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Prosocial shifts in worldview : promises and challenges of growth and transformation

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ABSTRACT

This theoretical study is fundamentally about change and growth. It explores shifts in worldview

that facilitate greater openness and compassion in relating to oneself and others. The focus,

intentionally broad, explores the mechanism and phenomenology of such shifts. Shifts of

worldview tend to fall into two major categories involving insight into oneself or relationship to

others and shifts related to spiritual or mystical experience. Constructivist developmental theory

and transpersonal psychology offer perspectives which frame shifts in worldview and provide a

prosocial trajectory. The literature around shifts of consciousness and turning points in find that

there are often times challenges that proceed significant change, however the theoretical

perspectives of Robert Kegan's constructivist developmental theory and transpersonal

psychology often find that challenges persist and follow shifts as well. Growth is shown to often

involve moving through difficult mental and emotional states. With this understanding, support

can be offered in a nonpathologizing manner to those who are undergoing positive

transformations, which may appear to be disorganizing. Theories were applied to a case example

based on the autobiography of Paul Rezendes, *The Wild Within: Adventures in Nature and

Animal Teachings* (1998). Constructivist developmental theory as well as transpersonal theory

each offers a unique perspective, yet many aspects overlap. Development into adulthood is

shown to ultimately move beyond limited self-concepts and result in a wider more encompassing

orientation and awareness.

PROSOCIAL SHIFTS IN WORLDVIEW: PROMISES AND CHALLENGES OF

GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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CHAPTER I

Exploring Prosocial Shifts in Worldview

My awakened dreams are about shifts. Thought shifts, reality shifts, gender shifts; one person metamorphoses into another in a world where people fly through the air, heal from mortal wounds. I am playing with my Self, I am playing with the world's soul, I am the dialogue between my Self and el espiritu del mundo. I change myself, I change the world. (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 92)

Introduction

This study is about change and the potential for transformation that can occur when one view of reality is let go of and a new one emerges. Gloria Anzaldua (1999) speaks of a world that is flexible, fluid and interactive, where world change occurs first in one's self and then ripples outwards. The idea of shifts in perception of reality is not new. Plato proposes in his *Allegory of the Cave* (Bloom, 1991) that our understandings of reality, including: life, society and physical structures of the world are merely shadows of symbolic forms cast upon a wall from a flickering torch within a cave. There is no way to know that this is the case until a shift of some sort occurs, where everything that had been taken to be solid and true is now in question. One often does not know that their worldview is a lens until it becomes possible to see the lens clearly; making what was previously subject, now object (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994). In the Allegory there are several stages, steps and shifts that describe the development and change in worldview. The process begins with the individual standing up and looking around, eventually being dragged

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out of the cave into the blinding light of day. This disorienting process of going from darkness to light takes time. Eyes adjust slowly and eventually one is able to see new forms clearly. Then, the individual excitedly returns to the cave to share this new experience and insight, which is understandably met by confusion, concern and disregard from the community still seated in chairs, unmoving and very certain that their reality is the only valid one (Bloom, 1991). In many stories, there are similar themes of the Hero's (or Heroin's) Journey; of leaving home, having various experiences which shift or transform ones worldview, then returning back home, with a different understanding of life and the world (Campbell, 1973).

The individual in the Cave allegory experienced a "shift" in their understanding of the world; the construction of their reality was dramatically changed. Throughout life there are many subtle and possibly profound shifts in the way one's worldview is constructed. Schlitz, Vieten and Miller (2010) describe worldview as combining, "beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values and ideas to form a comprehensive model of reality. Worldviews also encompass formulations and interpretations of past, present and future" (p. 19). Koltko-Riveria (2004), state that worldview, "is a set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behavior. …[relating to] to personality traits, motivation, affect, cognition, behavior, and culture" (p. 3). Another way of describing the *shift* is a transformation of worldview. Schlitz, Vieten and Amorok (2007), report*,* "Worldview transformation… is a fundamental shift in perspective that results in long lasting changes in people's sense of self, perception of relationship to the world around them and way of being" (as cited in Schlitz, Vieten & Miller, 2010, p. 20).

There are a variety of shifts and transformations of worldview. Some of these shifts are widely discussed in contemporary psychology and are considered to be developmental. Jean

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Piaget, childhood development pioneer, describes a cognitive shift as moving from concrete to formal operations, which tends to happen between the ages 11 or 12 onward (Spencer-Pulaski, 1971). This shift occurs when an individual is able to think abstractly, including: thinking about ones thoughts and understanding metaphors. The change in worldview is that the child can begin to be less "concrete" in their logic and understanding. It is then possible to see thought as symbolic and representative of a larger concept or theme. Within other areas of human development, like in object relations, some developmental milestones include: developing object consistency and integrating the "good and bad" into one object (Klein, 1958). Klein proposes that there is a shift from the paranoid schizoid position toward the depressive position when one's understanding changes from seeing good and bad as separate entities towards a more mature and depressive position of seeing good and bad as being able to exist in the same person. Theories of development and changes of worldview are not just limited to psychology. Critical consciousness theorists (Harro, 2001; Murray, 2001; Pitner & Sakamoto, 2005) don't necessarily speak in terms of developmental stages, yet they acknowledge that there are steps to becoming more aware and that the process involves changes in one's awareness of self and society. Gloria Anazulda, post-colonist, feminist, Chicana author and activist, has a seven-stage model of development that is not necessarily liner or sequential yet the stages are similar to other developmental models (Taylor, 2005). All of these theories and many others point towards a certain "shift" in perception of the self or worldview, which occurs as individuals increase their understanding of how cultural and societal factors have conditioned their interactions and perceptions of others.

This study will be exploring the shifts in construction of worldview towards a prosocial orientation. Prosocial behavior has been described as "sharing, donating, caring, comforting and

helping" (Caprara & Steca, 2007 p. 218) increased empathy and concern for others (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). Shifts of this nature have found to lead to greater cognitive flexibility and a greater ability to tolerate differences in others (Berger, 2005; Caprara & Steca, 2007; Schlitz, Vieten, & Miller, 2010). The prosocial dimension addresses how this shift affects the individual's relationship to others—benefit to communities, relationships and humanity on the whole. Someone could have an equally profound and important shift, resulting in increased hostility or malice towards another individual or group (Nowinski, 2004). The transitional nature and liminal space involved in moving between one perspective and another will also be explored. In the study, the intention is to keep a wide perspective on process, mechanism and implications of the shifts rather than to investigate a narrow and specific aspect.

There can be many different reasons why someone engages in prosocial behavior. To name a few: guilt, (Amodio, Devine, & Harmon-Jones, 2007) fear (Schimel, Wohl, & Williams, 2006) compassion, or love (Schlitz, Vieten & Amorok, 2007), could all be underlying motivational forces. The motivation behind a behavior is not always obvious. For example, helping a friend may be motivated by knowing the friend has a bad back, or by wanting to pick the friend's tomatoes in the summer, or both. There is the content of the action (helping) and the context or structure organizing the action (concern for friend vs. concern for self). To fully understand the phenomenon of shifts it is important to explore the mechanisms and structure of the experience, not just the surface appearance. This includes: the meaning making, organizing principles, and how one transitions from view to view. Schlitz et al., (2010) frame this distinction between *what* people know and *how* people know,

> Transformation involves epistemological changes in *how* they know what they know. It
> is not only behavior that changes, but also the motivational substrate from which that

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behavior arises… it is not only a change in what people do, but also in who they

understand themselves to be at an ontological level. (p. 20)

Transformations on the ontological level result in a fundamental change, which can have

profound effects on one's beliefs, values, relationships and sense of self.

Many of the changes associated with worldview shifts are described as, profound

moments that contain a sense of unity with others, or great love and tolerance (Schilitz, Vieten,

& Amorok, 2010; Miller, 2004). While shifts can be a lasting change, they are also can be part of

an ongoing process (Almaas, 1998; C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004; DeGloma, 2010; James,

1979; Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994; Miller, 2004; Maslow, 1971; Vaughn, 1986; Wilber, 2000a).

One's worldview may be altered in one area, to a certain degree, or momentarily, yet this process

may not be complete. A new period of change and development is often needed to help

disidentify from the old world view and integrate and allow the new one to take hold (Kegan,

1982; Kegan, 1994). Very rarely do shifts occur where the worldview is permanently "installed"

(Almaas, 2004, Cook-Greuter, 2005; Schilitz et al., 2007; Vaughn, 1986). There is not just one

way to think of or describe the phenomenon of shifts, and it is important to understand how the

process can look in different individuals. The study of prosocial shifts can benefit and inform

the contemporary social worker.

Implication and Relation to Social Work

Whether working in social work education, in human service in a micro, (clinical) meso

(case worker) or macro (legislative, activist) context, understanding the phenomenon of shifts

and change in worldview is extremely important to the field of social work. The goal of clinical

social work education, or social change is often linked with a transformational change in

worldview towards greater opportunity, healing and equality. This research explores the

relationship between internal and external change; specifically, how inner work of the individual can affect society: "Transformative change starts in the deeply personal and reaches to the profoundly political, and this calls for a critical praxis which locates personal reflection on a continuum with collective action" (Ledwith, 2005 p. 255). One could argue that a large part of oppression and injustice stems from cognitive distortions and narrow, ego-centric worldviews. Caprara and Stecca (2007), state that shifts that result in self-transcendence create more prosocial behaviors, including increased empathy and concern for a wider range of humanity (Schlitz et al., 2007).

In clinical social work, it is important to understand the terrain and mechanism involved when shifts occur. If a client depression or anxieties are understood largely due to a transitional stage, or shift, the approach may be different than if the symptoms were viewed as an indication of mental health issue. As in Plato's Allegory, someone talking "nonsense" may actually be trying to share a very important understanding that is just beyond the consensual, societal framework. Understanding how people transform and what the process and implications of a profound shift in worldview are, help the as practitioner to meet clients where they are, understand multiple perspectives and support transitions from one perspective to another.

The field of clinical social work, looks at how different people construct a framework from which they operate in societal systems. Social work in general, acknowledges and understands the importance of lens (worldview). It acknowledges the need to be able to understand not only ones own worldview, but also that others may have equally valid worldviews as well (Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda, 2012). Any field, promoting the exploration of critical thinking skills, and designed to examine the role of culture and upbringing could be seen as attempting to facilitate a shift in worldview. This shift may be from what may be

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considered to be a modern, or conventional view to a postmodern or post conventional view (Noble, 2004). Modern thinking values rationality, positivism and the idea that there is one truth which can known. Conventional ways of thinking are in line with the popular cultural. They are the main norms and values that the dominant social group ascribes to. Therefore, post-modern thinking, is usually characterized as the recognition of multiple perspectives, relativism (Hodges & Derezotes, 2008; Noble, 2004; Wilber, 2000) and often deconstructionism (Kegan, 1994). The result, of such education, if successful, would be that one can no longer look at one's life, upbringing, society, privilege, power or others the same way as before; it will appear as if a new world has appeared.

While this new worldview is positive in nature and is more open, aware and committed to social change, this may not be the final or most true worldview. Ironically, a truly post-modern perspective holds no perspective as more valid than any other, yet even this proclamation that there is no inherent absolute truth, is in itself a form of a truth. In the spirit of investigating worldview and the fluid nature of our construction of reality, current social work theory and education could benefit from a wider-angle perspective, which can critically examine its' own deeply held beliefs, worldviews and understandings (Hodges & Derezotes, 2008; Noble, 2004).

Need for Study

There is some literature examining how the inner psychology of an individual accommodates shifts including the transitional periods, challenges and promises (Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004; Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994, Vaughn, 1986; Washburn, 1994). Much of the literature however is scattered among social psychology, transpersonal psychology, theology, and developmental psychology. While there is acknowledgement of change in identity and in cognitive abilities in contemporary western psychological/sociological theory, it is a relatively

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new area of study to look at shifts in worldview, their effects and challenges (Miller, 2004; C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004; Schilitz, Vieten, & Amorok, 2010; Mamali & Dunn, 2011). While the terrain and process of moving from one world view to another may be different depending on the location and each individuals make up, it seems like there are similarities involved in the mechanism/the process of the shifting of the lens.

Shifts of worldview can be very exciting, and they can also be disorienting, and confusing. There are transitional periods of time and sometimes gaps and chasms between one place of reference and another (Kegan, 1982). This is one area that appears to be significantly lacking in the literature. It is likely that a shift in worldview of this sort could create some discomfort for both the person and the people who are close to them. Plato describes the painful process of learning how to walk, see and create a new understanding, and the challenges of interacting with others who have not had that particular shift (Bloom, 1991). Contemporary theorists and researchers talk about some of the challenges and joy's that arise when one transitions or shifts from one worldview to another (Almaas, 1990; Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994; Pitner & Sakamoto, 2005; Schilitz et al., 2007; Washburn, 1994; Washburn, 2003). This study will apply constructivist developmental theories and transpersonal theories to experiences of shifts with relevant case materials gathered from literature and compare and contrast the process and understanding within each theory.

Introduction to theories

Constructivist Developmental Theory: Constructivist developmental theory is a system that combines aspects of constructivism within a developmental perspective (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994) Constructivists believe that people are constantly constructing their understanding of the reality based upon their interaction with environment (Gal, 2002).

Reality or a person's understanding is not fixed, or solid but on-going. In this sense there is no one "world," but many individuals with different worldviews. Developmental theorists, like Piaget, Kohlberg and Loevinger, believe that human development occurs in stages and with clear points marking different milestones. Whereas, constructivist developmental theorists (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994) are interested in how people developmentally makes sense of their lives and world based on their orientation and point of view. As people move from one order to another the construction of reality changes. Stemming from Piaget's concepts of "genetic epistemology," (as cited in Kegan, 1982, p. 15) development is understood to be a balance of what we are subject to and able to be objective about. Kegan combines various aspects to create a "metapsychology," stressing the importance of, psychological and social, the past and present and process between emotion and thought, (Kegan, 1982 p. 15). Thus constructivist developmental theorists believe that,

> Everyone moves through qualitatively different ways of knowing what they are, how they know what they know. Constructivist developmentalists believe that human nature is dynamics, adaptable and continuously evolving both individually and throughout history. (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p.13)

The individual makes meaning and creates understanding while moving through life. Stages or orders of development have unique characteristics, and it is believed that the ways of making meaning follow a specific progression (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Eriksen, 2006; Kegan,1982; Kegan 1994). The phenomenon of shifts can be explained, from a constructivist developmental perspective, by stating that someone's framework for organizing reality, has shifted from one stage, or order to another. Thus the individual experiences a dramatically different way of constructing meaning.

Transpersonal Theory: Shifts can be described as a profound change in perception of the self, other and worldview. Transpersonal theory addresses the mechanisms of what occurrs on the level of ego and consciousness. Transpersonal psychology is a branch of psychology that recognizes spirituality, and possible development beyond the western psychological concept of the ego, or experience of a separate self (Rowan, 2005). Shifts in worldview are sometimes framed as "peak experiences," (Maslow, 1971) or are glimpses of the transpersonal beyond the egoic framework (Walsh & Vaughn, 1994). This study will be pulling from several key theorists including but not limited to A.H. Almaas, Ken Wilber, and Michael Washburn. Much of the literature relating to shifts, outside of the field of transpersonal psychology, actually contains elements that are transpersonal (C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004; DeGloma, 2010; Miller, 2004; Schlitz et al., 2007; Wilson & Spencer, 1990).

Whether shifts are fleeting glimpses of a peak experience, or more enduring, the experience described is often prosocial. A.H. Almaas (2002) describes essential aspects, inherent in each individual including love, wisdom, compassion and peace that can emerge during intense periods of meditative inquiry. Much of the transpersonal theory acknowledges a process of transitioning from ordinary states of egoic mind to another level or place of consciousness where one's perception of self and world are dramatically different (Walsh & Vaughn, 1994). This shifting of views to perceive more of a unifying and spiritual connection can be argued to be one of the main paths to a more harmonious world. As Vaclav Havel said.

> In today's multicultural world, the truly reliable path to coexistence, to peaceful coexistence and creative cooperation, must start from what is in the root of all cultures and what lies infinitively deeper in human hearts and mind, it must be rooted in self transcendence. (as cited in Kotovska, 2006, p. 97)

Transpersonal theory offers a framework for transitions and integration of the shift. There are various types and maps compiled by different sources which seems to illuminate the experience of the shift, both during and afterwards. It is helpful to chart the transition and the challenges and opportunities that may come from such a shift, as well as to explain the spiritual and mystical nature of shifts people have reported. Additionally within this paradigm and framework, the concept of mental health arises and a wider range of viewpoints are allowed in exploring the inner world (Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2005; Assagioli 1977; Hunt, 2007; Lukoff, 2007).

The inclusion of the transpersonal into social work is a relatively new phenomenon (Cowley & Derezetoes, 1994; Robbins et al., 2012) and fits in well with understanding people and their wholeness.

> The practice challenges facing social workers in the postmodern age call not only for the development of a more complex and inclusive understanding of what it means to be fully human, but also for the use of a transpersonal theory "big" enough to allow and facilitate quantum leaps in human consciousness. (Cowley, 1993 p. 533)

It could be a regular practice to do a bio-psycho-social-spiritual intake that looks at the spiritual realm as importantly as any of the others. While it may appear that the transpersonal and social work have two different goals, their values are very similar; both having a concern for the individual and the collective (Cowley & Derezotes, 1994; Hunt, 2009; Robbins et al., 2012).

