

## Peace Pilgrim, Exemplar of Level V

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Cases of secondary integration (Level V), the most advanced level of development through positive disintegration, are easily found within the religious sphere. To find a secular case of secondary integration presents a greater challenge. The life of Peace Pilgrim (1908–1981), known personally to a great many people, appears to be such a case. The course of her personality development appears to reflect successive phases of multilevel growth. This article examines Dabrowski's concept of secondary integration, personality ideal, and Peace Pilgrim's state of inner peace in an attempt to arrive at some purchase on these concepts. This study also raises the subject of spiritual experience as personal experience unbounded by systems of religious beliefs. This stratospheric study does carry actual implications for gifted education.

Since her death in a head-on collision in 1981, Peace Pilgrim has become widely recognized as an extraordinary person, “an American saint who transcended all national, religious, or sectarian bonds to communicate love, understanding and integrity. Her life was her teaching” (Dan Millman, 1996). There are very few examples of individuals who have reached Level V, the highest level of development of personality in Dabrowski's theory. Drawing on the sources about Peace Pilgrim's life, Dabrowski's definition of secondary integration (Level V), and of the processes leading to it, this article examines the evidence and attempts to show that Peace Pilgrim is indeed one of those rare individuals who has taken up the arduous task of “psychological mountaineering” (Assagioli, 1991, p. 32) to its utmost attainment.

I begin by introducing the image of multilevel development as climbing a mountain and then present Peace Pilgrim's outline of the phases of her personal growth in order to examine the parallels between her development and Dabrowski's levels. Was her developmental potential indicative of strengths sufficient to bring her to secondary integration? In what way are Dabrowski's concepts of secondary integration and personality ideal reflected in her “inner peace”?

### PSYCHOLOGICAL MOUNTAINEERING

In Dabrowski's paradigm of positive disintegration, personal growth is indeed much like scaling a mountain rather than a sequential unfolding of childhood, adolescence, and

adulthood. Imagining personal growth as ascent of a mountain, encountering danger, facing tests of courage, and forging on with perseverance suggests that not everyone has the strength, endurance, and determination to climb far; few manage to reach the summit. Moreover, not everyone is interested in climbing and may prefer to remain in the valley. Some may not even be aware of the mountain. The endowment for how far in scaling the figurative mountain an individual can go constitutes developmental potential. An endowment for multilevel development signifies that a person starts already a considerable distance up the slope.<sup>1</sup> A person with limited potential starts in the valley and does not reach far.

Can we line up Dabrowski's levels on such a mountain slope? Possibly, though we must leave Level I (primary integration) out of consideration because with its limited developmental potential and a narrow, rigid, and emotionally limited scope, Level I cannot be the starting point for multilevel development (Piechowski, 2008). Levels are peculiar constructs. They are abstract categories of types of development quite different from the intuitively obvious stages of life. For this reason, Dabrowski's theory does not define a starting point for development, the way fertilization or birth do, because there is none. Alternatively, the starting point for multilevel development can occur anywhere on the slope. One thing is certain, the absence of transforming elements in limited developmental potential precludes multilevel development (Dabrowski, Kawczak, & Piechowski, 1970; Piechowski, 1975, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup>Barry Grant (personal communication, September 2, 2007) asked if someone could start at the top. Laurence Nixon (personal communication, September 6, 2007) said that the Danish-born mystic Sunyata (1890–1984) is known as a “rare-born mystic,” one who from the very earliest of his life was in conscious union with the Infinite (Sunyata, 2001).

With this said, Level II would represent meandering around the valley, perhaps going a little up and down again, but without a significant advance up the slope. The quest for self and one's own voice would be the start of inner growth that might lead higher up the slope (Piechowski, 2008). Level III would be about serious climbing but with many setbacks. Still, at the end of the day, the person would be higher up the slope than at the start. Level IV would represent serious, determined, purposeful climbing. Level V would be the broad summit.

Level V is not easy to grasp. Who can say they know personally someone sufficiently advanced to qualify to represent this lofty plane of the most advanced development? Is such a person possible at all in our midst, other than Jesus Christ, Saint Francis of Assisi, Gautama Buddha, Paramahansa Yogananda, Pope John XXIII, or the Dalai Lama? Would Bishop Tutu be a good example? Or Mother Teresa, her detractors notwithstanding? Shall we look among saints?

Religion, if followed with conviction, imposes a demanding personal discipline, and one could argue that a person without a religion would have no chance of attaining the most advanced level. I always felt that the most convincing examples of high levels of development are secular.

Dabrowski defined Level V (secondary integration) as follows:

Secondary integration as the highest level of development is also called here the level of personality. By "personality" is meant here a self-aware, self-chosen, and self-affirmed structure whose dominant dynamism is personality ideal. . . . Through the synthesis and organization carried out in Level IV, all dynamisms operate in harmony. They become more unified with the Disposing and Directing Center, which is now established at a high level and inspired by the personality ideal. *Personality ideal becomes the only dynamism recognizable in the fifth level* [italics added]. (1977, pp. 53-54)

Dabrowski's earlier descriptions put more emphasis on the concept of *personality* as the outcome of development through positive disintegration, a person in the fullest realization of the most fundamental and universal human qualities. Secondary integration was defined as the *level of personality* (Dabrowski, 1967, 1973). Interestingly, a similar concept of personality was proposed by Assagioli (1965), as the result of a synthesis and integration of all component "subpersonalities."

