeper emotions, together with a focusing of vengeance on one's own self. (Dąbrowski, 1937, p. 12)

Among neurasthenics, self-accusation and self-mutilation may be the result of a strong mental tension and depression combined with a feeling of impotency and inferiority. This mechanism is illustrated by the case of 18-year-old S who was a pleasant, cooperative boy of high intelligence. Once he slashed both his wrists with a penknife; several times, in states of excitement, he lifted heavy stones. In these instances he wanted to punish himself for masturbation and to free himself from the unpleasant state of mental *overexcitability*. A feeling of inferiority, combined with masturbation, shyness in relations with girls (when in their company, the thought persisted that he would not be able to have relations with them), together with acne of the face, played a part in the development of self-mutilating and suicidal tendencies. The following points throw light on the source of this condition. In his family, his mother was fonder of his better-looking brother, of whom the patient was jealous. He was not brought up to be an active member of the community; he took no part in plays, amusements, or school activities. He was highly emotional, which he probably inherited from his parents. This condition was intensified by masturbation which the patient considered from the beginning sinful and punishable (he grew up among people holding such convictions). These factors produced states of strong mental tension of an anxious character which were released by self-mutilation. (1937, p. 25)

The suicide of Spitznagel, a friend of the great Polish romantic author Slowacki, is an example of suicide based on the irritability and struggle between tendencies. We know from the psychological works of Julius Slowacki that he was, in contrast to Spitznagel and despite his great *overexcitability* and tendency to depression, a type which easily realized his aims in the world of dreams and fancies by which he transformed real life as he wanted it. Spitznagel, on the

contrary, needed to see spiritual values in life and had a much more strongly developed sense of reality and criticism, which did not allow him to transform reality at will. Not finding in the real world the spiritual values he sought, there was an intensification of the inner conflict resulting in self-mutilation and suicide. (1937, p. 43)

Anxiety associated with nervousness, awareness of his physical unattractiveness, and past humiliations caused the birth of a feeling of inferiority compensated for by a tendency to irony, disdain, and irritability. Emotional *hyperexcitability*, at times when it was difficult to find a full outlet in art, released itself in self-mutilation, a characteristic means of release for the type of anxious and distinctly introverted individuals to which Michelangelo belonged. Emotionality and a predominantly inner life produced a strong need for love and deep enduring friendship. However, he experienced in this respect not only disappointments but also humiliations. One of his beloved ones played with his **excitability**: she excited his jealousy by flirting with others. He detested her in the end; he begged fate to disfigure her, and to make her fall in love with him, so that he could in his turn refuse her love and cause her pain. (1937, p. 48)

He remained emotional and *hyperexcitable*, with an “absent-mindedness” in every kind of undertaking. In the last years of his life he thought less and less of his creations, giving them away and sometimes destroying them. (1937, p. 51)

We shall endeavor to examine these factors one by one. Dostoyefsky, from his childhood, showed signs of emotional *overexcitability* and nervousness. He suffered from nervous headaches and palpitations, according to Dr. Jaworsky (a close acquaintance), and showed symptoms of hypochondria. According to his wife, friends, and acquaintances he was of an explosive type, **excitable**, and inclined to extremes in feeling, judgments, and actions. (1937, pp. 52)

He easily fell into childish fears about his wife and children and often expressed a feeling of impending death. The mental *overexcitability* and the states of anxiety produced an unbearable self-consciousness, causing frequent outbursts, loss of presence of mind, and ridiculous actions, which became the basis of a feeling of guilt, humiliation, and self-accusation. Lacking the possibility of finding an outlet for the tension, the state of restlessness and excitement increased. The knowledge of an inner source of these states strengthened his self-accusation and self-mutilation. Dostoyefsky writes of himself that in the absence of outer excitation the inner ones became predominant and caused nervousness and day-dreaming. (1937, p. 53)