Description of Chapters

This study will be using constructivist developmental theory and transpersonal psychological theory to explore the nature of shifts in consciousness towards a prosocial orientation. There will be relevant examples including, biographical materials and examples from the literature used to illustrate the personal experience of such shifts. Narratives, which

contain first person accounts of profound shifts, will be used to evaluate the theories ability to organize, describe and understand the process. Chapter offers a general introduction to the topic. Chapter two focuses on methodology, outlining the theories and rational for the study as well as defining terms. Chapter three is an in depth view of the phenomenon of the nature of prosocial shifts of worldview. It explore the different ways that shifts are discussed in historical and contemporary literature and research. Chapter four looks at constructivist developmental theory as a way of describing shifts and creating a map of the general realm of possible adult development. Chapter five uses a transpersonal perspective to explore the nature of shifts particularly beyond the ego, as well as the subtle dynamics and challenges that may emerge during the transitional periods. The final chapter, six, is a discussion and overview comparing the two theories, and applying them to a narrative description of shifts to determine the ways they overlap and differ. This application will continue to look at how this understanding can be applied to social work in both micro, meso and macro practices. In the next chapter, there will be a more in-depth introduction to the theories, terms and methodology of study

CHAPTER II

Methodology

Prosocial shifts in worldview, can be understood in many different ways. In order to help

support and facilitate shifts, It is important to understand what the transition is like, what factors

are present, and how the experience is being understood by the individual. Many of the

experiences can be seen as exciting, uplifting and life changing (Miller, 2004; Schilitz et al.,

2010; Thomas, Brewer, Kraus, & Rosen, 1993). Other times, the initial period, or process

shortly after the shift, may not be seen initially as positive. Transformations are not always

clearly understood and may be upsetting to the individual, undergoing the change (Grof & Grof,

1992; Lukoff, 2007). Additionally, since one of the main goals of contemporary mental health

perspective is to have a solid identity and ego structure, (Robbins et al., 2012) then a profound

shift that creates instability, could alarm not only the individual in whom it is occurring, but the

family, community and the mental health field as well. Sudden changes can be mistaken for

psychosis, or misunderstood by family or friends, who wonder how and why their loved is

suddenly embracing different values, ideologies or perspectives (Grof & Grof, 1990; Kegan,

1982, Solowoniuk & Nixon, 2009). Exploring these shifts requires expanding one's perspective

about change, growth and development.

Author's Bias & Framework

I have had a curiosity about change, growth and transformation for many years. After

years of reading, study and many informal conversations with others with similar interests, I

discovered several theories that helped explain the shifts as described in this paper. As a result my approach to this study is to explore theories that I have already deemed as valid and helpful in framing the phenomenon of shifts in worldview. Constructivist developmental theory elegantly describes the process of becoming more aware, and how this creates a change in view. Transpersonal helps explain why certain transcendent or peak experiences are fleeting, while others seem to be more consistent. Additionally both theories offer a perspective that acknowledges the promises, and challenges involved with internal change. In some ways it feels absurd to try to create theories to explain or predict such an inexplicable phenomenon as a change in worldview, however as Robert Kegan states, we are meaning making creatures and our minds seem to like stories, and theories (Kegan, 1994).

I understand that all theories have shortcomings and are limited in their scope and framework, yet I find the chosen theories to be among the more comprehensive and relevant for exploration of the topic. I am interested in some of the ways that the theories are similar and different, especially when applied to a narrative examples of profound shifts. Had there been other theories, which seemed more relevant and appropriate I would have elected to use them, yet in my course of study I have not come across any that detail the process of change or the inner terrain as carefully and meticulously. I think of theories as being a certain worldview, which is worn as if a pair of glasses. Therefore the color of the lens, or particularities of the theory influence the way the world is seen and understood. These theories are not the truth, they are not the way the world "actually is," rather they are maps which can help to chart and describe certain aspects of the terrain.

It is not possible to separate a study or piece of writing from oneself. I am a product of my mainstream society and education, which means that my work is going to be coming from a

western perspective. At times I make references to "our current society," or "western beliefs." I understand that there is no "our current society," and "western beliefs" could be many different things. Even the idea of Western and Eastern are questionable, west and east to what?

Furthermore, within the field of social work there is an emphasis on social change and working to reduce oppression and injustice (NASW, 2008). As someone who has not historically been drawn to social policy and social activist work, I am challenging the assumption that there is one right way to effect change. Studies that look at shifts in consciousness and transpersonal development highlight that people become more compassionate, able to hold multiple perspectives and have a greater care and concern for humanity, not just among similar racial, political and social party lines (Vieten, Amorok & Schlitz, 2006). There is a split within the social work community between those who advocate and emphasize macro work and those who are more interested in doing micro based psychotherapeutic work (Abromovitz, 1998). While it is possible and effective to approach social change using a macro technique or ideology to create a micro shift in individual's worldview, those who espouse this view often downplay, disregard or negatively critique the internal micro process and vice versa. This is not an either/or question for me. I believe that there is not one right way that everyone should follow. Additionally unless there is a real understanding of how worldviews do change and what those changes are like, much of the efforts to effect social change may be inefficient and at times, even counterproductive. It is possible for the individual's transformation of worldview and consciousness to ripple outwards to bring about change in the world as well.

My emphasis in this study is not to look at the external structures and how they create injustice, which is certainly important and must be understood and embraced as well, but to look at how changes in the internal structures can lead to a greater openness, compassion, tolerance

and prosocial behaviors. People will be drawn to do micro, macro or some combination of both. Within the apparent contradiction and polarity of external and internal and in accordance with pluralism and multiple realties, there is a dialectic, which allows both to exist without needing to make one the "right answer." It is possible to sum up many of the world's conflicts with the idea that "everyone thinks that they are right and that if only others would think like they do, there would be no problems." This idea may actually *be* the problem.

The overall goal of this study is to offer an exploration of a subjective experience involving a change in worldview, and simultaneously bring awareness and curiosity to the fact that worldviews change. Inherent in this discourse is the assumption that worldviews influence the way in which individuals relate to themselves and each other. By exploring the experience of having a shift in worldview, I am hoping to offer a sense of possibility and understanding for how and why people experience positive shifts in their understanding of their self and world. There are areas of development within this study that point towards a possible worldview which is complex, inclusive, and tolerant (Berger 2005; Blackstone, 2007; Kegan 1994; Zaytoun, 2010). This study also attempts to highlight that not all growth and development looks positive (Almass, 2004; Assagioli, 1977; Kegan, 1982, Lukoff, 2007). By having a wider view that allows for a deeper awareness of the process of shifting worldviews, it is more likely that some of the signs of transition, will not be mistaken for symptoms of a mental health disorder (Grof & Grof, 1990; Lukoff, 2007).

Both constructivist developmental and transpersonal psychology have articulated a number of clear ways of looking at shifts that can be used as maps to understand and make sense of something that in all regards is intangible and immeasurable. Since the majority of the work is subjective and in many ways, outside the normal frame of current academic discourse, there are

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limited areas of empirical research, in particular for transpersonal. In regard to stages of development, I both appreciate and am wary of this perspective found within both constructivist developmental as well as some aspects of the transpersonal community (Kegan, 1982; Wilber, 2000a). There is little argument that development occurs, people grow and change, and that some of this can follow a certain predictable order. However when this growth is labeled and made a linear process and given specific criteria it begins to feel more mechanistic and potentially problematic, or simplistic. As much as one is reminded that people are not orders or stages, and that these are just ways of looking at the world, it begins to feel like qualitative judgment about where and how one is operating within the world. Although in all honesty, people are constantly categorizing each other all the time, putting people into boxes like, "liberal, conservative, radical," "white/of color" "open/closed minded" "mature/immature" "kind/unkind," "intelligent/unintelligent," or "queer/straight." In one-way Kegan's orders are another way of expanding the process that often occurs without much conscious awareness when we interact with people on a daily basis. This is just another way of making categories and distinctions and making sense of the world based on certain characteristics. These concerns will be further explored in subsequent chapters. The intention of these theories is to further understanding and reduce conflict and suffering, elements which overlap with current social work theory.

Finally, in spirit of the topic of this thesis, my study represents aspects of my current worldview, which if all continues to go as it has, will be very different in another one to five or ten years. This represents a snapshot, a glimpse into some aspects of my lens, although it is certainly not the only lens being used, and it is certainly not being taken as the final lens. I look forward to removing these lenses and eagerly and patiently await the next worldview.

Introduction to Theories

  Constructivist Developmental Theory: Constructivist developmental theory offers an explanation of a shift, as a transition one has begun, or completed by moving from one developmental orientation to another (Kegan, 1982; Kegan,1994). This theoretical orientation breaks down the process and creates an understanding of why someone may see themselves and the world in one way, and how they may move to seeing the world in a completely different way (Berger, 2005; Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994). This study will be using Robert Kegan's constructivist developmental, subject-object theory as one of the theoretical frames.

  Within the constructivist developmental perspective there are various stages that orient the individual to their understanding relation to the world (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994). The use of these orders or stages is not intended to focus on a particular stage, attention will be paid to process of change and the ability for someone to move from one orientation to another. The primary features of constructivist developmental theory relevant to this study are the *stage theory*, *subject/object* distinction, the awareness of *cognitive, interpersonal* and *intrapersonal lines of development, deconstruction and reconstruction* and the *transitional process* (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994).

  Stage theory, stemming from a neo-Piagian perspective (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994), operates under the assumption that development does not end when a child reaches Piaget's formal operations stage. Constructivist developmental theory proposes that there are distinct stages or "orders," that adults can move through which have specific features and characteristics that can be identified and generalized. Each different stage changes the way one organizes or makes meaning of their life. Kegan proposes that the complexity of organization increases, as each order is transversed. As one reaches the most complex order, one is characterized as being

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more tolerant of difference, able to hold greater paradox and contradictions, and is generally open to seeing oneself as a combination of ever changing parts rather than a solid permanent structure (Berger, 2005; Eriksen, 2006; Kegan 1982; Kegan, 1994; Zaytoun, 2010).

Subject/Object theory (Kegan, 1982; Kegan,1994) is the primary way that Kegan organizes the process of moving from one order or stage to another. The movement involves a what was subject becoming an object. What previously was being held as the primary way of understanding something becomes more clearly an object, something which could be reflected upon. Subject is described as, "elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to fused with or embedded in" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). This is how knowing happens, how our experience is organized and made sense of. It is the lens or worldview one has, and although one is not aware of this, one is subject to it. The object is described as, "elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate or otherwise operate upon" (Kegan, 1994. p. 32). The change of what was subject-- becoming object-- signifies a shift in worldview or in the way in which life is organized. For example in recognizing the limits of our social conditions, Kegan states, "we can only do something about our reactions only if we "have" them. When they have us, there is no *there* there to overcome the ethnocentricity" (Kegan, 1994 p. 231). Thus, in order to develop greater ability to reflect upon our conditioned assumptions, we need to first recognize that these assumptions are operating.

Cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal lines of development, are present in Kegan's model highlighting that development can occur in different areas of oneself. The cognitive dimension is related to how one creates meaning, organizes information and processes information. The intrapersonal is related to ones internal or self-awareness, including how one

understands their own vales, beliefs and how these inform and influence behavior. Interpersonal deals with how one understands and behaves in relationship to other people. It is possible that some lines could be more developed than others, which could result in development hat is not balanced or as inclusive as possible (King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005).

Deconstruction and reconstruction occur on an ongoing basis in ones interactions in the world. Generally one deconstructs or breaks down an old paradigm and then reconstructs a new own. There are different ways that this can be talked about and it involves different components. In interactions with the world, either one *assimilates* ones experience to fit a familiar framework, (Kegan, 1982) which can be seen as a form of defense (Kegan, 1994), one *accommodates* ones experience into the new situation or experience, resulting in new growth and understanding (Kegan, 1982). This framework is adapted from Piaget's understanding of how knowledge is created, (Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994). If one is able to accommodate an experience, then it means that there is differentiation or distance from an old schema, which can be the beginning of a deconstruction and reconstruction process.

Transitions are seen as a part of the process of growth and development. When one moves from one way of understanding the world to another, a transition is being undertaken, which can be both exciting and challenging (Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994). The transition always involves the loss of something familiar and the entry into a new way of being and knowing. This can create both euphoria and a sense of possibility as well as depression, anxiety and confusion (Eriksen 2006; Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994).

While this frame for orders can sound very linear and possibly mechanistic, one other way of understanding the orders can be illustrated in the shift from third order to fourth, which will be explored in greater detail later. In short, the realization that one has been conditioned by

family, society, and culture that were unquestionably adopted and taken to be true, can accompany the shift to fourth order. While many people have this experience in their lives, it is not thought of as "I just changed orders of consciousness, I am no longer subject to my inherited conditioning (or to as much of the condition). I didn't even know that my socialization was just one way of seeing things. Now I can see it as an object therefore allowing me to think about it in a totally different way." Kegan is putting a framework to an experience that everyone experiences on some level multiple times from birth.

     Transpersonal Psychology: In researching the phenomenon of shifts, it became clear that a good number of the references to shifts described them in a mystical or spiritual fashion (C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004; DeGloma, 2010; Miller, 2004; Schlitz et al., 2010; Wilson & Spencer, 1990;). In order to greater understand experiences that point to the numinous, transpersonal psychology is being used to understand shifts. Transpersonal theory will allow and help give context to the spiritual nature in which people understand their shifts and additionally it will help chart and map the transitional periods.

     Various shifts and changes in development, leading at times to transpersonal states and stages, can be illuminating and life changing. Frequently one has to return or attend to areas of the ego that were unintegrated, or in some ways wounded, denied or previously rejected (Adyashanti, 2010; Almaas, 2004; Kornfield, 1989; Washburn, 2003; Welwood, 1999). Thus the transpersonal theory offers an in-depth look at some of the challenges and exhilarating aspects of shifts in consciousness as well as a framework for understanding unitive and profound experiences. Since mapping out various terrains of consciousness is one of the strengths of transpersonal psychology, in particular dealing with aspects of peak experience, and mystical experience, it makes sense to use this lens in looking at shifts. Transpersonal psychology can

offer an understanding of what shifts are occurring and what the inner terrain is like for individuals in their glimpse or more enduring transitions.

The following are key terms in understanding how transpersonal theory relate to the phenomenon of shifts: *transpersonal/spiritual/ mystical, egoic, state vs. stage, developmental process beyond ego, the absoult,* and *process of transformation.*

The term transpersonal refers to being beyond the normal, personal egoic frame of reference reaching the wider aspects of humanity, life, psyche or cosmos (Friedman et al., 2010; Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). Assagioli refers to the transpersonal as "that which his beyond or above ordinary personality," (as cited in Rowan, 2005 p. 11).

Egoic is that which is related to the ego. The ego as defined in the transpersonal theory is the limed sense of self, or sense of being a separate person. It is the collection of thoughts, memories, beliefs, ideas, images, self-identified roles, emotions, defenses and character patterns. The ego is what is constantly trying to defend, justify, and rationalize and often is fueled by the pull of desire and the push of fear (Almaas, 2008).

The concept of the absoult, (Almaas, 2004; Funk, 1994) is understood to be a common aspect of consciousness that is accessible to all people, and ultimately is recognized in all things. There are different names and ideas about how it is understood. This is one of the key frames of transpersonal theory. This absoult is the place where the transcendent exists, a unifying field of awareness or underlying reality present in all individuals (Almaas, 2004; Blackstone, 2007; Funk, 1994).

A developmental process beyond ego (Almaas, 2004; Funk, 1994; Friedman et al., 2010; Hartelius, Caplin & Rardin, 2007; Rowan, 2005; Vaughan, 1986; Wilber 2000) is referenced in most, if not all works of transpersonal psychology. There is some disagreement among the

different theorists and clinicians as to what the development looks like, however generally it is agreed that some form of shift, or change can be seen from a developmental lens. According to some theorists, the developmental process is more predictable and organized (Washburn, 2003; Wilber, 2000b) others see it more as an unpredictable organic unfolding (Almaas, 2004).

States and stages are found in several different works, but primarily acknowledged in Wilber's (2000a) work. While explicated upon fully within Wilber, (2000b) the understanding translates and can be applied and seen within other models as well. A states are broken down into *natural* and *altered*. Natural states are basically sleeping, waking, dreaming. Altered states, include everything from drug-induced intoxication to meditative experiences of absorption and peak experiences, (Wilber, 2000a). A stage is dependent upon the idea that there are different, predictable ways of organizing reality making sense of meaning. Stages in the transpersonal world are not as focused upon adult egoic but related to the spiritual and transcendent absolut. Often times altered states give glimpses of a different stage, yet the characteristic of the state is that it is fleeting, while the stages are more enduring and a more ongoing reference point or center of gravity.

Transformation is a theme inherent in the transpersonal literature. There is a transformation from an ordinary mode of being and perception towards one that is trans-personal. A transformation involves moving from one mode of perceiving reality and life towards another. In the case of this study and in the transpersonal field in general, transformations are considered to be positive and towards more clarity, wisdom, compassion and harmony (Almaas, 2004; Robbins et al., 2012; Rowan, 2005; Vaughn, 1986). The whole theoretical framework is built around a life that is not limited to the normal ego-based personality.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of shifts is certainly not limited to the transpersonal or constructivist developmental perspective. Both systems have articulated a number of clear ways of looking at shifts that can be used as maps to understand and make sense of something, which in all regards is intangible and immeasurable. There is a good amount of literature from a variety of sources, which explore these changes. Some is clearly set in a religious or spiritual perspective and some is more interested in life stage or post-traumatic growth. The next chapter focuses on the different ways that shifts in worldview are discussed.

CHAPTER III

Phenomenon of Prosocial Shifts

Themes within literature

The focus of the study is on shifts which lead to a perspective and behavior that is more open, complex, connected to and accepting of others. Elements of the study overlap with areas such as personality change process (Crockett & Meisel, 1974; Frick; 1990; Heatherton & Nichols, 1994; Levitt, Rattanasampan, Chaidaroon, Stanley, & Robinson, 2009), in/out group experience (Ledgerwood & Chaiken, 2007; Maoz & McCauley, 2011; van der Schalk, Fischer, Doosje, Wigboldus, Hawk, Rotteveel, & Hess, 2011), restorative justice (D. Miller, 2001), and other areas which seek to explore personality, change, growth and transformation. This study will focus primarily upon the inner change of worldview including the understanding and experience of the shift. A worldview is ones internal framework for understanding ones self and others; it is a meaning-making construct that organizes perceptions and understanding (Koltko-Riveria, 2004).

Shifts are not necessarily dependent upon an external or noticeable life change, related to a rite of passage or external transition. The nature of the shift is an internal change akin to a revelation, epiphany, or awakening. The nature of the shift could be related to changes that occur on a more gradual and ongoing nature to a more sudden, and powerful change. There are a wide variety and implications and outcomes from such a shift, ranging from an interesting

passing experience, to a total transformation of ones life. Of particular interest are outcomes which result in a more positive and prosocial perception of others.

Theories

Within the literature, shifts fall under the category of a number of different frames and names. They have been described as: metanoia (Dirksen, 1932; Kotovska, 2006; Walden, 1896) conversion experience (James, 1979), peak experiences (Maslow, 1971), turning points (Clausen, 1995; Leonard & Burns, 1999; Wethington, 2003), crucial experience (Mamali, & Dunn, 2011), quantum change (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994; Miller, 2004), awakenings (Degloma, 2010), momentous life experiences (Pillemer, 2001), transformational change (Brown & Miller, 2005; White, 2004), intense personal experiences (Wilson & Spencer, 1990), world view transformation (Schlitz, Vieten & Miller, 2010) and symbolic growth experience (Frick, 1990). These theories are all speaking of an experience where a significant transformation or change in one's organizing and understanding of life occurs.