What developmental potential must be present for development of this magnitude to be possible? Dabrowski is explicit on this. The endowment must be positive, the environment for growing up must be favorable, and self-directed multi-level development must have an early start with some energy (Dabrowski et al., 1970).

## SOURCES ON PEACE PILGRIM'S LIFE

To find a representative example of secondary integration depends on the availability of information and documentation about a person that would allow making a good case. The case would be more persuasive if the person were a contemporary known to many people. Peace Pilgrim is a living example of multilevel development as it was precipitated by her search for meaning. Her work of inner transformation was self-chosen, deliberate, and carried out to completion with unswerving determination.

Mildred Ryder, née Norman, was born in 1908 and died in 1981. She changed her name to Peace Pilgrim and went through the legal process partly in order to protect her family from investigation by the FBI, as they regarded her as a communist (A. Rush & J. Rush, 1992). Her talks were recorded on audio and videotape. They were transcribed and published as a book, *Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work in Her Own Words* (1982), which also includes replies to questions from people who heard her speak. A 70-minute documentary, *The Spirit of Peace* (Friends of Peace Pilgrim), was made in 1995 and another, *Peace Pilgrim: An American Sage Who Walked Her Talk*, in 2002. Peace Pilgrim's *Steps Toward Inner Peace: Harmonious Principles of Human Living* (n.d.) were transcribed from her talks and printed early in her life as Peace Pilgrim. The interview with Ann and John Rush (1992) offers information on her early life and the "total revision" to become Peace Pilgrim. These sources offer adequate material to examine her development and the attainment of secondary integration. A brief outline of her life and the statements revealing what motivated her are combined here with an analysis in Dabrowski's terms. This study follows the model of examining lives of mystics in the light of Dabrowski theory as carried out by Nixon (1990, 1994, 2008).

## PEACE PILGRIM'S DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL

Talents, abilities, intelligence, overexcitabilities, and capacity for inner transformation constitute developmental potential (Dabrowski, 1977; Piechowski, 2003).

Her sister said that, even as a child, Mildred had a bearing that made other children listen to what she had to say. She was a precocious child with an inquisitive mind and a "fantastic memory and could recite long poems at age three. She learned to read at age four or five before starting school. She taught herself to play the piano over the course of one summer" (A. Rush & J. Rush, 1992, pp. 64-65). "She was always a dare devil when she was younger." Diving off a bridge she would do "a somersault, jack knife and the swan dive" (p. 65). In high school she was a bright, articulate, strong-willed student. Academically she maintained the highest grade point average and headed the debating team (Daniels, 2004).

In high school, she refused to drink and smoke. When pressured by her friends she said to them, “Look, life is a series of choices and nobody can stop you from making your choices, but I have a right to make my own choices, too. And I have chosen freedom” (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 4). As a teenager, she asked fundamental existential questions that no one could answer for her. She then looked for answers within herself. At 16, as a senior in high school (she must have been accelerated, as it was then a common thing to do with bright students) she asked, “What is God?” But nobody could tell her. She had no formal religious upbringing but the question of the nature of God intrigued her. Thinking deeply about it she realized that we call “God” everything that is beyond our capacity. Intuitively she understood “beyond all doubt” that:

God is a creative force, a motivating power, an over-all intelligence, an ever-present all-pervading spirit—which binds everything in the universe together and gives life to everything. That brought God close. I could not be where God is not. *You are within God. God is within you.* (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 2)

She discovered that she could get her spiritual answers from the inside (A. Rush & J. Rush, 1992, p. 66). The mysteries of nature, love and kindness, all things good and beautiful spoke to her of God’s immanence. Yet inner transformation was not to follow this profound intuition at this point.

After graduation from high school she had no trouble finding a job and spent her money on clothes, matching shoes and hat, a luxurious very soft bed her sister envied, and a flashy car. . . . She would spend quite a bit of time before she would go out, before the mirror, putting on all sorts of makeup. (p. 66)

She was a popular dance partner. She also wrote plays, in which “she was the director, costume designer, lighting manager, and producer” (p. 66). Her engagement in theater is evidence of imagination and creative talent. Creative people tend to have strong sensual overexcitability, and it showed in her attention to matching her outfits and accessories, conspicuous use of makeup, but also in her habit of striking a glamorous pose for pictures.

Her intellectual ability and her great inquisitiveness were combined with high energy and many talents, not the least her leadership and public-speaking talents. In other words, her psychomotor and intellectual overexcitabilities were very strong in addition to her strong sensual overexcitability. Her imagination is evident not only in the creative work of the theater but also in her boldness of breaking conventions, in her ability to see wider horizons than those circumscribed by her environment. At this point we have no obvious indicators of emotional overexcitability; nevertheless, her strong emotional nature shows in her independence of character, the passion she later developed for peace work, as well as her deep compassion and the way she acted on it.