One can find three phases of reaction to suffering in general, and especially to the unmerited and forced sufferings of the *overexcitable*, introverted individual. The first is a momentary state of stupor, followed by a feeling of rage and hatred against the cause of suffering; the second is a somewhat chronic state of psychic intoxication with suffering, self-retirement, and a necessity to frighten others with his suffering; the third and last, is the creation of a philosophy of suffering on the discovery of its power to deliver one from the higher moral values. It is clear that I am giving here only a brief outline. In principle, however, it is in accordance with the reaction to Dostoyefsky's suffering and many of his heroes. Such an adaptation to suffering may not reach the third phase, but may stop at one of the intermediate stages. The less clearly the perpetrator is determined and the more distant he is, the greater is the state of excitement and helpless anger. I have already mentioned, in the first chapter, that indistinctly localized vague excitations cause a stronger mental tension and make its release more difficult in contrast to the simple visible excitations. Such vague and poorly localized excitations are seen in self-mutilation in the psychic sphere, where the suffering is undeserved and imposed by an unknown perpetrator (forces of nature, laws of society for which all of society is responsible, etc.). The lack of a starting-point for the outlet of tension causes states of helpless fury. (1937, p. 59)

Stavrogin had frequent possibilities for outbursts of anger and for the humiliation of others, but seldom did he have a chance to experience great humiliation and derision. Hence, the experiencing of the latter would require a much greater tension. Mental *overexcitability*, and a tendency to psychopathic outbursts are released more easily and strongly by the action of the strongest agents. Therefore the search for humiliating and derisive situations becomes more comprehensible. Stavrogin provoked and insulted others in order to elicit an insult and abasement of himself. He illustrates a continuous inner struggle between the feeling of anger, aggression, and of the anger of others. In cases where it was difficult to become an object of aggression, Stavrogin found the object and subject in himself. He was the perpetrator of mutilation, and its victim. This is illustrated by a passage from the "document": (1937, pp. 81-82)

In this view we see a struggle of conflicting tendencies in Schopenhauer himself. It is an erroneous statement that each of us would most likely end life if this end were not connected with unpleasant experiences. It should rather be assumed that Schopenhauer wanted his wish to die to be more generalized. But this was not so, and hence the intensification of his aversion for society, turning into hatred, perhaps motivated by the fact that he felt in himself what he despised in others, namely, the very strong wish to live, the force of inexhaustible instincts which made him enjoy in his later years the spending of his works among the despised society. The extreme conflict between the mental and the sensual needs, the increasing suppression of the wish to live, and the surrender to this wish were the basis of the state of *overexcitability* and of states of anxiety and aggression in literary creations as well as in life, in the form of irony, disdain, and hatred directed toward men in general. (1937, p. 87)

During the preschool period Ella had been an obedient girl but from time to time emotionally *overexcitable*, ambitious, independent in her activities, and sensitive toward the external environment, though in a subtle, private way. She had always had a great deal of inhibition. At 4 1/2 she had begun to discuss with her parents the problems of loss, of death, and of life after death. (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 24)

Ella was an introvert with rather schizothymic traits. She was intelligent, self-conscious, and inclined to be emotionally *overexcitable*, and her excitability was easily transferable to the vegetative nervous system. She was ambitious and tended to be a perfectionist but was somewhat timid and likely to resign in the face of external difficulties. She had symptoms of transient depression, anxiety, and inhibition. However, her aims and ideals were clear, and she leaned toward moral and social concerns. She presented the type of emotional tension very closely related to psychic development. (1964, p. 25)

We see in this case a fairly early stage of positive disintegration with emotional *overexcitability*, ambivalences, and the initial formation of psychic internal environment. There is the gradual construction of the disposing and directing center, hindered by the child's inhibition but supported by her determination to handle new situations despite anxiety, her strong feeling of obligation, and her ambitions. This conflict, increased by her need to meet new situation, presents a crisis in development. (1964, p. 25)

The patient was extremely intelligent and particularly apt in his field of studies. He showed a high emotionality and imaginative *overexcitability*, strong inhibitions, guilt, an attitude of timidity, discontentment with himself, feelings of inferiority toward himself, and feelings of disquietude and anxiety. He presented a very strong moral structure and a tendency to be exclusive in his emotional attitude and in his relation to other people. (1964, p. 28)