There are some slight differences in the way that these are talked about, although they are all about change in perception and experience of oneself and others. Transformational change (Brown & Miller, 2005; White, 2004) is evidenced by, "radical and sustained alterations of character, identity, and interpersonal relationships (White, 2004 p. 462). While symbolic growth experience "alters and reshapes existing perceptual-cognitive patterns and brings entirely new conceptual elements into being" (Frick, 1987, p. 411). Symbolic growth experience points towards a moment when ones understanding of life or themselves greatly changed. It is framed as a powerful and transformative learning that brings for a new reality (Frick, 1987). Frick points to several case examples that capture a moment of change. For one individual it was hitting rock bottom of alcoholism, another recalled being a child and for the first time

understanding the "beingness" and personhood of another and themselves, while another individual realized, while watching a child make sand castles on the edge of the ocean, that they focused too much on the end result and not enough on the process (Frick, 1987).   While pointing in different directions, with different factors and outcomes and ways of making sense of the experience, there shares a commonality. A way of being or seeing the world, oneself or others was changed or transformed allowing for a new perspective or orientation leading to positive results. For the sake of this paper they will be referred to as shifts. The research that William Miller and Janet C'de Baca (1994) did around quantum change and Schlitz, Vietien and Amorok (2007) with transformational change are most closely aligned with shifts that are being studied within this paper.

Categories

All of the shifts within the various theoretical perspectives listed above, seem to contain a cognitive and emotional component and often times a behavioral/life situation component. At times these distinctions are less clear, or they wind up leading to each other. One of the areas is related to insight, or a new view or understanding. This insight can be on the level of oneself (intrapersonal) or someone else (interpersonal). And another is related to what has been described as a mystical or spiritual nature (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994; James, 1979; Schlitz et al., 2007; DeGloma, 2010; White, 2004; Wilson & Spencer; 1990). It seems that when one has the experience of a completely different worldview or transcendent experience that is out of the normal everyday process it is often interpreted in terms of religious or spiritual terms. It is also possible that people whom are more religiously or spiritually oriented seem to have or make more meaning based upon such experiences.

In addition to these categories, there tend to be two main ways of looking at the shifts however most theorists acknowledge both. One way is an attempt to find a causal relationship linking the internal experience to the external situation that someone is going through. For example much of the research on turning points, looks at life stages, roles and transitions as impacting individuals experiences (Clausen, 1995; Sutin, Costa, Wethington, & Eaton 2010). While the areas closely related, looking at quantum change, (Miller, 2004; Miller C'de Baca, 1994; C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004), are more interested in the internal experience and process without being as focused on the concrete external forces. These two ways of exploring shifts, are closely linked and often hard to separate from each other, although the latter orientations is less causal and focused on the environment. Within this perspective more attention is being drawn to how the inner cognitive-perceptual framework is operating and the experience of changes within this system. There have been various ways of conceptualizing and exploring shifts within several different fields. The main areas are found within religious, spiritual, and psychological. The history of shifts will be explored next.

History of Shifts

Metanoia

Some of the earliest references to shifts of this nature, from a western perspective are related to the term *metanoia*, which was used in ancient Greek texts as well as early Christian works including the New Testament (Walden, 1896). Metanoia is similar to the concept of conversion, moving from sin to the graces of God It can be also understood to be a fundamental change from evil to good (Dirksen, 1932). Dirksen (1932) specifically states that to meet the New Testaments definition of metanoia, meaning a change of soul, one must meet the conditions

for conversion to God, including, "a complete breaking away from sin, which is accomplished by contrition, confession, amendment, and satisfaction for sin" (Dirksen, 1932 p. 201).

Christian scholar Treadwell Walden (1896), has a slightly different understanding of metanoia and is less focused on the concept of repentance, and contrition, and more interested in the powerful and transformative conversion; the actual, "change of mind," which is also connected to and implying a "change of heart,"

> 'Change' in the radical sense we here intend, when applied to 'mind,' ought to suggest something hardly short of transformation; not of essence of course, but of consciousness…. Sort of mental transfiguration, under which the Mind, when placed in a new situation, thinks new thoughts, receives new impressions, forms new tastes, inclinations, purposes, develops new aptitudes; such a Change may be good or evil, but such a change is possible. (Walden, 1896, p.4-5)

While Walden acknowledges that there is a positive or negative directionality, his overall framing is one that is connected with the heart and moves towards being in alignment with Christ, creating a deep experience of wisdom and love. This idea speaks to a radical transfiguration or shift which is deep enough to create new ways of being, not just on the cognitive level, but also on a emotional and behavioral level. The majority of the references implored a positive view of this shift and would find it in accordance with the possibility of the prosocial nature of changes (Walden, 1896; Dirksen, 1932; Kotovska, 2006). In contemporary philosophy, metanoia has been used to describe the very nature of the shift in perspective, moving towards a prosocial direction,

> Speaking in terms of L. Kolakowski, metanoia it is the transformation of human consciousness from homocentric to biocentric. This means to revise the human superior

position not only through deep dialogue with the other, but also to change instrumental

thinking about nature as a non-living thing one can use and possess. Such kind of insight

is the way for humankind to mature and think wiser. This attempt is not just a mechanism

or a specific state of mind, but it requires a radical, inner spiritual transformation of

mind—metanoia. (Kotovska, 2006, p.109)

The idea of a radical spiritual transformation of mind relates to spirituality, religion as well as

psychology. There are numerous psychologists who have taken it upon themselves to study shifts

in consciousness as well.

Relevant Psychologists

One of pioneer's in the contemporary western field of "shift" was William James

(11979), a psychologist and philosopher from the early 1900's. James explored the topic of

conversion, which is very similar to the topic of metanoia. James described conversion

understood in a Christian perspective, as a radical shift in experience, where one feels a sense of

grace moving from a place of distress or towards harmony or integration. James quotes a

description of a teenager boy in the late 1800's who wrote of his conversion experience,

My happiness was so great that I wanted to die; this world had no place in my affections,

as I knew of… I had an ardent desire that all mankind might feels as I did; I wanted to

have them all love God supremely. Previous to this time I was very selfish and self-

righteous; but now I desired the welfare of all mankind, and could with a feeling heart

forgive my worst enemies. (James 1979, p.160)

This experience is an example of such a shift that results in a prosocial orientation with a desire

for service to others. Nine years later another experience occurred,

I began to feel exceedingly happy and humble, and such a sense of unworthiness as I never felt before…It took complete possession of my soul, and I am certain that I desired the Lord, while in the midst of it, not to give me any more happiness, for it seemed as if I could not contain what I had got. (James, 1979 p. 162)

James was taken by the powerful nature of these experiences, which he believed were extraordinary. James stated that there were several features of conversion, including: a loss of worry, and a sense of deep peace and harmony, the perception of truths before unknown, a sense that the world has undergone a change and is illuminated with a "beautiful newnesss," (James, 1979 p. 203). Other more contemporary psychologists have also studied these shifts and equated them to mystical or spiritual experiences.

Abhram Maslow (1971), one of the leaders and founders of humanistic psychology, described experiences that relate to the concept of prosocial shifts. His work focused on *peak experiences*. Maslow understood peak experiences to be common, something that everyone has experienced, yet often not acknowledge or integrate them into life. Based on self-reports of many individuals peak experiences often include features such as: "truth, beauty, wholeness, dichotomy-transcendence, aliveness-process, uniqueness, perfection, necessity, completion, justice, order, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness, and self-sufficiency" (Maslow, 1971 p. 106). Other ways of describing peak experiences are, "great joy, the ecstasy, the visions of another world, or another level of living" (Maslow, 1971, p. 177). Maslow would interview individuals about peak experiences by asking about, "the most ecstatic moment of your life…" or "Have you experienced transcendent ecstasy?" (Maslow, 1971, p. 174). Maslow found that peak experiences were often brought on by experiences of "perfect justice, values or excellence" (Maslow 1971 p. 107). Some of the experiences involved: childbirth, works of art, music, even

while working on math equations. Maslow acknowledges that many of these experiences do not lead to significant changes in ones being, although they are often glimpses of what he called self-actualization (Maslow, 1971).

Both James and Maslow catalogue experiences that would fall under the spiritual, religious or mystical nature. Maslow and James believed that the experience could be precipitated by a crisis, or difficult experience, however James found that more often than not, some form of despair or anguish precipitated conversion experiences. Maslow acknowledged the possibility of despair preceding but focused more of the extremely uplifted and positive nature of the experience and lead up. They both agreed that the process could be gradual or sudden, and that it could lead to lasting changes, or be relatively uneventful.

Peak experiences and conversions are transcendent and profound, leading to an unworldly or palpable change in seeing the world. While writers and researchers continue to be intrigued by prosocial shifts of worldview, these seminal authors are still referenced. Not all shifts result in what could be considered to be a religious, spiritual or ecstatic moment. There are also shifts that occur on a more interpersonal level, where one experiences another in a new way, or see's interpersonal dynamics in a new light. Some of the literature is focused on the external nature of shifts, including transitional moments, and post-traumatic growth. Other areas are more focused on the nature of the shifts, including increased awareness of self, or shifts of a mystical or spiritual nature.

Contemporary Research and Theory

One of the most researched and written about aspects related to shifts is found in the field of turning points (Clausen, 1995; Leonard & Burns, 1999; Leonard & Burns 2006; Wethington, 2003) Wethington defines the term as:

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A period or point in time when a person has undergone a major transformation in views about the self. Life events and difficulties: life transitions; and internal subjective changes such as self-realization or reinterpretations of past experiences. (Wethington, 2003, p. 39)

When researching and doing interviews, Clausen (1995), a leader in turning points research, would as questions like "As you look it over, can you pick out any point or points along your life course that you would call 'turning points'-where your life really took a different direction?" (p. 370). Turning points tend to focus more on the events and ones interpretation of the event, rather than on the actual shift and what the internal experience entailed (Clausen, 1995; Wethington, 2003). The field of turning points are is primarily focus is on external roles, transition and external life events.

Crucial experiences, "significant life experience that induces major changes in one's own way of thinking, feeling and relating… experiences in which one makes an important choice between opposite values, worldviews, relational patterns, moral orientations or behavioral responses" (Mamoli & Dunn, 2011, p. 104), are often are equated with the experience of loss. Crucial experiences may precipitate a turning point (Mamoli & Dunn, 2011). The majority of the research done on turning points has looked at stressful situations and major personal changes, like: marriage, life stage transitions, birth of child, middle-age, loss of loved one, or major illness (Clausen, 1995; Pilemer, 2001; Sutin et al., 2010; Wethington, 2003). It is acknowledged that turning points do not have to be negative in influence and that many of the shifts that occurs that seem to be the most relevant are more in the positive domain (Wethington, 2003). The majority of literature around significant life change in general—turning points, and crucial experiences, momentous life experience, seems to focus on life change related to difficulty, loss, or trauma

(Clausen 1995; Mamoli & Dunn, 2011; Sutin et al., 2010; Wethington, 2003). And others not exclusively focused on difficulty acknowledge that it is one of the factors involved (James, 1979; Miller & C'de Baca; 1994; Schlitz, et al., 2007).

Quantum change focuses more broadly on people who had, "spiritual conversion, personality transformation, and sudden extensive cognitive and behavior changes. These changes led them to new ways of thinking and understanding. They shed the old ways of being" (C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004, p. 531). Quantum change includes more open-ended explorations of the experience of the shift itself rather than specifically linking it to external or difficult precursors.

The majority of the research done on turning points has looked at stressful situations and major personal changes, like marriage, life stage transitions, birth of child, middle-age, loss of loved one, or major illness. (Clausen, 1995; Pilemer, 2001; Wethington, 2003; Sutin et al., 2010). It is acknowledged that turning points do not have to be negative in influence and that many of the shifts that occurs that seem to be the most relevant are more in the positive domain (Wethington, 2003). The majority of literature around significant life change in general— turning points, and crucial experiences, momentous life experience, seems to focus on life change related to difficulty, loss, or trauma (Clausen 1995; Mamoli & Dunn, 2011; Spencer & Wilson, 1990; Sutin et al., 2010). Others did not focus exclusively on difficulty yet acknowledged that it is one of the factors involved (Schlitz, et al., 2007; James, 1979; Miller & C'de Baca; 1994). There are overlapping areas with the field of post-traumatic growth (Linley, Joseph, & Goodfellow, 2008; Gerrish, Dyck & Marsh, 2009; Payne, Joseph, & Tudway, 2007). Often times shifts are spurred by difficult or traumatic experiences, however it would be limiting to assume that these difficult events are the only precursors. There are various categories which

shifts fit into, regardless of the origins or external circumstances. These include interpersonal, intrapersonal/insight and spiritual/mystical components.

Examples of Interpersonal Shifts

Shifts within the interpersonal generally are related to a change in the way that another person or group is perceived. Since this study is focusing on prosocial shifts, it is related to a sense of greater connection to another, increased tolerance, compassion or empathy. In a study on desistence from crime, David Gadd (2006) describes a subject, Frank who experienced an interpersonal shift. Frank was in a study looking at far-right activists, who had been involved in hate crimes. Frank describes how he went from an abusive poor family where his father encouraged fighting, skipping and stealing, to being involved in a pro-white racist political party in England. There was a moment of awareness, or humanity when he saw that his actions past and present were causing harm, and injury to other humans. Frank was able to reflect on the political party he was involved in and his past behaviors, "'A load of racists, thugs . . . They will never be any different, as far as I'm concerned. I mean skinheads aren't they? Exactly what I was them years ago'" (Gadd, 2006, p. 189). This was spurred by a turning point, a shift in his understanding of life, involving his relationship to another racial group, when he realized that discrimination and hatred was effecting children as well as adults. "'Can't blame the kids . . . To do that is blatantly racist.' Frank was 'disgusted'" (Gadd, 2006, p. 189). Frank had realized that his way of being in the world and of relating to people who were different from him, specifically people who were of color, was creating suffering, which became unacceptable to him in this different light. From the findings of the worldview transformation study by Schlitz et al., (2010) they determined that there were stages that followed a certain progression leading from a more "me" centered awareness to a wider "we." They chart a course of social consciousness from

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embedded, to self-reflexive, to engaged, collaborative and finally what they refer to as resonant. This example of Frank shows a type of shift from being more "me" centered to more "we" centered (Vieten et al., 2006).

Examples of Insight Type of Shift

One of the types of shifts that was referred to in several studies is a shift related to learning something new about oneself, or understanding something in a different or new light. (Miller, 2004; Schlitz et al., 2010; Wethington, 2003) The insight shed light on oneself in a positive or negative (Wethington, 2003) manner and is similar to the experience that is sought after in psychotherapy (Bien, 2004; Fosha 2006). These insights generally re-organizes sense of self and can be "accompanied by intense emotion and a cathartic, even ecstatic, sense of relief and release, (Miller 2004, p. 457). It may happen in therapy or in a different context. An example would be the realization that one's actions are no longer appropriate, or that they have been selfish or self-serving. This type of insight can have a large impact in one's life.

Examples of mystical/spiritual shifts

Shifts that would fall into a mystical or spiritual category are much more along the lines described in conversion (James, 1979) and metonoia (Walden, 1896). They fall more into the experiences that Maslow (1971) described as peak experience. They are as Miller (2004) describes

> They are the kind of experienced by William Wilson, Malcolm X, Tolstoy, Joan of Arc, Theresa of Avila and many others. They are transient states of consciousness usually lasting for only a few minutes and distinctly different from normal consciousness. The person typically experiences them passively, not a product of personal will or control, and has a difficult time expressing the experience in words. They usually are intensely

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positive, joyful experiences, and often the person senses the presence of an awe-inspiring

Other. Often there is a noetic element of revelation, a sudden knowing of a new truth. An

experience of unity is common; for example an ineffable oneness with all of humankind,

with nature or the universe. (p. 457)

These mystical or spiritual type of shifts were not actively sought by Miller and C'de baca

(1994) although they were more sought after by the Schiltz et al. (2007) studies. The stories of

such shifts have a number of similarities. Peter Ralston writes of such a shift, which contains

familiar elements to many others stories,

My mind opened up to a new level of consciousness, and I felt my familiar sense of self

completely dissolve. It seemed like my awareness both expanded and merged with what

had always been true: the very essence of "being"… A sense of calm, lightness, and ease

saturated my being, and I felt I had at last become one with my real self. All inner

turmoil evaporated. All doubt and struggle fell away. It was the most extraordinary

moment of my life. A deep sense of peace washed over me. (Ralston & Ralston, 2010)

Some of the elements that comprise the more mystical or spiritual shifts include a sense of peace,

compassion, unity, emptiness, and seeing through a solid self. These descriptions are found

across culture, ages and religious and tend to be rather similar. They are, however primarily an

internal subjective experience, which makes determining the validly and ability to generalize

difficult (Hodge & Derezotes, 2008). There are empirical studies, however they can only point in

this direction, which is far from the declaration of a scientifically verified fact.

Key Empirical Studies

Several contemporary studies stand out as particularly relevant to this thesis, both

theoretically and empirically. Cassandra Vieten, Tina Amorok and Marilyn Mandala Schlitz of

the Instuite of Noetic Sciences did the first and most comprehensive study. Over the course of

10 years, they researched and collected over 900 questionnaires from individuals who had

experienced transformations. In addition to this information they interviewed approximately 60

individuals who had experienced shifts and transformations of worldview, and were now in a

position to help facilitate and support others in this process, experts in the field of transformative

shifts. The researchers have published two academic papers (Vieten, Amorak & Schlitz 2006;

Schlitz, Vieten & miller, 2010) and a book (Schlitz, Vieten & Amorok, 2007) which detailing the

findings. Between the semi-structured interviews and the hundreds of questionnaires, there was

a great amount of information that could be studied and extrapolated upon to greater inform the

understanding of shifts in would view. They found similar results to others who have studied

this area, although they had by far the most comprehensive in wide reaching data set. Since this

study was focused specifically on transformative change, there was an emphasis on

distinguishing between the shift in perspective and the process of transformation.

> Although "transformation" is often used synonymously with "change," many respondents
>
> noted that although transformation results in changes in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors,
>
> the actual process of transformation does not require changing these things directly but
>
> instead involves a change in perception or perspective, resulting in an alteration in one's
>
> fundamental assumptions. (Vieten et al., 2006, p. 923)

The transformational change in perception is what is being defined as a *shift*, in this study.