Although the indicators of developmental potential are strong, we do not see any signs foretelling her advanced development. In fact, her brother-in-law remarked that “While Mildred’s background was intellectual and moral, there was little evidence of the altruistic, self-sacrificing traits so prominent in the personality of Peace Pilgrim. In order for her to become Peace Pilgrim it was necessary for her to undergo a complete revision. This goes far to explain why so many of her family and former friends actually rejected her” (A. Rush & J. Rush, 1992, p. 65).

As a young person she was not free of prejudice, as she disapproved of her sister’s friends who were of other races or social classes. In 1933, on impulse she married Stanley Ryder, but the marriage was not successful. According to her sister, it was “physical attraction only” (A. Rush & J. Rush, 1992, p. 66).

Somehow she became an ardent pacifist. When her husband was drafted in 1942, she urged him to become a conscientious objector, but he refused. Her pacifist views stopped her from visiting him at the camp. He filed for divorce. She volunteered with peace organizations and was a legislative lobbyist in Washington, D.C., for the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (A. Rush & J. Rush, 1992).

#### PEACE PILGRIM’S TIMELINE OF HER PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In her talks Peace Pilgrim would draw the phases of her psychological and spiritual maturing as shown in Figure 1. The flat horizontal phase of emotional ups and downs of small amplitude—point (1) in her graph—she called “ordinary living, stably governed by self-centered nature,” a life spiritually lacking and of little depth, with maybe only an occasional glimpse of higher truth. This would correspond to Dabrowski’s unilevel development that is characterized by shifting mood, inconsistent ways of acting, being easily swayed by social opinion as well as a tendency to recycle one’s problems, with little of inner direction. However, there is no evidence of anything like this in her life; rather, there are strong multilevel elements; that is, evaluating experiences and behaviors in terms of higher versus lower in oneself (and also in the world), as we saw in the characteristics of her developmental potential: awareness of choice in her life, sense of responsibility for the choice, evaluation of what was around her, looking at the world with clear eyes and sorting out what made sense. She said that among the hodgepodge of her childhood learnings was a set of opposites. She was trained to believe that she should be kind and loving and never hurt anyone and, on the other hand, if so ordered, that it was honorable to maim and kill people in a war. This did not confuse her, because it was so obviously wrong. The other did, and that was “to be generous and unselfish and, on the other hand, to get out there and

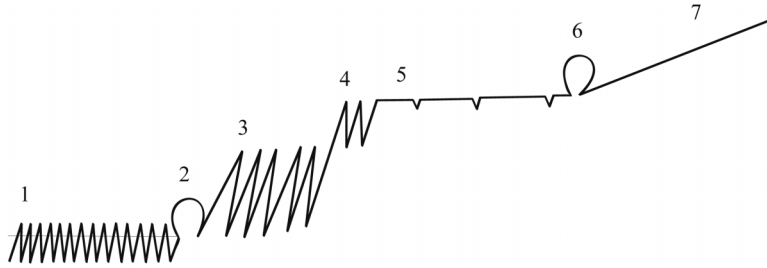


FIGURE 1 Peace Pilgrim's timeline of her inner growth: (1) ordinary living; (2) radical change; (3) the struggle between the lower and the higher self; (4) first experience of inner peace; (5) extended periods of inner peace; (6) complete inner peace; (7) continued growth.

grab more than my share" (Friends of Peace Pilgrim, 1977). This one confused her until she reached the point of surrender to a higher cause.

She made two important discoveries that brought her to the first critical point in her spiritual journey. As her values were emerging, she was moving away from material things but seeking a deep purpose to give her life meaning:

In the first place I discovered that making money was easy. And in the second place I discovered that making money and spending it foolishly was completely meaningless. I knew that this was not what I was here for, but at that time . . . I didn't know exactly what I *was* here for. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 4)

The next excerpt shows how her compassion brought her to the point of radically changing her life—point (2) in her graph:

I became increasingly uncomfortable about having so much while my brothers and sisters were starving. Finally I had to find another way. The turning point came when, in desperation and out of a very deep seeking for a meaningful way of life, I walked all one night through the woods. I came to a moonlit glade and prayed. I felt a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life—to dedicate my life—to service. "Please, use me. Take all of me!" I prayed to God. And a great peace came over me.

I tell you, it's a point of no return. After that, you can never go back to completely self-centered living. (p. 7)

This moment was a decisive act of will and of surrender. She called it "the first hump of no return." A new phase opened:

And so I went into the second phase of my life. I began to live to *give* what I could, instead of to *get* what I could, and I entered a new and wonderful world. My life began to become meaningful. . . . From that time on I have known that my life work would be for peace—that it would cover the *whole peace picture*: peace among nations, peace among groups, peace among individuals, and the very, very important inner peace. However, there's a great deal of difference between being willing to *give* your life and actually *giving* your life. (pp. 7–8)

From this point on her "positive disintegration" was deliberate, self-chosen, and carried out to completion.