The patient was introverted, schizothymic, and emotionally *overexcitable* and had trouble adapting himself to the demands of the external environment. He was very inhibited and had an inferiority complex based on his stuttering. He had a high level of subtlety of introspection and moral attitude toward himself and his environment. There was a clear hierarchical development of the psychic internal environment, but his disposing and directing center was not strongly developed because of lack of attainment of his aims, poor adaptation to this social environment, and lack of proper self-evaluation. In the various difficulties of everyday life his emotional *excitability* increased, and he showed the symptoms of subacute emotional crisis. This state caused, and was in turn increased by, his difficulty in taking examinations and his subsequent failure. At the same time, his condition was clearly connected with his emotional attachment to a girl and his inability to realize a satisfactory relationship with her. (1964, p. 29)

P—, a 3-year-old girl, very intelligent (I.Q. = 140), impulsive, imaginative, and emotionally *hyperexcitable*, had a clear attitude of opposition to but at the same time a deep affection for both her parents. Although there was strong mutual confidence between her and her parents, she presented mood changes with egocentrism to which her parents were in opposition. She reacted to the position of the parents by crying. (1964, p. 38)

The patient was the older of two children. Her sister, 5 years and 10 months old, was more of an extrovert and more independent than the patient. The mother was harmonious, rather introverted, and systematic in her work. She was concerned about the long-range implications of the patient's difficulties. The father was of mixed type with some cyclic and schizothymic traits. He was dynamic, self-conscious, and self-controlled. The development of both children had presented no special problems. During the preschool period Ella had been an obedient girl but from time to time emotionally *overexcitable*, ambitious, independent in her activities, and sensitive toward the external environment, though in a subtle, private way. She had always had a great deal of inhibition. At 4 1/2 she had begun to discuss with her parents the problems of loss, of death, and of life after death. (Dąbrowski, 1967, p. 196)

St. Augustine possessed all forms of excitability: sensual, affectional, psychomotor, imaginal, and mental. Sensual *hyperexcitability* is the ground for perpetual sensual hunger, continual and excessive satiation and dissatisfactions. Affectional *hyperexcitability* constitutes the ground for compassion, pity, anxiety about others and about one's own thread of life in connection with recollection and on analysis of the past. Psychomotor *hyperexcitability*, in conjunction with the other forms, is the main cause of violent reactions, motor unrest, and the need for action. Imaginal excitability plays a great role in forming the hierarchy of aims and in the development of prospection. Finally, mental excitability causes a whirl, a stream of problems, thoughts, multidimensional mental attitudes, and a richness of associations and methods of work. (1967, p. 223)

S. Mz. shows disorder of functions and psychosomatic suffering resulting partly from constitutional characteristics (emotional and imaginative *overexcitability*) which are aggravated by strong and difficult experiences. At the same time we notice a high level of mental sensitivity, a distinct development of moral feelings, and a tendency towards cultivation of exclusive forms of emotional attachment. This last tendency is a natural consequence of her enhanced emotional excitability which is one of the components of her developmental potential. She showed this emotional *overexcitability* rather early in life. As a child she was stubborn, emotionally independent and in a childish way independent in her thinking. At times she also suffered from anxieties. However, the unfavourable conditions of her life prevented the development of all her psychic resources. (Dąbrowski, 1972, pp. 28-29)

This patient represents a clear instance of multilevel disintegration, even if limited in scope. We are dealing in this case with such strong forms of emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* and with such distinct introversion that under the impact of grave experiences and also the pressure of complex experiential contents, there appears to take place a not totally conscious uncovering of the basic dynamisms of positive breakdown. There is high tension, frantic search for solutions, realizations of the instinct of partial death, striving for the atrophy of lower level functions, seeking suffering) with an ambivalent mobilization of suicidal tendencies, supersensitive hierarchization of values, transposition of the reality function to a higher level (i.e. into the world of fantasy, imagination and transcendental problems). (1972, p. 29)

Case 10. S. was a young man 25 years old. He was very timid, emotionally inhibited and suffering from anxiety. These are signs of an emotional *overexcitability*. His movements were nervous and quick, he was biting his nails and his lips. He talked fast and a lot. These are signs of psychomotor excitability. He was excessively preoccupied with his health. His emotional inhibitions and crises tended to be transposed into somatic reactions. He had internal psychic hypertension. There was ambivalence in his feelings since he alternated between being excited and being inhibited. (1972, p. 142)