Respondents of the study reported, "shifting the way you see the world, and yourself… a shift in

sense of self… seeing self in a completely different way, (Vieten et al., 2006, p. 923).   Some of

findings showed significant changes in understanding of self and others. Most of the shifts

resulted in a greater sense of compassion and a desire to be of service and help reduce suffering,

a greater sense of being connected to a larger sense of self, or interconnection with others. These types of experiences resulted in a reduced sense of isolation and alienation. Many, but not all, catalysts of transformation were a result of difficulty involving suffering or pain-- 21% said that the transformation was difficult and rather unpleasant, 50% said it was pleasant or enjoyable, most shifts were not enough single events which created long lasting cognitive or behavioral changes (Schlitz et al., 2007; Vieten et al., 2006) The researchers focused primarily on people who were seeking spiritual change and development. An earlier study found similar results without as specific a population or wide scale of an effort (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994).

The original study was by William Miller and Janet C'de Baca (1994) and then followed up ten years later by C'de Baca and Paula Wilbourne (2004). Initially there were 55 people interviewed. Participants responded to feature story in the *Albuquerque Journal* which asked for research volunteers "who have been transformed in a relatively short period of time—who have a deep shift in core values, feelings, attitudes or actions" (Conaway, 1991; as cited in Miller & C'de Baca 1994). This study was not asking specifically about religious or spiritual experiences. The majority of the subjects were White, much like the Schlitz et, al., study—and wound up identifying as either being religious or spiritual. Other than these two commonalities, which are not insignificant, the researches state that there were no other factors that seemed to be common in terms of personality or presentation. The individuals varied in terms of socioeconomic status, age, religion, culture and verbal ability (Miller, 2004). The consistent finding was that the respondents, who averaged 11 years since the experience, reported that this experience was, a "central turning point in their lives, watersheds that divided their memories into before and after" (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994, p. 260).

The majority felt that the experience: took them by surprise, stemmed from an external event, had concluded within 24 hours and approximately 50% reported some distress or upset prior to the experience. A minority of them were seeking experiences or wanting a closer relationship to God. The events occurred during a range of situations like: eating, working, watching TV, showering, singing, smoking marijuana, traveling, crying or receiving an abortion. (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994). Ninety-six percent of the respondents felt that their life was now much better. The most common reports included "liberation, deeply positive feeling, and a new kind of meaning and perception," (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994 p. 264). These changes also corresponded to changes in values.

The researchers separated their findings into gendered characteristics between men and women, finding that personal values differed. Participants were given a value hierarchy using 50 different values, which were ranked from highest to lowest priority. Men's top five values originally being: wealth, adventure, achievement, pleasure and achievement fell to 50th, 29th, 26th, 25th, and 33rd respectively and were replaced by: spirituality, personal peace, family, God's will and honesty. Woman's top priorities originally were: family, independence, career, fitting in and attractiveness moved to 12th, 22nd, 34th, 49th 38th being replaced by: growth, self-esteem, spirituality, happiness, and generosity (Miller C'de Baca, 1994). While these are not directly pointing towards an increased interest in benefiting others, they are pointing towards positive changes. Not all the studies related to this field are as open ended and exploratory, or result in findings that are related to spirituality. Other relevant studies are focused more on preceding factors or external situations.

Other Empirical Studies

A review of the other relevant literature related to shifts found a number of similarities and differences in their area of study and approach. Two studies looked at turning points and specifically the preceding events and focused on difficulty or trauma (Sutin et al., 2010; Wethington, 2003). One of the studies was interested in stressful events and how different personality types responded (Sutin et al., 2010). The other study was interested in turning points that corresponded to finding out positive or negative information about oneself (Wethington, 2003). Leonard & Burns (1999; 2006) focused on turning points and was more open ended and exploratory that did not have any specific hypothesis. The subjects were women who where middle to late life, found that the biggest turning points were related to personal growth or change, not stress or trauma. It is worthwhile to emphasize that the study that was most open ended and exploratory found different data that the most commonly reported turning point was not distress relate (Leonard & Burns, 2006).

There are many variables that cannot be controlled for in the studies. There are questions as to who is willing to engage in a study in the first place. What people have and don't have phones, and what times are they being called (Wethington, 2003). There are some people who read the Sunday paper and some who don't (C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004). In addition there were many people who do not want to be part of a follow up study, which impacts the sample. (C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004; Sutin et al., 2010; Wethington, 2003). All these studies are generalizable only to a certain extent, depending on different factors. There was not evidence of a really a diverse sample that would be representing a wide range of individuals, with cultural and racial differences found in any study. To truly understand the universal nature of such changes and possibilities for growth and prosocial development, a more diverse and wide

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population should be studied.

Conclusion

There are many who understand that these shifts of worldview hold significant promise of creating a positive or prosocial outcome. (Almaas, 2004; Anazdula,1999; Maslow, 1971; Miller, 2004; Rowan, 2005; Schlitz et al., 2007) The very process of breaking down of old cognitive structures can lead to a greater openness to others, thus increasing the likelihood of prosocial behaviors. Much like in both the hero's journey and the Cave allegory, Daloz (1988) speaks of the starting point before the journey, and how the process of leaving what is familiar ultimately creates a greater ability to understand and develop compassion and connection with a wider community. Some of the shifts are seen as sudden or fleeting, others more permanent. Often the shifts contain a new sense of life. Some interoperate this newness in as profoundly spiritual or mystical. Regardless of how it is framed, the individual's internal experience of increasing awareness and shifting worldviews can ripple outward to positively influence social structures. The next chapter will explore theoretical lens of Constructivist Developmental theory and useful components, which relate to the area of shift.

CHAPTER IV

Constructivist Developmental Theory

Robert Kegan's constructivist developmental theory, presents a model that helps explain how and why people make sense of their lives and the surrounding world. Much of his early work applied this theory to: teaching and learning, therapy and navigating work and relationships (Kegan, 1994). Jennifer Garvey Berger, teacher, researcher and consultant specializing in adult development using constructivist developmental theory, shares her perspective,

> Theories like Kegan's show that coping well with the demands of modern life is not just related to any particular set of skills; it is also related to the way individuals make meaning about the world. These ways of making meaning of the world aren't inborn, but are developed over time as we increase our capacity to take perspectives, view authority in new ways, and see shades of grey where we once saw only black and white. (Berger, 2011, p. 5)

It is not an easy task to create a framework for conceptualizing how worldviews change, however constructivist developmental theory is carefully thought out and well researched (Baxter Magolda, 2010, Berger, 2005; Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1982; Kegan,1994). Much of Robert Kegan's work has revolved around understanding what skills and perspectives that adults need to be able to function well in our current pluralistic, post-modern multicultural society. Constructivist developmental theory thus provides a map for understanding why it can be so

difficult for people to work with others who have conflicting or different experiences or worldviews.

Kegan's theory parallels Jean Piaget's work of child development (Kegan; 1982). Piaget's work ended at formal operations, which later in his life, was acknowledged to have, an early and late stage (Kegan, 1982; Piaget & Inhelder, 2000) Formal operations, Piaget's final stage develops between the ages of 11 and 16 and is related to the capacity to think more abstractly, and develop the capacity to think about thinking (Kegan, 1982; Montangero & Maurice-Naville, 1997; Piaget & Inhelder, 2000). Kegan added more complexity and depth and an additional stage, while Piaget primarily looked at cognitive development. Constructivist developmental theory also included intrapersonal and interpersonal development based upon object relations theories as well as developmental theorists who studied morality (Kegan, 1982). There are overlaps with these other developmental theories, although Kegan's framework and application are unique to himself.
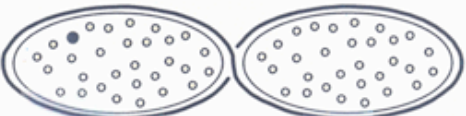
The field of adult development, including constructivist developmental theory is based in empirical research (Baxter Magolda, 2010; Berger, 2011; Cook-Greuter, 2011;Kegan, 1994) One supporting area is related to neurobiology. Areas in the cerebral cortex related to learning and memory, get thicker or thinner in response to environmental and intellectual challenges. There are indications that increasing development is linked to these changes in the brain's structure (Fischer & Pruyne, 2003). Additionally there are many other researchers, scholars, theorists and educators who use Kegan's Subject object constructivist developmental theory and the sentence completion test, which is designed to give empirical data and help determine stages of development. Jennifer Garvey Berger, an expert in adult development, Marcia Baxter Magdola, who focuses on student development and intercultural awareness and Karen Eriksen, who

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focuses on the clinical settings and with families, will be referenced in addition to Kegan. The terms that are relevant to understanding this theory as it applies to the study are *stage theory, subject/object* distinction, *cognitive, interpersonal* and *intrapersonal lines of development, differentiation and reintegration,* and *transitional process,* and will be explored in greater detail in this chapter.

Kegan theorized that as society becomes more complex and varied, the way that people think and relate to others must become more complex as well in order to meet the demands of life. The demands and requirements of our current world have increased, often leaving us, as Kegan suggests in the title of his book, *In Over our Heads* (Kegan, 1994). Through the model provided, there can be a greater understanding how one construction of reality changes and grows and how to be less "in over our heads."

Overview of Orders

There are a total of five orders with sub phases within each order (Berger, 2011; Ericksen, 2006; Kegan, 1994). Each order is framed as a way of constructing reality and is defined as having a subject and an object (terms explained in following section). Each order contains three lines of development, cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal (explained in later section) that make up the unique constellation of the order. Orders are "transformative, qualitative, and incorporative. Each successive principle subsumes or encompasses the prior principle" (Kegan, 1994, p. 33).

Developmental Stage/ Order of Mind (typical ages)	What can be seen as *object* (the content of one's knowing)	What one is *subject* to (the structure of one's knowing)	Underlying Structure of Meaning-Making
1st Order: Impulsive Mind (~2-6 years-old)	one's reflexes	one's impulses, perceptions	Single Point
2nd Order: Instrumental Mind (~6 years-old through adolescence)	one's impulses, perceptions	one's needs, interests, desires	Categories
3rd Order: Socialized Mind (post-adolescence)	one's needs, interests, desires	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	Across Categories
4th Order: Self-Authoring Mind (variable, if achieved)	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	self-authorship, identity, ideology	Systemic
5th Order: Self-Transforming Mind (typically > ~40, if achieved)	self-authorship, identity, ideology	the dialectic between ideologies	System of Systems

Adapted from Kegan, Robert. *In Over Our Heads: the Mental Demands of Modern Life.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994. pp. 314-315.

Figure 1: Orders of consciousness in constructivist developmental theory (Taken from:

http://peterheywood.com/?p=85- April, 21 2012).

Stages/Orders

Kegan's (1982) early work called the different ways of creating meaning, stages, and

started with 0. His later work Kegan (1994) changed the name of stages to orders and began with

the first order at around 18-24 months old. He changed the name from stage to order because he

felt that stage, sounded like a value judgment, that a higher stage would be equal to a better

person, which was not in alignment with how he saw growth. His theory is in general, thought of

as a stage theory, meaning that there are distinct organizing principles that structure the various

lines to make identifiable patterns of consciousness (Eriksen, 2007; Kegan, 1994). In his model, Kegan outlines several different orders of consciousness development (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994). The *orders* are not considered to be solid or fixed, but generally people have a particular orientation, or center of gravity, towards one order. Murray (2011) believes that the range of flex or capacity for access to orders can stretch at times even beyond two orders. These stages are, after all concepts, and it is important to understand that people are not the order; it is merely it is a description of a style of organizing experience "Practitioners must remind themselves that the notion of the "stage" is itself an artifact or a construction, and it cannot represent any individual's total way of making meaning" (Eriksen, 2007, p.180). Each order consists of something that is subject, that which cannot be seen or analyzed since it is the lens for viewing the world, and an object, that is able to be reflected upon (Kegan, 1994).

This subject/object configuration shapes a particular way of meaning making and sense of the world. It is a way of organizing reality, much like theories or philosophical perspectives are ways of organizing and making meaning of the world. When one becomes identified with any theoretical outlook, the world is seen through that lens. It is not really the way the world is, it is a frame which our minds makes sense of things by compiling experience, perception, thought and sensation into something that the linear and conceptual mind can understand. Each order is similar in that life becomes filtered and processed according to the subject/object balance. Since all of the orders are based upon each other, it is difficult to talk about any of the orders without referencing the others. The order where one is operating from can be determined through the use of a qualitative measure, the Subject Object Interview. People are asked key questions for 60-90 minutes and the interviewer listens for key themes. And example questions are could be "What was the most important thing about that? What was hardest for you? What

was most at risk?" (Berger, 2011, p. 8). Themes may be around: conflict, relationship, responsibility, perspective taking or contradiction. The answers to many questions like this give a more comprehensive look into how people are making sense of their lives and the world around them, thus pointing towards an order that is most relevant for them at that point in time (Berger, 2011).

Subject/Object

The particular color of lens that is being worn can be thought of as what we are *subject* to. What the lens illuminates or brings to our vision can be thought of as the *object*. One moves from one order to another when what was previously subject, becomes object. In an overly simplistic and tidy example, each new subject/object relation corresponding to an order is like getting a brand new pair of glasses, free of scratches and blemishes. The world is perceived through the lenses although it is not clear that one is actually wearing lenses. Once worn for a period of time, the lenses get scratches, and chips and smudges and no longer is the way of seeing the world seem unfiltered, it becomes evident that glasses are being worn. This process happens repeatedly.

Growth occurs as one develops a wider frame of awareness. In an interview with Elizebath Debold (2002), Kegan describes subject as being everything that we are identified with, fused, unable to reflect upon or see as unquestionably ourselves. While what we can be objective about is what is object. This is what can be questioned, teased apart, reflected upon, controlled, or seen in relationship to other parts of self or others (Debold, 2002). In a poetic way, Kegan (1982) describes the process of subject losing, leading to object finding.

This losing and finding can be seen in all movement between orders. For example, in moving from second to third order, (see Figure 1) the subject of the second order is thought of as

being ones needs, desires and interests. When this can be differentiated, or separated from, and seen more objectively, it allows a new subject to emerge, which in the third order is a sense of a reciprocal relationship consisting of mutuality. It becomes the lens of the third order's view of the world and others, and is taken to be ultimately true and adhered to fully, until there is some glimpse, some movement where it begins to become more object (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994).

People are not usually in one order fully and can fluctuate, but they generally have a center of gravity. Kegan describes the continual movement of subject to object as being a process of increasing differentiation and integration. Kegan, referencing psychoanalyst, Ernest Schachtel states "Growth always involves a process of differentiation, of emergence from embeddedness, thus creating out of the former subject a new object to be taken by the new subjectivity" (Kegan, 1982, p. 31). Kegan describes the transition to a new subject/object balance,

> Transforming our epistemologies, liberating ourselves from that in which we were embedded, making what was subject into object so that we can "have it," rather than "be had" by it—this is the most powerful way I know to conceptualize the growth of the mind. (Kegan, 1994, p.34)

Kegan believes that the continuous development would ultimately culminate, when a person was no longer being subject to any of their own patterns or conditioning "through the complete emptying of the subject into the object so that there is, in a sense, no subject at all—that is, you are not looking out on the world from any vantage point that is apart from it" (Debold, 2002 p. 4). Kegan continues to state that the emptying of the subject would result in a complete sense of oneness with the world, no separation of perceived from perceiver. Each subject/object movement involves a transition that is not always an easy or seamless process.

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Transitions

The actual experience of moving from one order to another, from subject to object is not as simple and neat as realizing one is wearing glasses and then taking them off to see them. The identification with what is subject is paired with ones sense of self. It is how one sees and understands the world. When the subject changes, it results in "a wholly different way of constituting what the self is, how it works, what it is most about" (Kegan, 1994, p. 111). The transition from one order to another is about losing balance, and losing a familiar way of being, "all disequilibrium is a crisis of meaning; all disequilibrium is a crisis of identity" (Kegan, 1982, p. 240). At some point in time, the start of a transition occurs, either when one's actions, relationships, and beliefs, become ego-dystonic, or one see's something in a new light, or has an insight. Often the discovery of a new truth and perspective creates a crisis, where one struggles to let go of the old, allow in the new, and makes sense of life in a new way

> Every evolution can be expected to involve a specific loss, including the loss of a home or culture and the need for a new one. Like every evolution it can be expected to bring into being a whole new way of organizing inner experience and outer behavior. And often enough before doing so, it can be expected to resist mightily and mourn grievously the loss of a way of making meaning that the self has come to know as itself. (Kegan, 1982 p. 225)

The characteristics and aspects of the transition varies from stage to stage, there are some aspects of the transition that are common to most processes. For example, anxiety, depression or grief are common responses to any transitional stage. The transition for an infant into the first order arises at the same time as separation anxiety, usually around 18-24 months. This anxiety may be the result as the infant is transitioning to the realization that there is a differentiation

between self and caregiver. The new balance is not yet in place, so there is little stability resulting in an anxiety that emerges over losing contact with the caregiver. Furthermore, Kegan questions if the terrible twos are a result of a separate self, slowly becoming more object. The end result would be stabilization into the new order (first) where a sense of self is experienced in a new way (Kegan, 1982). All transitional periods consist of a liminal state, with a foot in each world, oscillating between ways of being and knowing. The transition between third to fourth order, found in many college students, can manifest as anxiety and depression involving a sense of being withdrawn from life, with less purpose and a sense of being less focused on relationships. An article for college educators and counselors address this transition:

> Being caught between one way of meaning making and another can be very disruptive and painful. This is particularly true in the transition of the structure of "relationship" from subject to object, during which students may experience loss and loneliness as well as feelings of selfishness. (New Directions For Student Services, 1999, p. 72).

This growth and change could be related to as a problem, which needs to be fixed, by the individual or a counselor, if not seen in the appropriate light. During the transition, there can be confusion, and a sense that things are falling apart. This is not a sign of mental illness, or a regression. It is a developmental, process calling for a new orientation, not for fixing the old, "Any real resolution of the crisis must ultimately involve a new way of being in the world" (Kegan, 1982 p.42). In order for something new to emerge, something ultimately is lost. At each stage what one's discovering (object) and losing (subject) is different, therefore the crisis and challenge changes depending on the situation.