Dabrowski used to gesture how in multilevel development the ups and downs have an upward trend. And this is how Peace Pilgrim drew it in two of her recorded talks. The amplitude of the ups and downs at point (3) is far greater than in ordinary living, no doubt because the moments of higher consciousness illuminate dramatically the lowness of their opposites. The overall trend is upward, whereas in ordinary living it is flatly horizontal (unilevel!).

In Dabrowski's terms, intense inner conflict takes place in Level III, between "what is"—the undesirable traits and tendencies that one has—and "what ought to be"—the desirable, humanly better qualities that one yearns to develop.

In the 15 years that followed her first point of no return, Mildred Norman attempted to live what she believed. She entered the battle between the lower self and the higher self or, as she put it, the self-centered nature struggling with the God-centered nature. This took hard inner work: "It's as though we have two selves or natures or two wills with two contrary viewpoints" (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 8). It was "lots of hills and valleys" (Peace Pilgrim, n.d., p. 2).

The first phase of multilevel development is called *spontaneous*; it has humble beginnings in disquietude and astonishment with oneself, the first stirring of the higher versus lower in oneself. But Peace Pilgrim started with a total commitment and determination to carry through on her vow to give her life over to service; "Use all of me" she said. In other words, her development at this point already had strong features of Level IV.

During the spiritual growing up period the inner conflict can be more or less stormy. Mine was about medium. The self-centered nature is a very formidable enemy and it struggles fiercely to retain its identity. . . . It knows the weakest spots of your armor and attempts a confrontation when one is least aware. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 8)

It is hard to say at what point the transition to Level IV (when inner conflict attenuates) took place or whether ever there was a distinct transition. In fact, Dabrowski did not see a clear demarcation between these two levels.

Knowing that her life's work was going to be work for peace, she embarked on a program of preparation.

## PREPARATION

Looking back on her life, she said that she felt she was preparing for her mission even as a child, without knowing what she was preparing for. A sense of mission, that some gifted children feel as a compelling guiding force in their lives, is called *entelechy* (Lovecky, 1990).

After that night of prayer and complete surrender, her first moment of no return, she went on to work with troubled teenagers, the psychologically troubled, and the physically and mentally handicapped. It is in those 15 years that the struggle between her self-centered nature and her God-centered nature took place.

She undertook a tough program of physical and spiritual preparation. From May to October 1952, starting in Georgia and finishing in Maine, Mildred embarked on a 2,000-mile hike of the Appalachian Trail, plus 500 miles of side trips to "points of special beauty." She was the first woman to complete the entire trail in one continuous trek.

I lived out-of-doors completely, supplied with only a pair of slacks and shorts, one blouse and one sweater, a lightweight blanket, and two double plastic sheets, into which I sometimes stuffed leaves. I was not always completely dry and warm, but enjoyed it thoroughly. My menu, morning and evening, was two cups of uncooked oatmeal soaked in water and flavored with brown sugar; at noon two cups of double strength dried milk, plus any berries, nuts or greens found in the woods.

I had been thoroughly prepared for my pilgrimage by this toughening process. A walk along the highway seemed easy by comparison. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 54)

Completing the Appalachian Trail was her test of living simply, at the bare level of one's needs, including tests of endurance in all weather conditions, without hot water, Walkman, or iPod. In short an extraordinary program of self-development. What she did through the extreme reduction of her basic needs is what Dabrowski called "partial death," a progressive stripping of all that is unessential. It is a characteristic of Level IV and associated with the dynamism of self-perfection. She did it with great joy. Toward the end of trekking the Appalachian Trail she had a vision of her pilgrimage coast to coast across America.

## STEPS TOWARD INNER PEACE

She had by then a complete program of spiritual development consisting of 12 steps, on which she elaborated in detailed, practical terms (Peace Pilgrim, 1982).

*Preparations.* These steps include (a) assuming the right attitude toward life, (b) bringing our lives into harmony with the laws that govern this universe, (c) finding a special place in the Life Pattern, and (d) simplification of life.

*Purifications.* These steps include purifications of (a) the body, (b) thought, (c) desire, and (d) motive (to serve without thought of a reward).

*Relinquishments.* These steps require relinquishments of (a) self-will, (b) the feeling of separateness, (c) all attachments, and (d) all negative feelings.

These 12 steps would test the mettle of any spiritual aspirant. They form a succinct distillation of the ideal goals of many spiritual traditions. Putting such steps into practice cannot fail to engage the person in the process of multilevel positive disintegration.

The steps can be taken up in any order. Again and again she stressed the supreme effectiveness of service: "The motive, if you are to find inner peace, must be an outgoing motive. Service, of course, *service*. Giving, not getting. . . . The secret of life is being of service" (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 17).

