

Comments to Prof. Jaakko G. Borg's book:

Drive Emotions and Color Preferences: Szondi's Personality Theory in the Year 2004.

In this book he describes the further development of his BEL (Borg-Ekman-Lüscher) color test. On page 88 of this book he states:

If Lüscher's eight color series is run twice, as Lüscher himself recommends, a summing of the results of the two runs will produce figures fully comparable with those from the BEL.

Reading this statement I became enthusiastic, as Borg's extended studies in the year 2000 [*Szondi's Personality Theory in the Year 2000*] had already shown a correlation between Szondi's factors and Lüscher's colors. If these were correct it would mean that, in addition to the basic Lüscher interpretation, one could apply much of the collected knowledge already presented by Szondi's research. **This meant an immense increase of potential valuable information, based on only 12 minutes testing!**

It looked, moreover, that Freud's famous metaphor of "**The Shattered Crystal Theory**," (1936 in *Die Zersetzung der Persönlichkeit*) without great theoretical problems even might apply to the Lüscher test. Lüscher's eight colors might be interpreted from the same theoretical outlook as he applied it to the eight Szondi factors.

After this short theoretical introduction follow herewith some of the terms Borg and Lüscher had in common:

1. a). **Autonomous**, (Field independent. A law onto Oneself.) **Authoritarian, Directive. +2 +3 Green and Red.** (Centripetal [concentric] movement toward the self [green] - centrifugal [ex-centric] movement outward from the Self [red]) or **Major** (Sexual Index, subjective experienced **Masculinity**). * [See explanations of terms in End Note.]

1. b). **Heteronomous**, (Field depending. Subject to Another's law). **Receptive, +1 +4 Blue and Yellow** (Centripetal [concentric] movement toward the Self, the centre [blue] - centrifugal [ex-centric] movement outward from the Self [yellow]). Suggestible. **Minor** (Sexual Index, subjective experienced **Femininity**). Note: "minor-tonality individuals seek personal feedback, even to the point of dependency." * [See explanations of terms in End Note.]

2a) **Integration** (sociability) **+1 + 3 (Blue and Red)** versus

2b) **Differentiation. +2 +4 (Green and Yellow)** was another valuable factor one could find in Lüscher's classification.

With these qualities in mind, and especially based on the interrelation of the four basic colors, one can easily draw important conclusions: for example, to indicate to which "potential psychiatric class" the client might belong. But of course this presupposes a thorough knowledge of the significance of the colors.

The Phenomenal Modes of Experiencing Colors:

Prof. Borg explained them in the following way [Borg, 2004, pp. 74-78]:

Lü. 3. Red

As a color experience red is inherently centrifugal. Lüscher also characterizes it as autonomous, independent, self-sufficient.

"Preference for red indicates a desire for activation in general, on the one hand in the erotic direction, but also, depending on the situation, in the direction of aggression." "A subject who is himself forceful, vital, energetic -- and thus has the self-confidence red presupposes -- will incline to red; one who is weak and encounters something powerful will experience red as threatening" (Lüscher 1974, p. 6).

Thus:

(+3) = Attraction (*Hinwendung*); "A desire for experiences, a craving for stimuli" (Lüscher 1974, p. 45); autonomy, centrifugality.* [See explanation of terms in End Note.]

(-3) = Rejection (*Gegenwendung*); "Fear of excessive stimulation, excessive demands, exhaustion (*Ibid.* p. 45); contrary to the foregoing this is negation of centrifugality, which means centripetality. Autonomy is lacking and feared; hence a tendency to heteronomy, especially if blue is placed first.* [See explanations of terms in End Note.]

Lü. 4. Yellow

As a color experience this is also centrifugal, possibly even more so than red. According to Lüscher yellow is nevertheless heteronomous, lacking in self-sufficiency, resorting outside itself. "Yellow is preferred by subjects who seek changed, liberating conditions in order to find outlet for built-up tensions in the desired way, to develop more happily. They desire liberation from burdens, or detachment from some relationship which they

find distressing in the dependency it entails." (*Ibid.* p. 19). (They want to be independent.)