While the process can be challenging, and involve emotional upset, it can also be wondrous and joyous. Allowing "... a sense of flow and immediacy, a freeing up of one's

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internal life, an openness to and playfulness about oneself" (Kegan 1982, p. 231). Life, growth,

evolution then consists of a lifelong process of finding a new truth or perspective, only to once

again lose it and replace it with yet another only to be lost in time (Kegan,1982). The transitions

can get easier and less stressful with each increasing development. In some ways, it can be said

that the development doesn't in itself get rid of stress or difficulty, but that the challenge can be

embraced and seen differently. For example, Eriksen (2006) reports that, "Suffering or obstacles

or lack of resolution are valued as just as important to relationship as are wholeness and

transformations, and so resolution of difficulties is not the primary aim (p. 296). If there is

greater comfort with uncertainty or more experience of having made these transitions, the

process could be less stressful. Much like a tightrope walker, people attempt to find balance and

equilibrium. This equilibrium comprises the orders of consciousness. However there are

considered to be three lines that comprise this balance (see figure 2).

Lines of Development: Cognitive, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal

A Three-Dimensional Developmental Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity

Domain of Development and Related Theories	Initial Level of Development	Intermediate Level of Development	Mature Level of Development
Cognitive (Baxter Magolda, 1992, 2001; Belenky et al., 1986; M. Bennett, 1993; Fischer, 1980; Kegan, 1994; King & Kitchener, 1994, 2004; Perry, 1968)	Assumes knowledge is certain and categorizes knowledge claims as right or wrong; is naïve about different cultural practices and values; resists challenges to one's own beliefs and views differing cultural perspectives as wrong	Evolving awareness and acceptance of uncertainty and multiple perspectives; ability to shift from accepting authority's knowledge claims to personal processes for adopting knowledge claims	Ability to consciously shift perspectives and behaviors into an alternative cultural worldview and to use multiple cultural frames
Intrapersonal (Cass, 1984; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Cross, 1991; D'Augelli, 1994; Helms, 1995; Josselson, 1987, 1996; Kegan, 1994; Marcia, 1980; Parks, 2000; Phinney, 1990; Torres, 2003)	Lack of awareness of one's own values and intersection of social (racial, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation) identity; lack of understanding of other cultures; externally defined identity yields externally defined beliefs that regulate interpretation of experiences and guide choices; difference is viewed as a threat to identity	Evolving sense of identity as distinct from external others' perceptions; tension between external and internal definitions prompts self-exploration of values, racial identity, beliefs; immersion in own culture; recognizes legitimacy of other cultures	Capacity to create an internal self that openly engages challenges to one's views and beliefs and that considers social identities (race, class, gender, etc.) in a global and national context; integrates aspects of self into one's identity
Interpersonal (M. Bennett, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Kegan, 1994; Kohlberg, 1984; Noddings, 1984)	Dependent relations with similar others is a primary source of identity and social affirmation; perspectives of different others are viewed as wrong; awareness of how social systems affect group norms and intergroup differences is lacking; view social problems egocentrically, no recognition of society as an organized entity	Willingness to interact with diverse others and refrain from judgment; relies on independent relations in which multiple perspectives exist (but are not coordinated); self is often overshadowed by need for others' approval. Begins to explore how social systems affect group norms and intergroup relations	Capacity to engage in meaningful, interdependent relationships with diverse others that are grounded in an understanding and appreciation for human differences; understanding of ways individual and community practices affect social systems; willing to work for the rights of others

Figure 2: Example of Lines of development related to "Intercultural Maturity," (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p.576)

Kegan (1982; 1994) has pointed out, that we are *meaning making* creatures. It could be said that the theory of constructivist developmental theory is an attempt to make meaning. Part of the process of making meaning involves naming parts and making distinctions. Within this framework, Kegan makes a distinction within the orders of consciousness between the *cognitive, intrapersonal,* and *interpersonal* lines of development (see Figure 2). There are certainly other lines within individual development that could be labeled (like moral, musical, kinesthetic, etc) ,

although these are the three primary ones he addresses. Development occurs on various lines, and that the shifting of orders corresponds with movement and growth on all three lines.

The cognitive line was in many ways what Piaget was studying in his childhood development. This aspect of the person is what makes meaning, how learning happens and how one creates a worldview. (Baxter Magolda, 2010; Kegan, 1994; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). It is related to learning, perception of life and meaning and how knowledge is being processed. The cognitive dimension refers to the way or process by which information is understood and integrated. At times, Baxter Magolda (2010) substitutes the cognitive for a epistemological line, which is focused specifically on the understanding or way of coming to knowledge and how this translates to being in the world. This is similar to the cognitive line Kegan proposes.

The interpersonal line is focused on one's relationship to others. This includes what is valued in relationship, how one thinks and reacts to others and how ones sense of self is defined or understood based on relationship. The interpersonal line is related to the prosocial dimension of the study. It is believed that has one develops and moves through increasingly complex orders, that one becomes more caring and concerned and able to relate more effectively with a wide range of people, both similar and different than oneself. Kegan describes the increasing orders as the ability to perceive more, "Seeing better increases our vulnerability to being recruited to the welfare of another. It is our recruitability, as much as our knowledge of what to do once drawn, that makes us of value in our caring for another's development" (Kegan, 1982, p. 16-17).

The intrapersonal line is primarily about ones feelings and sense of self. This domain is related to beliefs, values and perception about who we are in the world (Baxter Magolda & King 2005). While the cognitive is looking primarily at knowledge and perception of information, the

intrapersonal line is directed specifically at ones own inner understand of self. This includes

emotions and concept of who one is in the world.

Baxter Magolda (2010), who uses Kegan's model in education and cross cultural

development, thinks that it is possible that one can be more developed in one line more than

another complicating the idea that all three lines would progress at the same time and result in a

new order. This distinction points to the difficulty in saying that a line could be isolated and self

contained, and in making a theory that will neatly and efficiently sum up human growth and

change. In a manner of speaking all of the lines contain elements and aspects that interrelate to

each other, yet they are pointing to specific facets of the person and their life. Baxter Magolda

(2006; 2010) writes more specifically about the lines of development, as they exist on their own,

while Kegan incorporates these lines into his general framework for his orders. The concepts of

these lines are somewhat contained in their names and are abstractions applied to the idea of

growth and development. Eriksen (2006) believes that someone can be in the fourth order in one

area of life and the third in another. Our selves are complex and multifaceted and as nice a

theories and models tend to be people often don't fit into neat packages.

Five Orders of Development

  Incorporative: The first order, incorporative, is in early childhood, until roughly 18-24

months. At this order, reflexes are the primary orientation, there is very little, if anything that is

object. Infants in this space do not have a sense of self, and are unable to differentiate, at least

initially between self and other. There are no objects yet in the infants consciousness, to have

relations to (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1982). Kegan did not focus on this stage in his later work

(Kegan, 1994).

Impulsive (First Order): This order is usually somewhere between the ages of 2 and 7. The children are subject to their impulses, and fantasy. These subjects are by the definition, unable to be seen and reflected upon, they are the lenses from which one acts and orients from. The objects, what can be seen, influenced and understood are: the body features of movement and reflexes. Although sitting still may be difficult and attention span is limited. This corresponds to Piaget's preoperational phase (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1982). Children do sense that others have their own experience, that is different from the individual, although it may be difficult to tell ones own needs, impulse and desires from others (Eriksen, 2006). For this stage the loss is that the child must deal with a difficulty in realizing that the world is separate from oneself… that there is an "I" here and a "you" over there (Kegan, 1982)

Imperial (Second Order): The transition from the first to second allows the ability to understand that there are roles and the ability to have feelings and impulses rather than exclusively being them. Piaget noted that the concrete operational stage began (Spencer-Pulaski, 1971) Most people are move into the second order, sometime between the ages of six to eight until in their teen years. Although there are people who remain in the second order their entire lives (Kegan, 1994). This order begins with a view that there are categories that remain concrete. For example a child may realize that they like certain types of foods, that there are people who are generally nice or unfriendly. Additionally this phase occurs when ones reflexes become more able to be reflected upon, "rather than being my reflexes, I now have them, and "I" am something other" (Kegan, 1982 p.79). Kegan acknowledges that this process does not happen quickly and that there are losses involved in any shift in orientation.

The second order is when a child begins to develop more concrete and rational ways of thinking, their actions are based more on wider angle needs. It becomes clear at this second order

that there are "durable categories," consistent individuals or items with characteristics that are somewhat constant, like, "friendly people" or "vegetables I don't like" (Kegan, 1994 p.29). Children of this age may take interest in collecting objects, or learning about an area of interest, like dinosaurs, or animals, (Kegan, 1994). Socially, second order perspective, understands that people have different views of the world and different likes and dislikes, although they cannot hold multiple view simultaneously, and have a difficult time placing relationship as more primary then their own needs and goals (Kegan, 1994, p.30). One is subject to their needs, desires and wants. This is paired with an understanding that other people have their own needs, desire and wants and that they are not always the same, this can lead to a sense of being out of control and a need to try to manipulate the situation to get one's needs met. One does not feel much responsibly or concern about others wellbeing. A shift to the third order, triggers a desire to experience mutuality and reciprocity, and a willingness to sacrifice oneself for the relationship or for a greater good. There is a greater seeing that allows for relationship to become more central to ones self (Kegan, 1994).

Institutional Self (Third Order): Generally people transition to the third order sometime between the ages of 14 and 25. In the third order, people are able think abstractly, generate hypothesis, and generalize ideals and values. This corresponds to Piaget's early formal operations stage. Interpersonally, this is a very relational order. There is a great emphasis on making and keeping relationship solid and secure, even at the expense of ones own interests, (Kegan, 1994, p. 75). This occurs because ones sense of self is in part, very identified with relationships. The subject is ones inherited societal, family or cultural values, and one's roles in relationship (Kegan, 1994p. 34). The third order corresponds with being socialized, or in alignment with tradition. Individuals in the third order are able to identify internal motivations

and complex emotional situations, have ideals and values, identify with others, take different perspectives and place the bonds of relationship or morality over their own needs or self-interest (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1994). All of these qualities help create more balanced and productive relationships.

In the previous order a person (usually teenager) may stay out all night, and cheat on their romantic partner with the perspective that it is okay if they don't get caught. A third order perspective would understand that their behaviors impact others and may still stay out late but their behaviors and thinking would be different. They would text their partner to let them know they will be out late and would be able to see their interest in pursuing another sexually as something that can be seen and not acted upon (object) since it would hurt their partner's feelings. Thus the third order allows them to hold their own needs and wants as objects to be considered, which allows them to postpone their interests for the sake of the relationship.

Some of the limitations of the interpersonal order are that relationships, roles, values and traditions are the subject, which means that there is not a great ability to reflect on these areas. As a result, individuals can find it difficult to think outside of their traditions and upbringing, and can be limited in their actions based upon other peoples desire and preferences. It is difficult to question ideas and values that are inherited. Often what is important is not coming from within the individual, it is not a deeply learned or known value, it is more memorized and regurgitated as the correct answer. In order to actually change ones perspective, a shift to the fourth order would need to occur.

Transition Third to Fourth Order: In the third order, people *are* their relationship, in the fourth, people *have* relationship (Kegan, 1994). Having roles within relationship as object, allows one to develop a new sense of self that does not derive identity from the type of

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relationship or what roles they play interpersonally. This usually arises when a conflict occurs

between old values of relating (third) and new values of a more differentiated sense of self

(fourth). The transition from third to forth generally starts when relationships begin to feel

confining. Additionally, people can begin to question external authority and question whose

values they are living by. People often feel burdened or start to feel like they don't have a solid

sense of control over their own life. This marks a beginning to reflection on what is important

and why it is important (Kegan, 1994, p.110-111.) The fourth order begins to create a more self-

defined stance, "or a sense of self as distinct from others; self-authored and owned behavior;

self-dependence; an identity that remains constant across contexts" (Eriksen, 2007, p. 295).

Kegan is very clear that fourth order does not make a person "better," it is merely different. The

higher the order, the more options and perspectives the person has access to. He equates it the

difference between driving a manual shift car to driving an automatic. If someone is able to drive

a manual they can also drive an automatic, however it is not the same otherwise (Kegan, 1994)

Fourth Order Self-Authoring: Many people, who are leading successful, and

functional lives do not arrive at the fourth order (Kegan, 1994). It is this order that allows one to

become authors of their own life. In the fourth order relationship is important, but the identity is

not fused with it.   This allows for more flexibility in thinking and for a strong sense of

perspective that stems from the internal self defined ordering of concepts rather than external

authority defined concepts. Self-authoring perspective allows one to reflect upon what one

values. It is said one can have ideas about their ideas, or values about values, (Kegan, 1994 p.

110). As a result, there is a greater ability and freedom to, set limits, have boundaries, regulate

relationships and re-negotiate societal and cultural values (Baxter Magolda, 2010; Kegan, 1994).

The evolution toward self-authorship is shown by a lessening dependence on external authorities, trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation and securing internal commitments (Baxter Magolda, 2010). Trusting inner voice relates to an understanding that while life and reality may be out of one's control, one can have a say in their reaction to the experience. An internal foundation is referring to a sense of embracing ones strengths and characteristics allowing for a greater philosophy of life and directional focus to develop. And securing internal commitments represents a movement from being in ones head and having knowledge to allowing them to be more in ones heart and developing wisdom (Baxter Magolda, 2010).

The fourth order is not as identified with relationship as the previous one, and this allows in some ways a greater ability to be closer to others. If we are not made up by the relationship and the our sense of self is not welded to our partners or friends emotional state, then we are freed up to be with people even when they are having a difficult time, without needing to fix the experience or make it about us. Kegan outlines four relational insights that correspond with this order:

1. We are not made up by the others experience.

2. The other is not made up by his or her experience.

3. We are not made up by our experience.

4. The other is not made up by our experience (Kegan, 1994 p. 128).

These cannot be taught or "learned," they are developed as one transitions in development. They begin to point to the increasing nature of paradox that accompanies development. While one is no longer fused with relationship, people are allowed to be more of themselves (Kegan, 1994).

Some of the intrapersonal aspects in that there is more of a sense of how we are in fact contributing to our reality "The demand that we be in control of our issues rather than having our issues be in control of us is a demand for fourth order consciousness," (Kegan, 1994, p.133). In other areas, the fourth order allows one to,

> listen empathically and non-defensively… the responsibility for what happens to use at work externally and internally… resist our tendencies to make "right" or "true" that which is merely familiar and "wrong," or "false that which is only strange (contravene our tendencies toward ethnocentrism, gendercentrism)… Be able to look at and evaluate the values and beliefs of our psychological and cultural inheritance rather than be captive of those values and beliefs (Kegan, 1992 p. 302).

The fourth order begins to break down when one begins to see through the systems of the self that were constructed as a solid fixed identity.

Fourth to Fifth Transition: While Eriksen (2006) believes that the transitions can get easier, as orders progress, Kegan (1982) believes that the transition from the fourth to fifth order can be particularly disorienting and disturbing. This shift from fourth to fifth is the most rare and in many ways the most complex. Since very few individuals are making this transition, there is little understanding or support for the process, which can make the transition that much more difficult. Kegan believes that unless a teacher, counselor, pastor, or other support person, has themselves had this transition, they will be of little help (Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994). All transition involve the loss of something, in this transition it is the sense of a fixed identity or self.

The fourth order's self (self-authoring) is an authority, there is a sense of being able to write one's own perspective and steer one's life, so to speak. Often times self-authoring allows for great gains in life and has been a powerful force in making changes. This solidity and

confidence in the inner voice (Baxter Magolda, 2010), allows for one's own values to carve out a life that feels true to oneself, with beliefs and principles that are clarified and adhered to. Self-authoring allows one to sort through one's cultural heritage, societies messages and parental influences to decide what to keep and what to leave behind (Baxter Magolda 2010; Baxter Magolda & King, 2005; Kegan, 1994). In order to allow the change into the fifth order (self-transforming), one must leave behind all of the certainties and created systems "what is cracking here is that whole construction of the self as system" (Kegan, 1982 p. 238). One's sense of self, must, fall apart and be taken as object. This can create an identity crisis on a much greater level, than seen during other transitions. In other transitions, there was still a self that was solid, even if its orientation was changing. When one's self begins to shift into object (which is what happens in this transition), all of one's perception, values, and roles can be seen objectively for the first time. This can create a great crisis of meaning, even a sense of moral relativism (Kegan, 1982). The previously experienced solid self is now seen to be comprised of parts and is more fluid and malleable than previously known. As a result, the certainty and absoluteness of the fourth order, is replaced with uncertainty.   Feelings and instinctual urges that had previously been managed by the self-authoring order, can re-emerge and be perceived as threatening (Kegan, 1982).

There is also the possibility of realizing that because one has been operating from a constructed self for ones adult life, that there has never actually been true intimacy. One is actually becoming more open to others as ones self breaks down. This may sound positive, although it is often experienced as a threat, and can make it difficult to relate to others, involving both a fear of intimacy, and a profound loneliness (Kegan, 1982). "A sense of boundaries being violated may be felt. Fears also may develop about losing one's control and sense of being

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distinct" (New Directions For Student Services, 1999, p. 74). There is such a profound shift in ones reality and orientation occurring that often results in a sense of threat to ones self leading to the experience of being terrified, and lost (Eriksen, 2006, New Directions for Student Services, 1999; Kegan, 1982). These growing pains can be terrifying, and confusing. Fortunately, they are not the end result, they are not for naught. They are part of a process of unfolding of losing and rediscovering balance and order. If supported and understood, this can lead to greater wisdom and a more rich, open, complex life (Berger, 2005; Kegan, 1982; Kegan 1994, Zaytoun, 2010).

  Self Transforming (Fifth Order): Self-transforming order is labeled as a postmodern worldview. This is the order that one is theoretically able to handle the demands of a postmodern society. It is rare that an adult arrive at this order and usually does not occur before someone is 40 (Kegan, 1994; Berger, 2011). As with the other levels, there is a movement from what was subject in the fourth order into object in the fifth. The primary shift is that the self becomes object, which was described in greater detail in the transitions section. The self can now seen with its range of experience, "incompleteness, malleability, multipleness and interdependence with others" (Zaytoun, 2010. p. 159). This is a systems perspective which allows greater flexibility, comfort with contradiction, appreciation of paradox and a sense of being okay with the unknown (Berger, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Zaytoun, 2010). The realization that our worldview is much like a vacation rental, it is a temporary stay, is seen in the fifth order. The fifth order is able to appreciate and relax into realization that one's self is constantly unfolding and our ideas about the world, and ourselves are at best, a temporary map, a *constructed* reality (Debold, 2002).