Kafka was of weak physical constitution and from childhood exhibited high emotional *overexcitability*. He was extremely sensitive and irritable. Already as a child he was humble and lacked any artificiality. His interest and emotional involvement in literature showed up very early. In the course of his maturation this interest underwent a transformation to become an attitude of sacred mystery. (1972, p. 181)

From childhood Kafka showed a maladjustment to the practical side of life and in the opinion of his friend, Max Brode, "he had too little taste for possessing the things of this earth." On this background developed his general culture, his modesty, his uncertainty and complete inability to make decisions about his own life. On the background of his emotional *overexcitability* and introvertive sensitivity he developed abilities for exceptional insight and discussion. (1972, p. 181)

Kafka's life is a prime example of the role of psychoneurotic dynamisms in development. His extreme sensitivity and *excitability*, primarily emotional and imaginal, were the basis of his nervousness, and together with his creative literary potential compelled him to escape into solitude and a world of imagination and dreams. He removed himself from contact with everyday reality. He owned nothing "in this world." Attempts to disturb him in his preoccupation with essences lying totally beyond everyday life caused him to react drastically, as described earlier, by excitation or immobile withdrawal. These distinct psychoneurotic reactions are also evidence in his case of thirst for creative saturation and of creative nostalgia. (1972, p. 185)

Gérard de Nerval was a prominent French poet of the romantic period. His poetic abilities were displayed early in his life as well as his enhanced emotional and imaginal *excitability*. These traits were deepened by grave experiences of his life: early death of his mother, feelings of abandonment, emotional disappointments later in life. He grew defenseless and in need of affection to feel protected and secure. His whole developmental potential was based on an inborn poetic talent and these two forms of *overexcitability*, which gave him more occasion for the tragic and sad experiences than the pleasant ones. He did not exhibit any interest or need for systematic development of his own poetic style. (1972, p. 186)

His whole life Gérard de Nerval carried in his heart a mourning after his mother who died when he was very young. As a result he was always looking for an exclusive love relationship which would combine the ideal of a mother with the ideal of a lover. Often he displayed romantic exaltation which was also a cause of errors in his evaluation of his loved ones (e.g. Jenny Colon). It seems clear that such traits as his enhanced emotional and imaginal *excitability*, his infantilism, his feelings of inferiority, his exaggeration of exclusive and intimate emotions, his illusions and visions, were related on the one hand to his poetry, and on the other to his psychoneurotic constellations. (1972, p. 188)

Let us try to outline the relationship between de Nerval's psychoneurotic dynamisms, his creativity, and his development. Like in Kafka's case his enhanced *excitability* was mainly emotional and imaginal. His exclusive, ecstatic, all encompassing love for his mother were one of the strongest factors in the shaping of his development and his creativity. His enhanced excitability and the trauma of his mother's death were the basis of his maladjustment and his creative impulses. He isolated himself from reality and dwelled in the world of fantasy, esotericism, idealization of love. His occult experiences account for his irritability, lack of reality function at a low level, but at the same time for the factors of his creativity and individual development. His faith in the supersensory world was a strong creative factor but also it was an expression of a neurotic "absence" to realities of everyday living, and lack of adjustment to it. (1972, p. 189)

The first case (S. Mo.) is characterized by enhanced emotional and intellectual *overexcitability* with some admixture of sensual and psychomotor (masturbation, obsessive need to arrange things in perfect order). Emotional *overexcitability* finds its expression in the states of anxiety, intellectual *overexcitability* in the obsessive questioning of the meaning of life. S. Mo. as an introvert tended to search for solutions to his problems in his inner psychic milieu. At this time his inner psychic milieu was too poorly developed to provide a clear path of development leading toward a solution. In consequence his tensions grew high, his obsessions had little chance of being channeled, his sensitivity and irritability to the external environment were amplified because of the conflict with his introverted nature and his strong feelings of emotional exclusivity. (1972, p. 256)