Central here is on the one hand "increased activation," but at the same time a "growing tendency to seek outlet and release of tension in a search for the new."

Thus:

(+4) = *Hinwendung*; "A craving for things distant, for freedom, flight from problems"; Centrifugality, Heteronomy.

(-4) = *Gegenwendung*; "Fear of openness, of loss and defeat, fear of change." (*Ibid.* p. 45). Centripetality and rejection of heteronomy.

Lü. 2. Green

As a color experience this is centripetal and autonomous.

(+2) = *Hinwendung*; "A need for independence and recognition" (Lüscher 1974, p. 45). The subject seeks to barricade himself within his own self -- in other words, centripetality and autonomy in a full sense.

(-2) = *Gegenwendung*; "Fear of confinement and dependency, fear of situations of compulsion" (*Ibid.* p. 45); opposite to the foregoing: centrifugality, especially if red or yellow is placed first.

Lü 1. Blue

As a color experience centripetal, if possible even more so than green; blue is relaxing, soothing, tending to surrender. According to Lüscher blue is heteronomous, i.e., non-independent, non-self-sufficient. This is understandable in the light of Lüscher's association of preference for blue with dependency, desire for close relationships -- i.e., heteronomy. Preference for blue evinces in all essentials the opposite of the inclination to red -- an overall desire for tranquility.

As it is generally observed (Borg 1988 and numerous other studies) that blue is a woman's preference; this can hardly be taken to entail a dimension of "cold blue - warm red" -- women are certainly not inherently cold.

The explanation for the phenomenon lies in all likelihood primarily in the fact that minor-tonality individuals seek personal feedback -- even to the point of dependency.

They are, in other words, heteronomous, whereas the major tonality is linked to centrifugality and autonomy, men usually choosing red.

Thus:

(+1) = *Hinwendung*; "A need for peace and relaxation." Centripetality and Heteronomic.

(-1) = *Gegenwendung*; "A stimulus vacuum, fear of lack and non-satisfaction" (*Ibid.* p. 45); that is, centrifugality.

Lü 5. Violet

According to Lüscher this color is characterized by mutually exclusive opposites -- in the fusion which produces it, red is active and exciting, blue tranquillizing -- a 'coincidentia oppositorum' (Cusanus). Binding here consists in an **intense desire to merge - object identification**.

Preference for violet has been held to evince a desire for magical identification -- Levy-Brühl's *participation mystique* (*Ibid.* p. 11). In this color centrifugal and centripetal so tend to cancel each other out that in appropriate proportions these oscillate, rendering it conflicting, ambivalent in tendency. If red is the stronger element the propensities of red will dominate, i.e., centrifugality; if blue, the centripetality of that color will prevail.

Thus

(+5) = *Hinwendung*; "If in the Lüscher test violet is placed first, this will invariably evince "faszinierte Intresse" and a need for sensitive identification. This, however, is of a completely different kind according as second place is assigned to drive-like sexual red or sensitive tranquil blue, ecstatic enthusiasm with all its possibilities for sensitivity " (*ibid.* p.12).

(-5) = *Gegenwendung*; "A subject, again, who rejects violet fears loss of independence in sensitive erotic surrender, fear of having to pay as price his own fearful egocentric selfhood " (*Ibid.* p. 13). (Matter-of-fact oriented?)

"Our culture leaves little space for violet - for sensitive identification" (*Ibid.* p. 13). It should be observed that although violet involves a merging of opposites, it remains nonetheless inwardly conflicting, even inchoate -- or rather civilized man experiences it as such.