  Jennifer Garvey Berger, consultant in adult development, (2005) interviewed several individuals who embodied the spirit of the fifth order. They expressed ideas like:

I don't think it was that he was right and I was wrong, or that I was right and he was

wrong. It was that he expressed a valid point of view… that as long as he held it, he held

it. And I wasn't going to override it. (Berger, 2005, p. 25)

This points to the ability to hold multiple perspectives and to allow others to have their own

process. Additionally, there is a comfort in the unknown,

Matthew reflects that this disorientation is totally different than previous times of

uncertainty or confusion. In the past, he says 'I have wanted… to figure it out so I can

make it [the confusion] go away. 'Now he does not want the confusion to end, he just

wants 'whatever is next.' (Berger, 2005, p. 24)

The willingness to be okay with whatever is happening and to know that the self is constantly

unfolding leading to a flexible, multifaceted self-image, is a mark of the fifth order. Berger

reports that these individuals within this order of consciousness have,

The most profound orientation towards curiosity and openness that I have ever seen.

They refrain from judging other ideas as less complex or somehow less than their own

ideas, even when others frustrate or obstruct them (Berger, 2005, p. 26).

There is a sense of being more comfortable with difficulty and the complexities of life. This

translates to a feeling of "coming home" (Hamer & Jan van Rossum, 2010 p. 45). While there is

a sense of home, Kegan seems to believe that there is no real end to the journey and that it is

likely that there is a post fifth stage, which he has yet to explore (Diebold, 2002). It is believed

that the fifth order is the order that can truly meet the demands of the postmodern society,

although Kegan believes there are different ways one can embody postmodernism. Before

exploring postmodernism, it is important to understand more about how growth and the actual

movement of subject to object occurs.

Differentiation and integration

Kegan adopted Piaget's understanding of growth being a process of, "decentration,' the loss of an old center and what we might call 'recentration,' the recovery of a new center," (Kegan, 1982, p. 31). This process involves both Piagnian concepts of assimilation and accommodation, which gives name to parts of a dance between the organism and the world as it interacts and experiences new situations. Either the experience is able to be assimilated into existing schemas and understandings, or one's old schema becomes accommodated to meet the new experience. When one assimilates their experience, worldview usually remains consistent. When one begins to tip in the direction of more accommodation, a new worldview is being created (Kegan, 1982; Payne, Joseph, & Tudway, 2007). With accommodation, occurs an increasing differentiation from what has been subject, thus leading to a shift in the subject object process. If one moves toward accommodation, then differentiation followed by reintegration occurs.

When one is able to differentiate from something then a new understanding can occur. "It is necessary to differentiate, from what we have "originally fused," (Kegan, 1994 p.326). When we are fused with something, it cannot be seen, it is, in some sense, what is seeing, it is what we are subject to. The movement occurs when we are able to see what was previously seeing. For example, Kegan (1994) clarifies the sense of self as a difference in the fourth vs. fifth order, "Do we take as subject the self-as-form (the fourth order) or do we take the self-as-form as object (the fifth order)?" (Kegan, 1994, p. 316). There is a shift from being the self-as-form, with multiple roles and ability to hold multiple perspectives to being able to witness, or observe the concept of the self with greater clarity and a more objective nature. The process of moving from one place to another can be unsettling. The movement occurs and creates a bit of

an imbalance since ones stance was securely balanced based on a familiar concept. Kegan

believes that it is not enough to just *differentiate*, to separate out and see what is not longer true,

one must digest the experience and *reintegrate* it more fully. Thus differentiation begins the

initial part of the transition, and over time, experience and the relationship to the new subject and

object lead to reintegration. This cycle explains Kegan's understanding of the movement from

stage to stage. The process of disintegration and reintegration as applied to the self-transforming

order (fifth), is recast as a *deconstruction* followed by *reconstruction* to highlight different ways

of inhabiting the postmodern worldview within the constructivist developmental perspective.

Postmodernism in Self-transforming Order

Kegan (1994) believes that truly postmodern constructions are post-fourth(modernism)

stage of development and contained within the fifth order. For the same reasons it is difficult to

talk about one order's object without referring to how it was the previous order's subject, it is

difficult to explore postmodernism without exploring what is it "post"—to: modernism. No

modernism, no postmodernism. The process of differentiation and reintegration comes back into

the discussion both as a process of transition and transformation but also as an indication of the

process of consciousness development seen on the postmodern level. Kegan has articulated that

the continuum along the postmodern spectrum is actually pointing, at least partially, to the

process of deconstruction (differentiation) and reconstruction (reintegration). Kegan believes

that postmodernism looks very different depending on whether it is deconstructive or

reconstructive.

There are some key features that are found in most postmodern theories.   Kegan cites

Nicholas Burbules and Suzanne Rice to point to three aspects found within postmodern writing,

they are:

1. Relativism: a rejection of absolutes.

2. An understanding that all social and political discourses are steeped in power and dominance.

3. Pluralism: an appreciation and celebration of difference, not valuing one truth over another. (Burbules & Rice as cited in Kegan, 1994 p. 324).

The phase of development in the postmodern process that is related to differentiation, Kegan refers to as deconstructive postmodernism. Kegan cites Nicholas Burbules and Suzanne Rice, who call this "anti-modern" (Kegan, 1994, p.324). Antimodernism is post modern, although its way of being "post" is in a rejection of the prior stage, a rejection of what is modern. The rejection is the differentiation, resulting in a deconstruction and breakdown of the thought structures found in modernism. A major focus is on pointing out flaws of previous orders. Berger actually frames this as postmodernism found in the fourth order, or "self-authoring postmodernists." She reports that proponents:

1. often get frustrated with others who do not share their values.

2. have a very solid idea of what should be happening next.

3. contain certainty in their philosophical beliefs (Berger, 2005).

The irony clearly stated by Kegan (1994), as well as Burbules and Rice, (as cited in Kegan, 1994), is that two of the fundamental premises of post-modernism are actually being contradicted. One area is that there is a privileging of a deconstructive approach to view modernism and all other discourses, this inadvertently creates a contradiction since it is a form of an absoult. The other contradiction is that the differences of modernist beliefs are not respected or seen as equally valid, but are pushed against, criticized and rejected (Berger, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Murry, 2011). The antimodernist, or deconstructive postmodernist, is generally only

tolerance of difference and complexity some of the time. The understanding and critique of the modern paradigm is very important and in some ways crucial for any interest in a just society. However as with all orders, what is subject can not be seen or reflected upon. One aspect that is relate to the subject is that it is unlikely for antimodernist to see anything beyond, or for that matter, previous to, its perspective as valid.

Kegan gives the reconstructive postmodern fifth order more advantage because, as one move through developmental stages there is greater ability to see the limits in most discourses. Actually the reconstructive perspective has undone the rigid polarized thinking previous identified with in the deconstructive view:

> Reconstructive postmodern position are prized ahead of antimodernist positions, but not because the advantaged position is closer to some dominating, ideological absoult. Rather, each is preferred because it is closer to a position that in fact protects us from dominating ideological absoult…They [higher orders] assume an advantaged position because with each, the next way of constructing reality provides even more protection from the captivation and dominance of other reality constructions. (Kegan, 1994, p. 333)

The shift from deconstruction to reconstruction frees up a lot of energy that was directed at breaking down paradigms and point out flaws. As a result, he states, "there's a whole capacity for reconnecting to these ideologies and recognizing that each of them is partial. You're building relationships among them rather than holding on to one and projecting the other. It's a much more positive spirit" (Debold, 2002 p.8).

From Kegan (1994) and Bergers's (2005) perspective, the deconstruction period is important and serves by creating space from the identification with the fourth order modernist perspective (Berger, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Murray, 2011). Kegan understands the necessity for a

wider view, since he is very aware that through the lens of a deconstructive postmodern view, his theory can be seen as modernist, or as yet another maintainer of the status quo, and therefore denied any relevance. He states, "I have spent twenty years developing a theory that turns to dust in antimodernist hands; yet I notice that my own sense of annoyance is transformed to once of connection when I take seriously the developmental possibility" (Kegan, 1994, p.333). Kegan believes that instead of judging and critiquing the antimodernist, and pointing out its limitations (much like the stance that the antimodernist takes), the constructivist developmental perspective understands and attempts to support the development and movement to an always unfolding and ever changing complexity. In this sense there is an acknowledgment of where someone is orienting from and simultaneously seeing where one's growing edge may be. If Kegan's model is correct, then much like all other stages, the deconstruction will be followed by reconstruction. One hopes that the reconstruction occurs since the implication are great, often times the way that antimodernist function creates more conflict and more division in the world, even if in the name of peace.

Reconstructive Postmodernism and Conflict and Difference

The antimodern, or deconstructive postmodern critiques that are often directed at Kegan's work are not perceived in the same manner from the reconstructive postmodern perspective. A reconstructive postmodern perspective embraces difficulty, conflict, and our interconnection with others and could be thought of as post-postmodern.

> Those who long for more fifth order consciousness—for the recognition of our multiple selves, for the capacity to see conflict as a signal of our over identification with a single system, for the sense of our relationships and connections as prior to and constitutive of the individual self, for an identification with the transformative process of our being

rather than the formative products of our becoming—let them take heart. (Kegan, 1994,

p.352)

The reconstructive postmodern individuals are described as having greater openness, patience, and joy. They are less likely to focus on the deficiencies' of others, and are interested in the individual behind a viewpoint, this all translates into a willing to negotiate and attempt to find a common ground (Berger, 2005) In conflicts, on individual, societal and global levels, the modernist, or even the deconstructive post-modernist would like to believe that their own perspective is the only one and the only truth, and that if the other person would just change then everything would be fine. Deconstructive postmodernists are often inpatient with others and look down upon their ideas (Berger, 2005). The reconstructive postmodernist understanding is that conflict is evidence of polarization, and stemming from a mistaken understanding that we are all separate and self-contained (Kegan, 1994). They are more likely to see conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow and discover more complex way of being in relationship. reconstructive perspective have greater ability to connect in general, "the eyes turn outward again, first towards other humans, then to living organisms, and culminating in a relatively insignificant, but intact self in relationship with the universe" (Harmer & van Rossum, 2010 p. 61). These are not ideas that can be taught, they are shifts in the perception of the world, that lead towards a greater complexity and increasing tolerance of others.

A reconstructive postmodern perspective can acknowledge and support giving greater voice and opportunity to those who have been marginalized and oppressed, while simultaneously understanding and supporting the growth of those who are oppressing and those who privilege a discourse that is more deconstructive. Reconstructive perspective is interested in acknowledging the limits and flaws in prior frameworks, while at the same time seeking to restructure and

salvage that, which can be beneficial. "Reconstructive postmodernism thus reopens the possibility that some kinds of normativeness, hierarchizing, privileging, generalizing and universalizing are not only compatible with a postideological view of the world, they are necessary for sustaining it" (Kegan, 1994, p. 331). Kegan believes that it is possible to say that hierarchy, a belief in universality and a theory that is generalizable is not necessarily a dominating and oppressive paradigm. Evidence of a hierarchy that is not oppressive would be allowing the most experienced and qualified sailor to have the most say on how to maneuver a boat through difficult waters, in a non-hierarchical system, all voices would be seen as equal, thus greatly increasing the odds of capsizing!

The shift from deconstruction to reconstruction frees up a lot of energy that was directed at breaking down paradigms and point out flaws. As a result, he states, "there's a whole capacity for reconnecting to these ideologies and recognizing that each of them is partial. You're building relationships among them rather than holding on to one and projecting the other. It's a much more positive spirit" (Debold, 2002 p.8). The positive spirit does not turn a blind eye to suffering or to injustice, it just has a different lens of seeing. Kelli Zaytoun (2010) looks at how Kegan's highest level of development, self-transforming shares similar features found in poststrucutral, post-colonist and feminist authors such as, Maria Lugones and Gloria Anzaldua. There are similarities in what Kegan describes as an awareness of the multiplicity of selves and the process of being in constant change and transformation and what Lugones and Anzaldua are writing about (Zaytoun, 2010).

> What these theories and Kegan's fifth order have in common is the idea that the self and
> its identities are never complete; they are changing, situated, complex localities of
> consciousness constituted in association with others. This incompleteness, and the self's

ability to reflect on and manipulate its own self-as –system, opens up new possibilities

for understanding and acting on its relationship to the social world. (Zaytoun, 2010,

p.153)

The directional focus in in Kegan's theory is towards greater ability to hold complexity and

tolerate difference. Not only of ones internal structures but also of others ideals and

perspectives, "At their best, [reconstructive postmodern] they suspend the tendency to evaluate

the others "culture," through the lens of their own, and seek rather to discover the terms by

which the other is shaping meaning or creating value" (Kegan 1994, p. 311). It is believed that

very few individuals reach this phase, (Kegan, new directions) and Kegan, himself,

acknowledges that he doesn't even fully understand the fifth order (Debold, 2002). The ability

to hold much greater paradox, and contradiction is hallmark to the self-transforming perspective

and is summed up beautifully in this quote by author, teacher and post-colonial activist Gloria

Anzaldua, who believes it is crucial that more people arrive at this perspective for humanities

future:

> The future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of
>
> two or more cultures… The work of mesitza consciousness is to break down the subject-
>
> object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh through the images in her
>
> work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and
>
> the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very
>
> foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of
>
> dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long
>
> struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of
>
> war. (Anzadula, 1999, p.102)

Constructivist Developmental Theory Across Cultures

Kegan (1994) believes that his theory is applicable in its most basic form to all people. He believes that all humans make meaning, and that there is a process that occurs where people grow and learn by making sense of life and reality based on ones experiences (Kegan, 1982 p. 209). Religions, science, creation stories, and philosophies are all ways that humans attempt to translate life experience into meaning. While this basic commonality may be universal, there are still many questions about the application of constructivist developmental theory outside of a dominant western culture. Kegan acknowledged (1982; 1994) that much of the early research had participants were very privileged and had greater access to resources than many, they were, "whiter, wealthier and better educated than the general population" (Kegan, 1994, p. 191). Since then, there has been increasing interest in applying his theory to cross culturally and within a wider range of demographics (Kegan, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 2010; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Torres, 2010; Weinstock, 2010; Hofer, 2010). Kegan acknowledged that development is hard enough even with plenty of resources, but if other areas of oppression or marginalization are added, it can be much more difficult "Since it is reasonable to assume that being less wealthy, less well-educated and from a discriminated against racial group might provide fewer supports and opportunities for growth" (Kegan, 1994, p. 191). One of the leadings in this field, Marcia Baxter Magolda (2010) has looked extensively at constructivist developmental theory as it applies to a wider range of cultural groups.

While there were similarities and an ability to translate the theory cross-culturally there were some difference and challenges. Baxter Magolda (2010) is interested if self-authorship (fourth order), in which ones ability to make decision based on ones own values and perspective, independent of others, including culture, translates to wider populations than those who are

western, white, wealthy with advanced degrees. In more collectivist cultures, there is not as much emphasis on the individuals' preferences or perspectives. It is likely that the self-authoring position is favoring a more individualistic framework (Weinstock, 2010; Hofer, 2010) and may be missing a developmental model that is found in more collectivist cultures both within the United States and elsewhere. One must take into account what the concept of self, family and relationship are within each group before applying a self-authoring theory that is inflexible (Hofer, 2010). Kegan believes that it is possible that self-authoring would look differently but still be relevant in more collectivist cultures (Kegan, 1994).

In one study of Latino/a students, it was found that one of the developmental tasks inherent in the process of moving towards other levels, involved dealing with racism and aspects of oppression. This challenge of being a minority in the United States prompted some Latino/a students towards developing, and the challenge caused others to regress (Torres, 2010). Kegan acknowledges how there is a mixture of challenge and supported needed to grow. Too little challenge does not lend itself to growth; too much challenge and not enough support can cause pain and frustration, and prevents growth (Kegan, 1994). In another study of economically disadvantaged adolescents who were predominantly African-American, found that there were students who had experienced disadvantaged conditions and were at a high level of development (fourth order) while the numbers were low, it is not expected that in general adolescents would be at the level found.

One way of looking at greater levels of development is related to wisdom (Berger, 2005). Most societies acknowledge that some individuals in societies are considered to have greater wisdom than others, generally associated with age and expertise (Takahashi & Overton 2002). While there certainly are differences to be expected, (Takahashi & Bordia, 2000), research has

shown that there are similar characteristics which have associations to what is described as wisdom, that are present in individuals regardless of culture (Kegan, 1994, Baxter Magolda, 2010; Berger, 2005; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Matisoff, 2011, Torres, 2010; Weinstock, 2010; Hofer, 2010). Development towards wisdom offers hope, promise and a trajectory that is prosocial and inclusive.

Constructivist Developmental Theory, Diversity and Transformational Learning: Kegan believes that our postmodern, pluralistic society requires a greater ability to understand, tolerate and work with differences (Kegan, 1994). He believes that many classes on "respecting diversity" do not necessarily facilitate different way of knowing or being, required addressing with racism and discrimination, within ones self or the world. Many times what is taught is a behavior or idea but it does not actually change structures of mind. In fact it may just drive racist or discriminatory behavior deeper underground. He continues to say that a different type of learning, would allow,

> us to see that the actual differences we experience are differences of attribution—differences we create by viewing the other according to the rightness of our own preferences…This kind of learning cannot be accomplished through *in*formal training, the acquisition of skills, but only through *trans*formational education, a 'leading out' from an established habit of mind. (Kegan, 1994, p. 232)

When there is not transformational learning, then very little structurally has changed. This is what Murray (2010) reports, as being the difference between developing skills rather than beliefs. The *idea* or *belief* of tolerance is very different than the actual *skill*. And while ideas that are indicative of higher orders can be taught, they are not necessarily lived or practiced as embodied skills. This is the danger of a superficial or informal education, and one of the

limitations of the third order. The third order is "… not capable of reflecting critically upon what it is being socialized into. Thus education becomes a way to lipsynch and find the correct way of saying things without actually embodying the message" (Kegan, 1994, p. 289).

As with all levels, the memorization of beliefs is limited because one is not aware of what they are subject to; therefore it is not possible to realize, what the limitation is. One might not be fully aware of behavior is rooted in "trying to good," stemming from social desirability, the importance of relationship and the value of upholding authorities values (third order) rather than from a deeper more internally (self-authored) derived source. For example, this can be seen in white individuals who begin to learn about social justice, privilege or societal location. It is likely even with good intentioned, that their actions could be primarily focused on learning the language and values of the discourse, yet not actually internalize and altering (accommodating) the structures of their consciousness to reflect these values. The principle operating is the preservation of relationship and of upholding external authority. As a result individuals may be more likely to try to prove themselves as being "good anti-racists," while pointing out and trying to "catch more unaware racists" in the process. There could be lip service to the process without actual fundamental change in ones way of understanding. Kegan (1994) understands that any real strides in creating tolerance and respect for all different walks of life will come from a deep unhinging of core beliefs and ways of organizing the world, not from learning a new language or being told that thinking a certain way is wrong or bad.