Kristine (Case 19) is characterized by emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* and an accelerated process of multilevel disintegration. The factors accounting for her advanced stage of development were positive traits of childishness, creative abilities, sensitivity and charm, and marked growth of self-awareness and empathy. In her mental structure Kristine had strong elements of developmental defense, one of them being the gradual formation of a disposing and directing center at a higher level. The main "pathogenic" element of her case was an inappropriate evaluation by her family. We could diagnose her case as psychoneurotic infantilism, which in itself contains prophylactic and developmental elements. (1972, pp. 258-259)

The ten-year-old girl, B.L. (Case 20) represents a combination of all five forms of psychic *overexcitability*. The strongest are emotional and imaginal components. This multiple mixed character of her *overexcitability* represents strong developmental potential, nevertheless, it is also a cause of excessive psychic tension. Her developmental stage is a "balance" of unilevel and multilevel disintegration. Her chief "pathological" symptoms were excessive excitability and obsessiveness, combined with easily evoked scruples and feelings of guilt, and excessive tensions. By her "positive regression" to behavior of earlier childhood she showed tendency to autopsychotherapy (relaxation, diminution of difficulties). (1972, p. 259)

In the case of R.R. (Case 21) we encounter the very important mixture of emotional, imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability*. These combined forms of *overexcitability* bring about an enhanced intellectual penetration which expands perception of reality. In turn this expansion serves the further development of these components of the developmental potential. R.R. saw and experienced the tragic aspect of existence, its cruel and unjust stresses; he felt an altruistic "pain of existence." His disintegration has reached advanced level III with great potential for further development. as for diagnosis R. R.'s condition can be described as psychoneurotic anxiety of the existential type with strong depressive components. (1972, p. 259)

Barbara's case (Case 22) is an example of the combination of all the forms of *overexcitability* although in different constellation of intensity. Imaginal and emotional components are predominant showing the greatest tension. This constitutes her great richness and at the same time great strength. At the time of the interview she was undergoing a rebellion, quite understandable and justified in view of the breakdown of her family. Her aggressiveness was not tempered by higher levels of an inner psychic milieu still insufficiently developed in her. In consequence she made sweeping negative generalizations about all the members of the human race. (1972, p. 260)

Let us try now to describe in some more detail the differences in psychotherapy of each one of these six cases, only to stress once more that the basis for differentiation of psychotherapy in each individual case are the differences in psychic *overexcitability* and differences in the stages of development (type of disintegration and the structure of the inner psychic milieu). In case 17 (S. Mo.) we are dealing with the borderline of unilevel and multilevel disintegration. This together with S. Mo's tetanoidal traits, with his obsessive perfectionism without a deeper understanding of the developmental sequence and hierarchy of self-perfection, makes it necessary to pay special attention to methods of relaxation as a tool in reducing his narrowly oriented tensions. It is necessary, therefore, to apply a systematic program of relaxation as a long-term measure, and also to apply some short term relaxation treatments to deal with the immediate tensions. (1972, pp. 284-285)

In case 20 (B. L.) we have to take into account that although the girl is only 10 years old she has great richness, many forms of psychic *overexcitability* and very strong psychic tensions. First aid, so to speak, is to so organize her environment as to reduce her tensions and give less occasion for their arousal. Thus partially freed she then could build up her own inner psychic milieu and mitigate its tensions. To start with it is necessary to help her develop her abilities yet without forcing anything that would lead to tension. If the girl switches her interests, even if she does it many times, this should be met with understanding, calmness and assistance in the pursuit of her newly elected fancy. She has to be given total support in the positive aspects of her needs to regress to earlier childhood. (1972, p. 286)

Considering the advanced stage of multilevel disintegration of R. R. (Case 21) and his constellation of emotional, imaginal and intellectual *overexcitability*, psychotherapy has to take the direction of further expanding his perception of many levels of reality. R. R. needs assistance in a systematic elaboration of a program of succor to others in their "existential pains." This would bring him to make his altruistic experiences more objective. One can expect that such work will bring greater calm to R.R. reducing to a large extent his tensions as yet too disunited and too little consciously organized. (1972, p. 286)