The four relinquishments are the most demanding components of her discipline. Relinquishment of self-will means nothing less than to be governed completely by the higher self, the God-centered nature. Relinquishment of the feeling of separateness means developing a transpersonal consciousness of a universal self that knows itself to be in all other selves.

Relinquishment of all attachments means not holding onto possessions and realizing that one does not possess any person. It means being happy doing good without any thought of reward. One can be detached and yet full of joy. Relinquishment of all negative feelings means to be free of worry, fear, jealousy, anger, and such. About the relinquishment of the feeling of separateness she said:

We are all cells in the body of humanity. We are not separate from our fellow humans. . . . It's only from that higher viewpoint that you can know what it is to love your neighbor as yourself. From that higher viewpoint there becomes just one realistic way to work, and that is for the good of the whole. As long as you work for your selfish little self, you're just one cell against all those other cells, and you're way out of harmony. But as soon as you begin working for the good of the whole, you find yourself in harmony with all of your fellow human beings. You see it's the easy harmonious way to live. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, pp. 18–19)

Unlike Assagioli (1991), who advocated a gradual process, Peace Pilgrim recommended quick relinquishment. To her it was the easier, faster, and more economic way:

The path of gradual relinquishment of things hindering spiritual progress is a difficult path, for only when relinquishment

is complete do the rewards really come. The path of quick relinquishment is an easy path, for it brings immediate blessings. And when God fills your life, God's gifts overflow to bless all you touch. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 21)

### UNSHAKABLE INNER PEACE

At point (4) in Figure 1 her graph shows a sharp lift to a higher level and a profound experience, "the first glimpse of inner peace."

Then in the midst of the struggle there came a wonderful mountain-top experience, and for the first time I knew what inner peace was like. . . . All of a sudden I felt uplifted, more uplifted than I had ever been. I remember I knew *timelessness* and *spacelessness* and *lightness*. I did not seem to be walking on the earth. There were no people or even animals around but, every flower, every bush, every tree seemed to wear a halo. There was a light emanation around everything and flecks of gold fell like slanted rain through the air. . . . I knew before that all human beings are one. But now I knew also a oneness with the rest of creation. . . . And most wonderful of all, *a oneness with that which permeates all and binds all together and gives life to all*. A oneness with that which many would call God. . . . I have never felt really separate since. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 21; italics in original)

From this moment on the amplitude of the ups and downs diminishes and attenuates. The "longer and longer plateaus of inner peace" at point (5) can be interpreted as the initial phase of secondary integration. The struggle ceases and there is no more than a slight wobble, perhaps from not yet being steady on the new level, as Peace noted, slipping out only occasionally. The occasional loss of inner peace she now felt more acutely than before. To lose even temporarily that perfect inner state caused her great distress.

And then at point (6) came "complete inner peace." It grew in depth and was hers for the remaining 28 years of her life. How can we comprehend a *complete* inner peace?

I could return again and again to this wonderful mountaintop, and then I could stay there for longer and longer periods of time, and just slip out occasionally. [Then came a morning when] I knew that I would never have to descend again into the valley. I knew that for me the struggle was over, that finally I had succeeded in giving my life, or finding inner peace. Again this is a point of no return. You can never go back into the struggle. The struggle is over now because you *will* to do the right thing and you don't need to be pushed into it. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 22; italics in original)

Note that Peace Pilgrim is using the image of mountaineering—reaching the mountaintop and leaving the valley behind. The attainment of complete inner peace was her spiritual birth: "No longer was I a seed buried under

the ground but I felt as a flower reaching out effortlessly toward the sun" (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 27). On that day, toward the end of 1952, she had a vision of her mission. She saw a map of America with lines drawn in zigzag between cities from Los Angeles to New York: the outline of her first marching route across the country.

### "AN EMBODIMENT OF ALL HUMAN HEARTS THAT ARE PLEADING FOR PEACE"

Amidst the Cold War, the Korean War, in the height of the McCarthy era, when the threat of nuclear annihilation hung over humanity, on January 1, 1953, Peace Pilgrim placed herself ahead of the Rose Parade initiating her march of 25,000 miles for peace. She was 44 years old. Her message was simple: "*This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love*. There is nothing new about this message, except the practice of it" (Peace Pilgrim, n.d., p. 4; italics in original).

Peace Pilgrim simplified her life to an absolute minimum. She wore only one set of clothing and carried with her only a comb, a toothbrush, and a pencil. She wore a tunic with the letters PEACE PILGRIM in front and on the back 25,000 MILES ON FOOT FOR PEACE. In this way she did not have to approach people in order to persuade them of the importance of working for peace but was approached by those who were interested. She gave up money and to the end accepted none. Her diet was simple and vegetarian. She accepted food and shelter when they were offered. Peace Pilgrim was fond of saying that she never had to skip more than three or four meals in a row. When shelter was not offered, she kept on walking, finding a place to rest in the woods, by the roadside, and in bad weather under a bridge or in a bus station.