Bias within Constructivist Developmental Theory

The approach to determining level of development, through structured interview, is not unique to Kegan. Other similar sentence completion tests elicit similar concerns or critiques (Murray, 2011a). Several aspects of stage theories of development and the tests are possibly

problematic.   For one thing, there is not a lot of control for what is happening in ones life, or the current emotional tone of the interviewee it is understood that difficult or stressful times or situations can cause a regression to occur (Murray, 2011a). Additionally, Murray (2011a) believes that sentence completion tests, value a certain type of way of processing information, and require a certain ability to communicate about the topics. It is possible that Kegan values certain things skew the perception of the orders, or that people will not be able to accurately express how they see the world, and thus not be accurately assessed. Murray, (2011a), in referring Zachary Stein, states that higher development does not necessarily mean that one is better or more evolved. While Kegan does not focus on a moral line of development, Murray (2011a) points out that one can be more cognitively developed than morally, which could create unethical actions. Finally there is a common phrase, "that maps are not the territory," and yet it can become very easy not take this seriously and still try to make people fit into certain fixed ideas like orders or consciousness. After all as Kegan states we are meaning making creatures (1994), and like to make situations and people fit into a familiar or comfortable mental map. The abstract, philosophical orders can become concrete structures which then applied to life as if the mental map were real and life was a construct to fit into our mental map (Murray, 2011a), thus distorting ones perception of others. It is a serious concern that models are being used as absolutes and that other ways of seeing are being screened out or denied. This is possibly reflected in the following study.

In Torres's study (2010), which involved people of lower-socioeconomic status, incarcerated individuals were screened out. Prisons are predominately composed of young men of color who have being targeted and racially profiled and receive longer and more strict sentencing, than white men (Alexander, 2010). In addition to this societal discrimination, it is

possible that there are young men, who have weighed the options, looked at the system and decided with all awareness, intelligence and self-authoring that actions which may have been against the law, were of better options, or more work the risk than playing by the stacked rules. It can be difficult at times to distinguish a second order action from a fourth or fifth's orders. The second order can be defying rules out of rebellion or lack of concern for authority or society. A fourth or fifth order's defying rules could very well look the same, but be informed by a more critically informed process evident of self-authoring. Obeying "societies rules," a trait of the third order, may not be very important if society is seen as a dangerous, oppressive or unattractive option. Dealing with the subtleties of racism and oppression makes any theoretical model of societal or interpersonal development more complicated.

There are questions, even raised by Kegan himself (1994), that constructivist development theory is based in a Western perspective. Many of his subjects have, in the past, been of the dominant social class-- educated white westerners (Kegan, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 2010). There are also, often concerns from some feminist and narrative theories, which feel like any evaluation of an individuals developmental capacity is inherently patronizing and egotistical (Eriksen, 2006). Kegan has pointed out that his theory appears to be full of bias when viewed from certain lenses (Kegan, 1994) and has attempted to address this bias in his book, *In Over Our Heads* (1994). The concern over stages of development within a hierarchy, which posits that there are higher levels of development, is of due cause and concern-- and Kegan himself is not blind to this concern,

> Subject-object increase presume to tells a story of increase, or greater complexity, they are thus more provocative, discomforting, even dangerous, and appropriately evokes greater suspicion. Any time a theory is normative, and suggests that something is more

grown, more mature, more developed than something else, we had better check to see if

the distinction rests on arbitrary grounds that consciously or unconsciously unfairly

advantage some people (such as those who create the theory and people like them) whose

own preferences are being depicted as superior. We had better check whether what may

even appear to be an 'objective' theory is not in reality a tool or captive of a 'ruling'

group (such as white people, men, Westerners) who use the theory to preserve their

advantaged position (Kegan 1994, p. 229).

The majority of theorists are of a more privileged grouping, being largely white middle to upper

middle westerners with advanced degrees. As a result, possibly due to their access and comfort,

much of the studies in the past had been on people of similar socio-economic status.

Interestingly, levels of ability to understand and accept different cultural ideologies and ways of

living are correlated with greater developmental capacity, and are many times made more

possible as one ages (Kegan, 1994; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Eriksen (2006) points out

that the critiques, concerns and ideals that are being directed at constructivist developmental

theory, are in themselves, perspectives of greater complexity and evidence of a higher level of

development, which adds an interesting response to the objections.

Conclusion

Kegan's theory begins with childbirth, expands during the late teen years and builds

strongly through adulthood. There is a directional process of growth and development that

points towards greater complexities and ability to see more and have greater range of options in

situations. Each stage builds upon the other and allows for a continuous process where what was

previously unseen or known, to be observed. Each time a fundamentally new knowing occurs it

triggers a new worldview, or understanding of self and others. While many aspects of the shifts

can be understood through this lens, there are a significant portion of shifts described which

Kegan's theory does not give very much attention. Constructivist developmental theory gives a

good picture of several kinds of shifts within the realm of ego development, and there is a

glimpse of further development

> The ultimate state of development would have to do with some way in which
>
> the self has become entirely identified with the world. It would be the
>
> recognition essentially of the oneness of the universe, which is something we
>
> have heard over and over again in wisdom literatures of the East and West (Debold, 2002
>
> p.4)

The next chapter will explore transpersonal psychology, which integrates the wisdom literature

of the East and West, continuing to explore development possible beyond the ego.

CHAPTER V

Transpersonal

Transpersonal psychology is focused on the experience of consciousness that is not limited to the individual sense of self. It is a psychology that explores transformation, transcendence and spiritual experience (Boorstein,1996; Grof & Grof, 1990; Hartelius et al., 2007; Hunt, 2010; Rowan, 2005; Wilber, 2000a). Because there have not been many western models in psychology, philosophy or religion that formulate this process, the theory has incorporated influences of eastern traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, in addition to shamanistic and other indigenous cultures. Many westerners, through pursuing eastern or indigenous practices as well as spontaneously, have wound up in transpersonal states, and have had little knowledge or framework for the experience, (Carse, 2006; Segal, 1996; Lukoff, 2007; Grof & Grof, 1990; Solowoniuk & Nixon, 2009; Tolle, 2004) therefore highlighting the need for the model. A current working definition of transpersonal psychology is "an approach to psychology that 1) studies phenomena beyond the ego as context for 2) an integrative/holistic psychology; this provides a framework for 3) understanding and cultivating human transformation," (Hartelius et al., 2007, p. 145). In short, "transpersonal psychology studies human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation" (Hartelius, 2007, p. 145) on both the individual and collective level.

The term *transpersonal* is reported to have been first used by William James during a 1905 lecture, (Friedman, Krippner, Riebel & Johnson, 2010) and was popularized by Abraham

Maslow, (1971). Carl Jung is also an early pioneer to address a psychology that was beyond the individual (Boorstein, 1996; Hunt, 2010; Jung 1965) "Know thyself, transcend defenses, transferences, projections, and even beliefs, and attain the station of one who has outgrown the need for such childish things, as the great human beings of all times and places have done" (Boorstein, 1996, p. 4). A comprehensive transpersonal model would include an understanding of each person's location in society and ones ego structures, in addition to exploring and strengthening the ability to have a wider frame of reference that is not limited the realm of the individual self (Brooks 2010; Hartelius et al., 2007; Vaughn, 1985).

As in any area of wide research, and theory, there are points of convergent and divergent themes in transpersonal psychology (Almaas, 2004; Capriles, 2006; Funk, 1996; Hartman & Zimberoff, 2008; Wilber, 1997). As for the specific mechanics of the development of the transpersonal, there is no consensus, no theory that is agreed upon, and in terms of the actual implications and experience, it does not seem important to have a final answer. This chapter will primarily be using the work of three prominent theorists A.H. Almaas, Ken Wilber, and Michael Washburn, who combine the psychological and spiritual theory. A.H. Almaas, is the pen name of Hameed Ali, who is a spiritual teacher and seen as a transpersonal theorist although he sees his work very practically and not within the realm of transpersonal theory, or even psychology. Almaas (1990), uses a psychodynamic lens to see and facilitate spiritual work. Ken Wilber (2000b) originally thought of as a leading transpersonal theorists is now described as an integral theorist, who has spend decades creating models of spiritual and social development. It would be difficult to write about transpersonal theory without using Wilber's work, even if he has distanced himself from the transpersonal movement. Finally Michael Washburn, is a

transpersonal theorists who is influenced by psychoanalytic and Christian as well as Eastern perspectives which contributes to his own vision of spiritual development.

For this paper, the areas of focus will be on understanding the interface of the transpersonal with western psychology and spirituality with specific attention to the experience that comes from a lack of identification with the egoic mind. It is described that when people are not limited to their discursive thoughts and contracted emotions and defenses, they are described as being more: open, peaceful, balanced, connected to something greater than oneself, spacious, aware, centered, loving, and alive (Almaas, 2004; Rowan, 2005). These experiences are often described as being spiritual. However the spiritual process and unfolding is much wider than these wonderful experiences, and there are various challenges that accompany openings to that which is beyond the egoic mind. Many of the concepts involved in transpersonal psychology are difficult to articulate, and often point to realms of consciousness that are beyond conceptual or ordinary ways of knowing or being. The following list of relevant transpersonal terms and concepts are not exhaustive nor able to accurately describe the non-conceptual nature of what is being defined, however they will be useful in understanding shifts of worldview. The following terms are: *transpersonal/spiritual/mystical, state vs. stage, egoic, developmental process beyond ego, the absoult,* and *transformational/healing.*

Transpersonal Roots: Spirit and Psyche

Transpersonal psychology builds upon the insights from western psychology, however due to the emphasis on spirituality and the view of a different possible human experience, they are not hindered by the limiting belief of other schools of psychology, Lukoff and Lu (2005) state "transpersonal psychology considers spirituality in its own right, distinct from Freud's reduction of religion as wishful illusions, Ellis's irrational thinking, or Skinner's manifest

disregard" (p. 80). There are aspects that are very important to transpersonal psychology found in traditional psychological perspective. In fact, most transpersonal theory is grounded in a psychodynamic or traditional psychology. Many of the major religious traditions that have dealt with the spiritual process, for one reason or another, did not integrate the inner psychodynamic influences into their systems (Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004). This highlights the ways in which transpersonal psychology and religion and spirituality are different. Welwood (1999) believes that some of the difference is that many of the systems of religion and spirituality of influence were from Eastern cultures, whose family and social structures were more connected. In certain cultures in the West, he argues, the family is often isolated, and fragmented, in addition to a supporting hyper individualism. This creates a psyche that is in some ways more wounded and fragile, making the experience of transpersonal states, harder to integrate. There are, however aspects of transpersonal theory that relate to western tradition and pull from more Christian sources (Washburn, 2003; Jung, 1965; Underhill, 1961).

The strengths of the transpersonal psychology are that, it is not very likely that in this day and age, one would make it though the spiritual journey without having to confront many aspects that are considered to be related to psychodynamic components of the psyche (Almaas, 1998; 2004; Gleig, 2009). Without addressing the aspects of the psyche, and just focusing on the transcendent, it is possible to enact a "spiritual bypass," which skips over the difficult or uncomfortable aspects of the individual and collective (Welwood, 2003; Augustus Masters, 2011).

Transpersonal, Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious

Transpersonal experiences are, "experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche,

and cosmos," (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). Transpersonal psychology is interested in these experiences. Robert Assaioli, in interest of distinguishing wide ranging spirituality, states that Maslow defined that transpersonal as "that which is beyond or above the ordinary personality" (Assagioli, 1991, p. 16).

It is difficult to talk about spirituality in general let alone a psychology that integrates concepts and experiences of spirituality into its system. Spirituality is a term with many interpretations and probably means different things to every person. For this paper spiritual and mystical will be used interchangeably, although mystical points towards actual connection and experience of contact with true nature, or the divine. Given the skepticism that the scientific medical model of psychology has had towards spirituality, the transpersonal movement feels it is important to set itself apart from many of the New Age metaphysical ideas like: manifestation, astrology, and crystal healing practices (Assagioli, 1991, Murray, 2011b; Rowan, 2005). It is not to disregard the role and value that many find in the New Age and spirituality in general, it is important to clarify the range of ideology and belief contained within the spiritual. There are many different things that spirituality can point towards. It is possible that there are as many definitions of spirituality as there are people. Wilber (2000a) has come up with at least five distinct definitions of the spiritual. Jose Jover Del Paso, transpersonal psychologist (2009) has decided that to him spirituality means, "the personal journey towards *the discovery of who we really are*, and such gradual discovery and realization is completely life transformative. Spirituality is the adventure of searching the Truth about life" (p. 58). Spiritually is certainly connected to the religious, although it is not necessarily as united with religious institutional and community based worship. It is seen as more of a personal inner connection to the divine, or comprising of an inner psychological journey. Other descriptions include a sense of a higher or

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greater power one is connected to, and a quest for greater connection to the human and non-human world, (Friedman, et al., 2010).

Mystical or spiritual experience can also have a variety of interpretations, however there seem to be some commonalties that are contained in a wide range these include: "An intensified perception of the phenomenal world, a sense of inner peace and wholeness, a sense of oneness with the manifest world (or a sense of transcending boundaries), and a sense of becoming a deeper and truer Self " (Taylor, 2005, p. 49). Spirituality is a unique experience for an individual whose subjective experience is altered based upon one's process (Hodge & Derezotes, 2008). For this paper spirituality will imply the inner journey, related to psychological constructs. It is also defined as a non-conceptual experiential connection to states of Being and true nature which are not contained within the individual sense of self.

The Absoult/True Nature/Being

One of the key concepts found in transpersonal literature parallels the teaching of most major religions. "Absoult is precisely the transcendence of consciousness. It is the Father of Christianity, the Divine Essence of the Sufi, the Parabrahaman of Hinduism, and the Nirvana of Buddhism" (Almaas, 1990, p. 469). There is a declaration, based upon many individuals direct experience, that there is an underlying aspect of all people that has specific similar characteristic. The characteristics are described as: a sense of oneness, beauty, mastery, peace and openness (Adyashanti, 2005; Almaas, 2004; Blackstone, 2007; Funk, 1994) The absoult or one's true nature can be understood as the nameless formless aspect of oneself, the open space of awareness from which everything occurs. It is called the dynamic ground or numinous by Washburn (2003), and Being, essence, the absoult, or true nature by Almaas (2004; 2008), depending upon what aspect he is referring to. Being is defined as, "no reaction, no mental activity that defines

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who or what one is. In fact, Being is not an activity at all; it is an existence, a suchness, a thereness, a Presence that is not doing anything to be there" (Almaas, 1990, p. 57). The absoult, according to Almaas (1990) is that which comes before Being, it is "essence with no qualities, before qualities come into being…it's the source of everything, because you see everything arising from it" (p. 165). Essence is defined as the source of life or awareness itself "Essence is the truth of our very presence, the purity of our consciousness and awareness" (Almaas, 2002, p. 8). The terms are cyclical, and for the sake of this paper, they will be used interchangeably. They are all pointing towards what is looking out through the eyes and what is hearing through the ears, before there is a concept or story about what is being seen or heard. Some believe it lives in the heart, others that it is transcendent of ones physical form. Regardless, the relationship of the personal and the spiritual is potentially deep and complex.

The spiritual is related to deeply personal structures of mind; it is entwined with hope, faith, meaning, purpose, and correspondingly struggle, despair, confusion, doubt and anxiety. This is where transpersonal psychology becomes very important, that there can be greater insight and ability to work with the psychological materials as they arise, regardless of whether they are of a "spiritual" or "psychological" nature. This perspective is important because it is believed that the main thing that obscures one's true nature from emerging is the ego's functions and defenses. The implications of living as one's true nature, are profound. The promise offered by the transpersonal theory is a totally new orientation to life, a seeing through the old illusion of the self and a change of occupancy, that is beyond what the conceptual mind can comprehend (Adyashanti, 2005; Almaas, 2008; Carse, 2006; McKenna, 2002;).

Egoic

Western psychology believes that the most developed and healthy way for the person to be is to have a clear sense of self and to have firm ego boundaries and defenses, (Robbins et al., 2012). The ego is defined in the transpersonal literature as the small self. It is the collection of thoughts, memories, beliefs, ideas, images, self-identified roles, emotions, peculiarities, defenses and solid character patterns. "Prolonged self-observation inevitable reveals that normal experience is perceptually distorted by the continuous, automatic, and unconscious blending of inputs from reality and fantasy in accordance with our needs and defenses" (Sutich, 1996 p. 18). The vision contained within transpersonal community is that there is development, or a way of being that is transcendent of the defensive ego structures. This is interpreted in different ways depending on the theorist, however it is agreed that a different way of being is possible.

Because there is a life beyond ego, often in the transpersonal community, the ego comes off as the bad guy, and is blamed and rejected. The irony is that the only thing that blames, and rejects the ego, is part of the ego. The ego's wants and needs are similar as a young child's. Often after the initial opening and challenges associated with the process, the ego is more like a terrified or traumatized child who needs to be related to with the same care and patience that a child would need (Hartman & Zimberoff, 2008). There are various ideas about the role of ego within transpersonal, from the idea that it gets totally annihilated, to it becomes a channel one's true nature to move through.

Developmental Process Beyond Ego

The ultimate goal of transpersonal psychology is the same as other psychological perspectives; to eliminate suffering. The idea of what causes suffering and how actual liberation from suffering can happen is where transpersonal theory veers off. Suffering in the transpersonal

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context is seen primarily as the result of identification with the ego. "Ego development as conceived of in object relations theory is an incomplete process, every ego structure will naturally have some inadequacy. The individuality of ego is not the real, true and final integration of the person" (Almaas, 1990, p. 370). Others are even more blunt, "a transpersonal model views, 'normal' consciousness as a defensively contracted state of reduced awareness…" (Sutich, 1996, p. 18). Most people, regardless of being a clinicians or theorist, are not very interested theoretically or personally in development beyond the ego, "Some people, however, arrive at a crossroads at which their lives change in a fundamental way; they embark upon a path leading beyond the maturely developed ego" (Washburn, 2003, p. 25). The experience of seeing beyond the ego is often life changing, "The shifts following ego-transcendence are of psychological nature and deeply affect the individual I" (Louchakova, 2007, p. 270).