Lü. 6. Brown

"Brown is a darkened orange, obtained when this is tinged for example with black. In the process the vitality of red is extinguished, suppressed, or "broken," as a painter might say. Brown has lost the active, expansive impulse, the forcefulness of red. What is left is vitality no longer actively assertive but passively receptive -- brown thus represents a vital physical-sensual emotion, the drive-like nature of Id determination. Hence preference for, indifference to or rejection of brown evinces **the subject's attitudes to his own physicality**. A subject who rejects brown as unpleasant is denying the vital state of his own body (*Ibid.* p. 21)."

This latter comment applies particularly to women; those who reject brown wish to be accepted as something other than bodily beings. Rejection of brown is constantly observed, especially in female subjects (Borg 1988, e.g. p. 106 and p. 155).

Orange is a centrifugal color, and, depending on the amount of black used in darkening, its effect will, as already noted, be offset and its centrifugality diminished, approaching centripetality until, via an ambivalent state, inhibition sets in as black predominates. According to the proportions fused, then, brown involves a struggle for balance between centrifugality and centripetality/ inhibition.

(+5) = *Hinwendung*; "Subjects who find themselves in an apparently inescapable conflict frequently prefer brown, a subdued, dull color. They no longer wish to deliberate; they shun reason and rational lucidity out of fear that they can no longer bear the life they are living. In suppressing reason they seek the refuge of a primitive drive state" (*Ibid.* p. 22). Here binding via suppression: one is prompted to ask whether the brown uniform of the German SA troops was not a coincidence.

(-5) = *Gegenwendung*; "Subjects who reject brown seek thereby to raise themselves above the drive-like instincts of the masses and gain attention as individual personalities" (*Ibid.* p. 22): brown moves to last placing.

Lü. (0) Grey

"The medium grey is not a color; neither light nor dark. It is completely devoid of stimulus and free of all psychic tendencies" (*Ibid.* p. 23). Grey evinces a "limit" of experience, an extremity.

Thus:

(+0) = *Hinwendung*; "A test subject who chooses grey -- that limit -- does not wish to be known, isolates himself from all influences in order to attain a stimulus-free state" (*Ibid.* p. 23).

Neutral grey is neither centrifugal nor centripetal and likewise neither autonomous nor heteronomous.

(-0) = *Gegenwendung*; "A subject who shuns grey activates himself out of readiness for stimulus and is distressed to be left unsatisfied (German: "zu Kurz kommen"). He desires to draw upon all possibilities to attain this goal and thus to achieve freedom from a stimulus-free state." (*Ibid.* p. 23).

Lü. 7. Black

"Black constitutes denial, the boundary at which the diversity of life ends. Black thus manifests the notion of nothingness (*das Nichts*), non-being in relinquishment, as death, denial in defiant protest" (*Ibid.* p. 25). "Black evinces the damming up of impulses, defense against them, rejection" (*Ibid.* p. 26). Preference for black does indeed indicate autonomy, although excesses in a pathological direction. (Destructive aggression SCH k-!!!)

(+7) = *Hinwendung*; "A subject who places black first is rising in defiant protest against his fate" (*Ibid.* p. 26).

(-7) = *Gegenwendung*; Does not wish to give up. Relinquishment means to him lack and distressing deficiency. A subject who finds black unpleasant -- statistically the most common observation -- finds it so difficult to give up in anything that he runs the danger of imposing authoritarian, inordinate demands (*Ibid.* p. 26).

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Moreover Borg describes, in his 2004 book, how he applied the Lüscher interpretation in a depth psychological way when he writes:

- **"The symptom is an expression of a repressed drive,"** by using fruitfully the selected first basic color (1,2,3,4) as the **"Symptom" (Compensation)** in contrast to the selected most negative color (1,3,4) (**Actual Problem**), which Borg theoretically interpreted as the **"Repressed energy."**

This approach really gives a surprising extra amount of diagnostically information in at most 12 minutes.

- This is mainly due to the way in which Lüscher's uses a **Cube model** in order to illustrate his theory. It corresponds perfectly with the way Szondi used the **Experimental Complementary Profile (EKP)** in his test!