In the next 28 years she crossed the country on foot seven times. She talked to churches, schools, interested groups, colleges, and radio and TV stations. She counseled people in spiritual as well as in practical matters. She wrote thousands of letters, sent in care of her sister in New Jersey, answering questions. Her schedule of appearances was filled 2 years in advance. She worked hard every day, but in spirit she was free in her unbroken communion with God.

### INNER PEACE, PERSONALITY IDEAL, AND SECONDARY INTEGRATION

Peace Pilgrim would mention her "contact" without saying what, or whom, she meant:

I had learned *to pray without ceasing*. I made the contact so thoroughly that into my prayer consciousness I put any condition or person in the world I am concerned about and the rest takes place automatically. (1982, p. 73; italics in original)

This was when she undertook a 45-day fast in order to stay concentrated on her prayer for peace, to make her prayer consciousness a state of being. One time she was caught in a freak snowstorm in Arizona but walked on while her feet were numb “like lumps of ice.” In the darkness she hit upon a railing of a bridge, went under the bridge and there she found a large cardboard packing box with wrapping paper. She crawled in and pulled the wrapping paper around her. “Even there shelter had been provided” (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 83). In that experience “only God seemed real . . . nothing else. I made a complete identification—not with my body, the clay garment which is destructible—but with the reality which activates the body and is indestructible” (p. 82). In other words, her essence is of a higher dimension, a transpersonal or spiritual dimension on which the material reality depends for its existence. Therefore, by her “contact,” she meant her anchoring in that higher dimension of reality. Accepting even the smallest provision would have nicked her living totally on faith.

She referred to her God-centered nature as “my divine nature,” and she appeared to be able to see that divine nature in others. To intercede, she presented others to God’s light:

[M]y divine nature reaches out—to contact their divine nature. Then I have a feeling of lifting them, lifting them, lifting them, and I have the feeling of bringing God’s light to them. I try to envision them bathed in God’s light, and finally I do see them standing and reaching out their arms bathed in golden light. At that point I leave them in God’s hands. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 73)

Though permanently established in the state of inner peace, she assured us, inner growth continues. Now the progress is harmonious, with no risk of slipping out. This is how she described this state:

There is a feeling of always being surrounded by all of the good things, like love, and peace, and joy. It seems like a protective surrounding, and there is an unshakeableness within which takes you through any situation you may need to face . . . There is a calmness and a serenity and unhurriedness—no more striving or straining. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, pp. 22–23)

And the supply of energy is endless. She remarked, that when she spoke, energy flowed through her “like electricity flows through a wire.”

Her mastery over her body, mind, and emotions was complete:

[T]he higher nature controls the body and the mind and the emotions. I can say to my body, “Lie down there on that cement floor and go to sleep,” and it obeys. I can say to my mind, “Shut out everything else and concentrate on this job before you,” and it’s obedient. I can say to my emotions, “Be still, even in the face of this terrible situation,” and they are still. (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 23)

People who knew her could attest that she indeed possessed this level of mastery.

Peace Pilgrim realized her goal to become totally governed by her higher self or, as Dabrowski would say, her personality ideal, the dynamism that unifies the psyche at the level of secondary integration.

## DYNAMISMS PREPARING SECONDARY INTEGRATION

The review of dynamisms of multilevel development draws on their descriptions and definitions to be found elsewhere (Dabrowski, 1977; Piechowski, 2003). Peace Pilgrim’s jagged but steep path to secondary integration is clearly outlined in her own drawing (Figure 1). Her 15-year battle between “what is” and “what ought to be” would seem to correspond to Level III. Although the dynamisms of Level III come by many names—*disquietude with oneself*, *positive maladjustment*, *dissatisfaction with oneself*, and so on—all are different forms of the tension between the higher and the lower in oneself, all are varieties of inner conflict, all are emotionally charged (Dabrowski, 1977). The will is present in the concept of a *disposing and directing center*, which at this level is ascending or descending, that is acting either in line with “what ought to be” or with “what is”; hence these great peaks and valleys.

Level III is called *spontaneous* multilevel disintegration. But after her surrender there is nothing spontaneous about Peace Pilgrim’s process. She entered the battle determined to carry it through, to establish “what ought to be.” One has to entertain the possibility that in her case dynamisms of Level III and Level IV ran side by side.

Dynamisms of Level IV are agents of inner restructuring, exactly what she started doing from the moment of surrender. *Subject-object in oneself*, as the process of critical examination of one’s motives and aims, is an instrument of self-knowledge. Peace Pilgrim’s recounting of the contradictory principles she was exposed to as a child—to be kind yet to kill in war and to be generous and yet to grab for oneself as much as one can—is one example of this process. But note that it took place early in her life. Her search to make her life meaningful is another. *Third factor*, the executive power of choice and decision in one’s inner life, a factor of “defining oneself and acting upon oneself” (Dabrowski, 1967, p. 41), is strongly expressed in her preparation for her life’s work. But it is already evident in her response to her high-school friends, “I have chosen freedom.” *Responsibility*, taking on tasks for the sake of one’s own and others’ development, and an empathic responsiveness to social needs are clearly manifested in how she was helping others with spiritual and practical counseling, direct intervention when called for, uplifting the discouraged, giving talks to interested groups, through her work with mental patients, and above all taking up the work for peace.