In the last case (Barbara), we are dealing with multiple forms of *overexcitability* and a borderline of unilevel and multilevel disintegration, however the weight of disintegration is toward the multilevel. Barbara displays some hysterical traits, but of a fairly high level of functions, combined with strong aggressive and subconsciously controlled tendencies. Here psychotherapy needs to be based on methods of relaxation, on non-opposition to the client but rather on development of self-awareness, on stimulating the awakening of the dynamism "subject-object in oneself." Barbara also needs help in learning to differentiate human types and levels of their development in order to attenuate her aggressiveness and give room to understanding and tolerance. It is essential here that she makes use of her own creative abilities, and perhaps discovers in herself some new ones. (1972, p. 287)

The symptoms are characteristic of unilevel disintegration with the exception of the moral sphere. The patient shows distinct *excitability* of the emotional and imaginal type, the need for strong and lasting emotional bonds, great moral sensitivity and a distinct hierarchy of moral values that indicate the beginning of multilevel disintegration. (1972, p. 37)

From Cienin Books

We have a vision of a hospital of the future for the so-called mentally ill. It would be a center of great universal human knowledge, above all, psychological a moral, and of wise love. The candidates "to be treated would be those, who, because of needs and aims development, "can't go through life," can't cope with themselves and their environment. They would be those who are filled with *overexcitability*, sensitivity, phobias, sadness, breakdowns, dissatisfaction with themselves. Those who have lost faith in themselves and in the meaning of life. Those for whom love is a basic need, and who cannot find, their ideal object of love and those who are distracted and maladjusted because they see a higher level of reality – "things not of this world;" those who experience incomplete visions, who are emotionally immature, and full of fear and trembling for others. (Cienin, 1972a, pp. 32-33)

A great number of psychiatrists have symptoms of unilevel disintegration This is the basis of their imbalance, their lack of responsibility, weak educational abilities, conjugal infidelity, separations and divorces which – it seems – are more numerous here than in other social groups. They manifest psychic *overexcitability* and disharmony, while their inner psychic transformation and self-control are insufficient. This is clearly related to the absence of a distinct hierarchy of values. (1972a, p. 34)

There are some forms of fetishism that express strong exclusive, emotional relations, as well as emotion sensual and imaginal *overexcitability*, in other words they are the result of an excessive irradiation experiences. If there are no other related pathological symptoms this dynamism is not pathological. (1972a, p. 36)

Also, some forms of masturbation which result from exclusive emotional relations and emotional and imaginal *overexcitability* at prolonged separation from a loved one make masturbation a morally and emotionally easier to accept form of release than intercourse with someone other than the loved one. (1972a, p. 36)

There are many different levels of psychoneuroses as well as different levels within the same psychoneurosis. It seems that psychasthenia or infantile psychoneurosis represents a higher level of the hierarchy of functions than neurasthenia, hypochondria, or somatic neurosis. Also, for example, hysteria can be differentiated into levels – its lowest form is hysterical characteropathy with symptoms of artificiality and pathological lying and so on. A higher form is conversion hysteria, and the highest form is that which presents increased emotional *overexcitability*, dramatization of life's attitudes, susceptibility to stimuli of higher levels, contemplation and ecstasy. (1972a, pp. 36-37)

All those who have a strong nuclei of increased emotional *excitability*, and imaginative *excitability*; those who have a too "educated" consciousness; those who have deep insight and are irritable – all those will be inclined to psychic wounds, to psychic fragility, that is to say, to schizophrenia. (Cienin, 1972b, p. 17)

Neurosis is increased psychic *excitability* in emotional, sensual, psychomotor, imaginal or intellectual form. The "injection" of such *excitability* widens and deepens the ability for a better understanding of reality, and also contains elements of the inner psychic milieu that is to say inner psychic transformation. These elements counteract psychic rigidity, allowing the development of the transformation of one's psychological type and the transformation of man's biological life cycle. (1972b, p. 19)

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Note: Dąbrowski (1996) has been placed before Dąbrowski (1977) because it was written first and is the same text as Dąbrowski (1974). Since I do not have a copy of that book, I have cited page numbers from the 1996 version.