Lüscher succeeds with the Cube model to show the dialectics of the client's 4 **basic colors** selection. By this model one can immediately see the color's **Foreground profile (FGP)**, the first positive position in its relation to the selected **Theoretical background profile (THP)**. The last is a negative position.

Lüscher based his psychotherapeutic conclusions on the dialectics of these two findings. For instance when the selection of Position one was Red and the last (negative) position Blue (+3 - 1), his therapeutic suggestion (Goal) was then to strive to turn around these positions and make the activation of the THP = (Blue/red, +1 - 3) qualities the goal of the therapeutic efforts in order to arrive at a better inner balance.

- Considering and applying Borg's conclusions to the color test, one rather easily can discover a correspondence between the Szondi Contact Vector (dialectic +1-3 resp- -1+3 to a "Manic-Depressive" picture); and the Ego Sch vector (dialectic +2-4 respectively +4-2 (Schizoid, Compulsions, Psychotic picture). Which means that, even with the color test, one can point out the potential crack in the client's personality. See Freud's *The Shattered Crystal!*

*End Note

On *Centripetal* and *Centrifugal*: Borg relates these concepts to tension: centripetal is accumulative, thus it builds up tension; centrifugal is dispersive, thus it releases tension [Borg, *Szondi's Personality Theory in the Year 2000*, p. 86]. Centripetal and centrifugal are both extremes.

Borg also equates centripetal and centrifugal in terms of direction: *Centripetality* is the movement towards the self and *centrifugality* is movement outwards from the self. [*Ibid.* p. 97]

Another idea that Borg relates and accepts is Lüscher's idea of *concentric* and *ex-centric* Ian Scott [*The Lüscher Color Test*, 1969, pp. 26-27] defines these two terms well so that one does not equate concentric with introversion and ex-centric with extroversion [something that Borg eventually does in his 2004 book]. "*Concentric* means 'subjectively concerned'.... Scott says that this is not to be confused with introversion, although an

introvert is concentric. "To be subjectively concerned is to be exclusively interested in that which is an *extension* of oneself, as well as being interested in the Self." He cites a person who talks and acts like an extrovert but the only things talked about are himself and all his family, possessions, and his interests.

Borg explicitly equates centripetal with concentric [Borg, 2000, p. 97].

More on Scott's ideas: "*Ex-centric* means 'objectively concerned' and is more nearly akin to extraversion than concentricity is to introversion. The *ex-centric* individual is interested in the environment, in the things and people around him, either from the point of view of impinging on and causing effects *on* his environment. If the former, he is being causative and therefore *autonomous* towards his environment; if the latter, he is being the effect of his environment and therefore *heteronomous*. *Autonomy* is thus the equivalent of 'being a cause,' while *heteronomy* is equivalent to 'being an effect.'"

Borg explicitly equates centrifugal with ex-centric [*Ibid.* p. 97].

On this same page, Borg states: blue and green are concentric and thus centripetal and that red and yellow are ex-centric and thus centrifugal. This agrees with Lüscher.

Borg then adds the Lüscher dimensions of *autonomous* and *heteronomous*: *Autonomous*, independent, a "law unto itself" for red and green and *heteronomous*: subject to other laws for blue and yellow.

Borg further adds to the situation by adding *major tonality* [which is the Szondi's *Dur* idea for masculinity] and *minor tonality* [which is Szondi's *Moll* idea for femininity]. Borg equates the extreme of *centrifugality* with masculinity and the extreme of *centripetality* with femininity. Borg distinguishes between the constitutional and actual sex against the subjective experience of one's sex [*Ibid.* pp. 101-102].

Hinwendung [turning toward] refers to the first two choices in the 8 color test; these choices are in the direction of satisfaction. *Gegenwendung* [turning against] refers to the last and the second-last choices and indicates rejection. As used above in the main text, *Hinwendung* refers to the goal of position one, and *Gegenwendung* refers to the last position, one of rejection.