The change from a fun-loving woman to a penniless and homeless pilgrim for peace, from someone with prejudices to a person of deep empathy, is evidence of extraordinary *inner transformation*. Peace Pilgrim's goal was to serve a higher purpose and to strip herself of everything that was not aligned with it. Her *12 Steps Toward Inner Peace* contain a clear, detailed, and rigorous program of *self-perfection* and *education-of-oneself*, which she carried out with the utmost consistency. The dynamisms of *self-control*—regulating development and keeping in check interfering processes—and *autonomy*—confidence in one's own development and freedom from baser inclinations and motivations—appear redundant at this point.

According to Dabrowski, at Level IV, the *disposing and directing center* is unified, one-pointed, acting in total concordance with one's ideal. As the personality ideal becomes stronger throughout this level, and the only dynamism at Level V, the disposing and directing center merges into it.

Pilgrim simplified her life out of *empathy* and solidarity with the millions who lead a life of forced deprivation. She had profound compassion for each individual, and especially for evildoers. Because she was able to see the spark of good in everyone, and because "from that higher viewpoint" she saw all people inseparable from her own universal self, such malefactors were to her emotionally and psychologically sick. If this is hard to comprehend, it is because the degree of inner transformation, her total surrender to her higher self, her *personality ideal*, is not within our experience. We would have to understand first, at some deeper level, what Dabrowski meant by personality ideal, what transformation of consciousness its realization in Peace Pilgrim's life has brought about, what does it mean to be plugged into the inexhaustible source of the energy of the spiritual universe. Just as we cannot create an image of the Earth from space without going into space, we cannot comprehend the spiritual workings of someone like Peace Pilgrim until we have gone a good distance up the jagged mountain path.

## FURTHER THOUGHTS ON SECONDARY INTEGRATION

Her inner transformation appears to be more far-reaching than the neutral terminology of secondary integration would suggest:

This clay garment is one of a penniless pilgrim journeying in the name of peace. It is what you cannot see that is so very important. I am one who is propelled by the power of faith; I bathe in the light of eternal wisdom; I am sustained by the unending energy of the universe; this is who I really am! (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 126)

If one is not open to her spiritual reality, how is one to understand her affirmation, "this is who I really am"; that is,

not this body, not this outward personality but someone immersed in divinity? Saying she is sustained by the inexhaustible energy of the universe, she uses the same words as William James did in his study of spiritually gifted people. He concluded that the visible world is part of an invisible spiritual universe, and that inner communion with that universe, or God, fosters inner transformation. The person gains new zest, an infusion of energy and enthusiasm, and in relationship to others "a preponderance of loving affections" (James, 1902/1937, pp. 476–477). James argued that spiritual life of a deep nature is possible only because there is another side—the spiritual universe—that responds and produces effects within a receptive mind.

As a philosopher, William James was a pragmatist. A pragmatist judges ideas, concepts, and observable phenomena by how well they work and by the effects they produce. James concluded that although the spiritual universe remains unseen, it nevertheless produces real observable effects, such as we see in the lives of mystics. Therefore, if the unseen can produce real effects, the spiritual universe must be real, too (James, 1902/1937). In a similar vein, Dabrowski stressed that reality is multilevel and multidimensional, as each level is a distinct universe. At higher levels the experience of transcendent realities and the reality of the transcendent are part of the process (Dabrowski, 1973, 1977).

One of Peace Pilgrim's associates related how he kept asking her "What is your secret?" Always extremely reticent about herself, she tried to brush him off but he persisted. She finally said, "I have a secret, but I would not call it that. There was a time, long ago, when I died, utterly died to myself" (Friends of Peace Pilgrim, 1995). Relinquishing the ego, the self-centered nature, is the goal and the ultimate achievement of spiritual life. Only then a person may become a pure channel for God's light (Yogananda, 1995).

Peace Pilgrim's will and her program of inner development were perfectly unified with her higher self. She meets, and surpasses, the criteria of secondary integration as given by Dabrowski. At the same time, she shows the validity of Dabrowski's concept of personality ideal as the dynamism that at the highest level gathers into itself all the prior dynamisms and becomes the source of energy and illumination. Dabrowski's definition of secondary integration as the level of "personality"—"a self-aware, self-chosen, and self-affirmed structure whose dominant dynamism is personality ideal" (1977, p. 53)—fully applies here yet falls short of conveying its spiritual depth and transpersonal dimension.

To what does Dabrowski's concept of personality ideal correspond in Peace Pilgrim's (1982) state of permanent inner peace? From calling her higher self a "God-centered nature" she moved to calling it "my divine nature" (p. 73), "oneness with God" (p. 21), "a channel through which God works" (p. 26), "merged with the whole" (p. 27), "I am not the body. *I am that which activates the body*—that's the reality. If I am killed it destroys merely the clay garment" (p. 37). In



other words, it is the higher reality of cosmic consciousness (Bucke, 1901, Yogananda, 1995).

If the above gives some idea of her higher consciousness, it goes beyond the concept of personality ideal. There is no longer a “dynamism,” however conceived, but another dimension of being, through and through a spiritual dimension, a higher reality. As long as Peace Pilgrim was in the process of trying to live according to her higher self, we could see in it a personality ideal. After attaining inner peace she felt no separation from people’s individually packaged selves but an actual consciousness of continuity with everyone and everything else, a cosmic consciousness.

Yogis have terms for these high states. One is called *sabikalpa samadhi* (*samadhi* “with difference”), in which the experience of oneness requires that the body be still and the breath suspended. The experience ends when breath returns. The second is called *nirbikalpa samadhi* (*samadhi* “with no difference”), in which the experience of cosmic consciousness continues unbroken while operating the body normally (Yogananda, 1995). It is quite likely that this was Peace Pilgrim’s state of consciousness. That’s what all her characterizations of inner peace appear to convey.

Dabrowski, writing about the fully developed person in secondary integration, suggested that “special organs or functions, a kind of transcendental sense” develop that makes “union with the Infinite” a reality (Dabrowski, 1967, pp. 23, 26). He also recognized the increased energy that comes with a high level of development. In some ways, then, some aspects of Dabrowski’s concept of secondary integration approach peace Pilgrim’s description of inner peace. The difference is that her inner peace, borne of union with God, leaves behind the personality ideal and makes it superfluous.

Personality ideal will take a different form with each individual and it is good to remember that it is very active already in Level IV. For Eleanor Roosevelt it was following in Christ’s footsteps (Roosevelt, 1940). Dag Hammarskjöld expressed it in a double image—one of a sustaining element, suggesting a state of profound inner peace and another of a magnetic field conveying the ever stronger pull of spiritual reality:

Now you know. When the worries over your work loosen their grip, then this experience of light, warmth, and power. From without—a sustaining element, like air to a glider, or water to a swimmer . . . through me there flashes this vision of a magnetic field in the soul, created in a timeless present by unknown multitudes, living in holy obedience, whose words and actions are a timeless prayer. (1964, p. 84)

The metaphor of a magnetic field in the soul offers a glimpse into the inner source of inspiration and energy that is powered by the willing surrender to an inner ideal (Piechowski, 2003).

The possible representatives of secondary integration mentioned at the beginning of this paper are all spiritual luminaries associated with religion. Peace Pilgrim and Dag Hammarskjöld started as secular persons but became deeply spiritual, as did Eleanor Roosevelt. This raises the obvious question of whether on the path to secondary integration there is a point when one cannot fail to discover in oneself one’s spiritual nature.

Peace Pilgrim’s example poses the question of whether her attainment sets the standard too high by which to judge secondary integration in other cases. What Peace Pilgrim called inner peace is a state so profoundly anchored in a higher dimension of spiritual reality (just recall her descriptions of unshakeableness, unending energy, oneness with all creation and all human beings)—just as it was for Christ and Saint Francis, Buddha and Yogananda—that it goes beyond Dabrowski’s requirements for attaining secondary integration. If by Kawczak’s (2002) analysis Abraham Lincoln can be seen to represent Level V, he did not seem to have attained inner peace. The question of “minimum requirements” for secondary integration remains open for future investigation to tease out the criteria out of Dabrowski’s somewhat diffuse and not always consistent descriptions. One must bear in mind, though, that as each level is a large universe of many possible patterns, so it is with secondary integration; there may be many levels within this “highest” level.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

Peace Pilgrim was not alone in stressing that working for world peace requires personal transformation toward becoming peaceful in deed, word, and thought. Similarly, Eleanor Roosevelt (1940) affirmed that democracy cannot work without each one of us becoming sincere in following a high ideal. Amidst the Holocaust, Etty Hillesum (1985) wrote in her diary: “Each one of us must turn inwards and destroy in himself all that he thinks he ought to destroy in others . . . every atom of hate we add to this world makes it still more inhospitable” (p. 222).

Education in general and gifted education in particular have no provisions for a curriculum of personal growth (Roepers, 2006). The pressure to achieve and become successful increases with every year of schooling. A competitive society works against cooperation and compassion; it denies the importance of educating the whole person. Until we take emotional development and personal and spiritual growth seriously, we have nothing to offer gifted young people who are seeking ways to secure peace in the world.

Because of their overexcitabilities, gifted teenagers are more likely to go through the developmental crises of adolescence with greater intensity and anguish than their regular counterparts (Buescher, 1991; Christensen, 2007). This is the time when positive disintegration may hit with great

force but few counselors are equipped to offer understanding and help. When will personal growth come into the mainstream? When will we be mature enough to give it attention? We have gradually accepted yoga and meditation for the benefit of reducing high blood pressure and anxiety. Yet this is a mere beginning. Though the techniques of personal and spiritual growth are accessible, their practice with children is not widespread (Piechowski, 2006).

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