For those who are interested in transpersonal development, or called forward, for whatever reason, it does not seem to be very easy to just drop identification with the ego, there seems to be a process, a development of some kind. In this way, dealing with the ego structures that create distress is the way through; the poison is the medicine. For example, distress, depression or despair are usually often as negative, abnormal, occurrences from a traditional psychodynamic western perspective. Transpersonal psychology understands that there is a wider angle to view human life and development, so it is possible that these symptoms are a sign of growth, and change, not as mental illness or deficiency. Experiencing or seeing the deficiency can actually be a sign of increased awareness or clarity (Almaas, 1990; Trungpa, 1973). There is a greater reverence for the many things in life that are beyond the normal frame of reference and are difficult for the conceptual mind to understand. One's transpersonal development goes from seeing the world in a certain limited way based on ego defenses and projections, towards an

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openness and connection to the absoult which is larger, transcendent, and interconnected (Gleig, 2009; Louchakova, 2007; Rowan, 2005).

Ways of Conceptualizing Development

Various theorists describe these processes using different worlds or metaphors. Some as a line upwards, towards great development where one transcends and included prior stages, (Wilber, 2000a) and others, more of a descent (Almaas, 2004; Washburn, 2003) to strip the layers that obscure ones ground of being or true nature. Almaas (2004; 1988) and Washburn (1994; 2004) do not propose a liner process of development. Almaas, who has created a theory based upon western psychodynamic theories and Eastern spiritual teachings, describes a process of reclaiming various parts of ones essence, or true nature, that unfolds in some similar ways but not necessarily the same time or way for any two people. Washburn (1994; 2003), also combining western and eastern perspective uses psychoanalytic theory to conceptualize a spiral model leading towards the dynamic ground of ones fundamental nature. This process involves dealing with psychological material called regression in the service of transcendence.

Within the transpersonal community there are on going debates as to the nature of "spiritual development" (Almaas 2004; Capriles, 2006; Funk, 1994; Hartman & Zimberoff, 2008; Wilber, 1997;Wilber, 2000a, Washburn, 2003) These nuances and disputes are beyond the scope of this analysis. The basic dispute deals with whether there is a continued development towards a higher stage of consciousness (Wilber, 2000a), verses an alternate perspective, which sees development, more akin to a stripping of layers to reveal the original nature, (Almaas, 2004; Washburn, 2003). This stripping down makes Wilber concerned that people are saying that the experience of an infant is the same as the experience of a Buddha.

Wilber doesn't want glamorize and idealize the innocence and merged state of childhood. It is his concern that this is a pre/trans fallacy; meaning that what is being called transcendent is actually regressive (Wilber, 1997). Wilber believes that the basic structures found in infants are transcended and included as development occurs, but that the states of transcendence are higher and beyond ego development rather than prior to. Wilber's model could be called a "heights" model of development, meaning towards a higher level of development rather than a "depth's" model, which implies that the absoult is already there, but it is just covered by our conditioning. (Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004; Washburn, 2003; Wilber, 2000b)

Stage: A shift in a stage is considered to be a transformative event, which results in a change in identity or way of meaning making. When the different stage is experienced, then life becomes reorganized. It is a more ongoing process that stays present. There are varying opinions on whether stages exist in psychological or spiritual development. Wilber is a large proponent of stages of development. He reports that there is not a final agreement if transpersonal, or spiritual development happens based on stages or not (Wilber, 2000b). There are different ideas about what spirituality is. Wilber's has five distinctions that are: the highest levels of any developmental line, the total of the highest levels of the lines, a separate developmental line, an attitude such as openness or love that is accessible regardless of levels, or that it consists primarily of peak experiences (Wilber, 2000a). Wilber believes that there are stages and patterns that can be traced to show the path of spirituality. He references the work by Daniel P. Brown and Jack Engler, on cross-cultural understandings of meditation "the models are sufficiently similar to suggest an *underlying common invariant sequence of stages"* (as cited in Wilber, 2000a, p. 131).

Wilber (2000a) distinguishes between what he calls horizontal and vertical development. Horizontal is more about the content, more akin to "the what" someone is thinking about. This can include concrete things such as changes in learning, emotional healing, knowledge, education and skill acquisition. This is the most common form of change; new skills are acquired, learning and growth occur, yet ones inherent sense of self and primary way of organizing and structuring the world remains consistent. Vertical changes are more radical shifts in the structures of the how information is organized. The way that thoughts, feelings and worldview are structured change with vertical development (Wilber, 2000a). This "vertical shift," occurs and a person's view of life can be profoundly different. Additionally it is possible that changes can occur within the spectrum of a state and stage.

There are other interpretations that are not framed as development higher or uncovering lower aspects. Another understanding is that everything is on a horizontal plane and can be accessed based on expansion (Friedman et al., 2010). Not all theorists think that the stages are a clear or defined as Wilber presents "[i]n none of the genuine Paths with which I am familiar, does the practitioner have to go through all the fulcra posited by Wilber, and to do so precisely in the order he establishes" (Capriles, 2006 p. 6). Capriles find further concern with Wilber's stage theory and his interpretation of the process and how it unfolds. He reports that Wilber's interpretations and assessment of other spiritual systems are inaccurate (Capriles, 2006).

Washburn (2003) proposes three primary stages of human development that include the substages: prepersonal, personal and transpersonal. He believes that the original nature or dynamic ground present as an infant that becomes lost and repressed is what returns during a regression in services of transcendence. Washburn believes that the stage theory that Wilber presents, is accurate but that it is missing some aspects as well (Washburn, 2003). Washburn

believes that Wilber's stage model is too linear and too heavily influenced by the Eastern developmental models of spirituality, and not rooted enough in Western concepts or experiences (Thomas et al., 1993). It is important to note that neither Washburn nor Wilber are clinicians or spiritual teachers, and their primary work is not helping others navigate this inner terrain.

Almass, somewhat involved in the debate feels that his perspectives "lies intermediate" to Wilber and Washburn, (Almaas, 2004 p. 531). Almaas, aligns more with Harry Hunt, who believes that essential realization is something that can occur during childhood, and does not necessarily require ego development beyond postformal operations. While a child may not live in this state all the time, she is able to access certain essential aspects, which are elements of Beingness (Almaas, 2004). The experience of the essence, or true nature, is not all or nothing, it is a continuum that can be experienced in varying degrees. While one may not be in constant contact with essential aspect, they are more able to be appreciated, recognize and integrated into ones life. There is a mixture of state and stage found within Almaas's work, and is much more of a continuum than a linear either or process (Almaas, 2002; 2004).

State: A state experience is often times a glimpse into a higher, more transpersonal state, or a glimpse seeing through the condition of the mind to ones true nature, (or essential aspect) depending on the view point. A shift in state is a temporary shift to a different perspective. It can be very powerful, yet fleeing. There is little controversy over whether there are different states of consciousness. A state of consciousness includes waking, dreaming, deep sleep, peak experiences, and experiences that can be induced by meditation, or substances. A main way to distinguish if something is a state or a stage, is whether the experiences becomes normative, or ongoing. Peak experiences are considered to be a state experience (Maslow, 1971). A state can

be very powerful and at times life altering, however it is not lasting. It is often the initial

opening that reveals a different way of being.

Unresolved Debate

The irony is that many of the characteristics that the scholars are writing about are

pointing towards a very simple experience and openness to life. Most of the perspectives point

beyond the conceptual mind, that is always trying to make sense out of the spiritual journey.

Wilber writes in the end of *A Theory of Everything*, that essentially "everybody is right," there is

a spectrum of truth which is accessed differently, yet all contain aspects of truth (Wilber, 2000b

p. 140). The culmination of life, of growth and development will eventually lead to dropping all

of the theories; "in order simply to be Everything" (Wilber, 2000b, p. 141) The three theorists

explored agree that each person will have a unique process depending upon their bio-psycho-

social-spiritual factors. Washburn calls for the need for a "both/and" perspective when it comes

to transpersonal development, yet he still seems to claim that the way to the transpersonal is

reached is through a regression—due to his belief that the transpersonal dynamic ground is

contained within the psyche and was covered up shortly after birth. It is difficult to discuss

transpersonal history and theory without getting into these debates, which ultimately seem

unimportant to the actual experience that transpersonal psychology is pointing towards. Spiritual

teacher, Dasarath sums up the absurdity of many of the debates found in transpersonal

psychology by saying,

> The floodtide of words subsides, revealing the pristine ground of silent being, a stillness
>
> that infuses all. Only this, always this. What a relief. What grace. A huge laugh fills the
>
> space of being. If we truly get the joke of this freedom, can we finally rest with Ryokan,
>
> the old Zen hermit poet? '*Why chatter about delusion and enlightenment? Listening to*

the night rain on my roof. I sit comfortably, with both legs stretched out'. (Dasarath,

2003, p. 79)

While the debate must be addressed, it seems less important than understanding how to help

support people who may be going through a transpersonal process.

Challenges and Transitional Phases

The moment the eyes opened the next morning, the mind exploded in worry. Is this

insanity? Psychosis? Schizophrenia? Is this what people call a nervous breakdown?

Depression? What happened? And would it ever stop? ...The mind was in agony as it

tried valiantly to make sense of something it could never comprehend, and the body

responded to the anguish of the mind by locking itself into survival mode, adrenaline

pumping, senses fine-tuned, finding and responding to the threat of annihilation in every

moment. (Segal 1996 p. 49)

While there are many benefits associated with spiritual practice (Birnbaum, Birnbaum &

Mayseless, 2008), there are also challenges (Adyashanti, 2008, Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004;

Assagioli, 1977; Trungpa, 1973; Starr, 2003; Grof & Grof 1990). The above is an excerpt from a

book by Susan Segal, describing the terror and confusion that occurred when she spontaneously

experienced contact with her true nature. Others have similarly stumbled upon such an

experience (Lukoff, 2007; Roberts, 1993; Solowoniuk & Nixon, 2009). There seems to be a

common view of a deconstruction of what is familiar and either a reconstruction or a rediscovery

of an underlying nature, or spirit,

The room was small, probably no bigger than this, and suddenly it appeared to expand

infinitely, carrying with it a rush of tremendous energy that engulfed me. There was panic

and terror, but amidst everything else there was an uncanny calmness as if time had

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stopped and I was watching everything happen. I was there, but not there all at the same time; everything was both real and unreal, it was like being formless. (Solowoniuk & Nixon, 2009 p. 1)

Solowoniuk, an intern in a mental health profession, knew that the psychodynamic perspective he was familiar with would not have a frame for understanding his experience. It was out of the ordinary, startling and terrifying. This is primarily why transpersonal psychology pulls from many Eastern traditions, because there is a framework for understanding this process (Almaas, 1990; Assagioli, 1971; Nixon, 2001; Rowan, 2005; Washburn; 1994; Washburn; 2003). The basic ideas put forth from is that contact with the absoult or other transcendent or transformative shifts often lead to a break down of what is familiar, which results in a process which requires integrating unresolved psychological material, new ways of knowing and ways of functioning in the world. There is a period described in certain meditation traditions, when one begins to experience the dissolving of the world and of the self. One can lose their bearings and feel as if everything was falling away this experience can create great terror and sense of being (Kornfield, 1989). One of the ways that the Christian mystical traditions described this was expressed through St. John of the Cross's dark night of the soul (Starr, 2003; Washburn, 1994).

Dark Night of the Soul

The dark night of the soul, originally written about by Saint John of the Cross, a 16th century Christian mystic of the Catholic Carmelites order, has become a common metaphor for the psycho-spiritual journey. Many theorists drawn upon the story of the dark night in their own writing and theorizing (Assagioli, 1971; Ram Dass, 1989; Kornield,1989; Grof & Grof, Roberts, 1993; Starr, 2003;Washburn, 2003). Usually this process is ignited after one has experienced an opening to the absoult. The opening, which was so wonderful and cast so much light and joy

often passes and the contrast is so stark, so severe that one enters into a very dark and desperate place:

> The self is in the dark because it is blinded by a light greater than it can bear… as eyes weakened and clouded suffer pain when the clear light beats upon them, so the soul, by reason of its impurity, suffers exceedingly when the Divine Light really shines upon it. (Assagioli, 1993, p. 40)

It is commonly thought that the dark night is part of a purification process, and while unpleasant, is one of the most important parts of the journey. (Assagioli, 1993, Washburn, 1994,) Ram Dass, describes it as "the despair that comes when the worldliness starts to fall away," (1989, p. 184). There are two stages to the dark night, the first being a dark night of the sense followed by the dark night of the spirit. "The dark night of the senses is a relentless desert experience of exile, aridity, enervation, disorientation, and unquenchable spiritual thirst" (Washburn, 1994, p. 220). This experience occurs when one's energy or interest in the world is drawn internally, and away from worldly objects. The dark night of the spirit sets in next and is a long process where the promise of spiritual salvation, hopes and joys are squashed, and a period of dissolution, alienation, despair and extreme emptiness set in. Washburn see's the dark night as one of the first stages of transcendence, "Spiritual development is seen as a long and painful process" (Washburn, 1994 p. 220). St. John described the futility of trying to explain the process,

> The dark night, through which the soul passes, on its way to the divine light of the perfect union of the love of God so far as it is in this life possible requires for its explanation greater experience and light of knowledge than I possess. For so great are the trials, and so profound the darkness, spiritual as well as corporal, through which souls must pass, if they will attain to perfection, that no human learning can explain them, nor experience

describe them. He only who has passed through them can know them, but even he cannot

explain them. (John of the Cross, Translator Lewis, 1922)

The dark night is a passage it is not a final resting place. The other side is a resurrection,

regeneration of spirit, (Washburn, 1994) or the experience of faith, and embrace of the flame of

God. The flame, now kindled gives heat and at last transforms itself and makes ones presence as

beautiful as fire (John of the Cross, as cited in Cannon, 2008, p. 208). The painful period gives

way to the flame of God, to the regeneration of ones true nature. This is also seen in the

Christian term, Via Negativa. Via Negativa is the path of renunciation, release and surrender,

> The Via Negativa theme of a full-bodied experience of the travails, nastiness and
>
> heartache of failurehood cracks open our compassionate heart to the untold sacred depths
>
> within, ushering in an appreciation for what is that had heretofore been taken for granted.
>
> (Friedman, 2010, p. 20)

The experience of being deconstructed during the Negativa period is followed, by via Positiva,

which illuminates what is left, one's true nature (Freidman, 2010). This theme is not just talked

about in Christianity. During the period of dissolution or Negativa, all can feel lost, however

when the process is allowed and supported, a true transformation and shift in view of self and

world occurs often with a deep letting go (Kornfield, 1989). This theme is a common one and is

also found in the awaking stories of many current individuals (Carse, 2006; Frazier, 2007;

Mitchell & Mitchell, 2002; Roberts, 1993; Segal, 1996; Tolle, 2004) It is important to note that

not all individuals who progress along the spiritual path experience the dark night, it is not, as

Washburn seems to imply a necessary process. It is also helpful to keep in mind that while not

all depressions are dark nights, some depressions are possibly invitations into a different way of

being, Thomas Moors, former catholic priest and Jungian psychologists understands this

distinction "John might help us see that what we call a depression is a kind of initiation" (as cited in Starr, 2003).

Regression in the Service of Transcendence

Washburn, a transpersonal theorist who is influenced by psychoanalytic perspectives adjusted the term regression in the service of defense to be in the service of transcendence. The dark night could be thought of as one part of the regression in service of transcendence. In the psychoanalytic perspective the regression is usually for the ego and is a defensive position. In Washburn's view, part of the process of spiritual development involves a regression which ultimately allows for reintegration and for moving beyond the limited structures of the ego. Meditation teacher and psychologist Jack Kornfield speaks of the challenges involved with the spiritual path, "The truth is very hard for us to realize… in the process one passes through all the realms of fire and dissolution, the storms and emotions, the whole series of temptations, hindrances, and difficulties," (Kornfield, 1993, p. 169). There are similarities to the dark night of the soul, in that usually the regression occurs after an initial opening or awakening. In Washburn's system, the ego-defenses temporarily breakdown or are bypassed, allowing for the dynamic ground, or numinous spirit, which is the one true nature, to emerge. The numinous, refers to "a sense of awe, wonder, and mystery in response to a sensed contact with an all encompassing "something"—then at its core will be the experience of Being itself (Hunt, 2007 p. 220).

The encounter with one's ground, or the numinous, is very powerful and can be equated with "ecstasies, sudden insights, wondrous sensations, feelings and visions," (Washburn, 1994, p. 240). As profound as these experiences may be, they are often temporary and only a beginning part of the process. One aspect of the ego may be drawn to and attracted to the

experience, frequently another part is disturbed and threatened by the process and fears for its

protection. As part of the process of opening, and the encounter with the numinous, the ego's

defenses and primal repressions are weakened. The initial reduction of defense can feel

wonderful, and yet one is not aware that there are long challenges that await and that stem from

this opening.

> The ego begins to feel that the breakthrough it has experienced is not completely
>
> beneficial, specifically, it begins to sense that its new openness is not only a spiritual
>
> receptivity but also a psychic vulnerability or "wound"; and it begins to sense that that to
>
> which it is open is not only a source of replenishing energy and wondrous phenomena but
>
> also an "abyss" that emits dangerous forces and beckons the ego to a dark destiny.
>
> (Washburn, 1994 p. 242)

As with the dark night of the soul, this regression does lead to transcendence, which is

regeneration and a reorientation

Alternative view to Regression In Service of Transcendence

Not all theorists see transpersonal development the same. Ken Wilber proposes a much

more linear process of development and does not acknowledge the regression in service of

transcendence. Wilber believes that there are potential pathologies, aspects of the personal and

collective shadow, unacceptable parts that have been denied, repressed or projected onto other,

that emerge at each level and must be addressed (Wilber, 2000a). The transition to the next stage

contains, a "little death," (Thomas et al., 1993). This is part of the movement and development

but Wilber does not indicate that there is an obvious return to the core processes of the egoic

structures, or that one must suffer a period of being at the mercy of the ego in terror, and fighting

for its survival.

In a qualitative study (Thomas et al., 1993) with twenty respondents who had reached transpersonal levels of consciousness, less than half had experienced what could be viewed as a regression in service of transcendence. It had happened to some, but others did not report anything similar to the process. Many of the individuals in the study did feel their lives had great amounts of suffering and struggle, although not in a way that seemed to fit a crisis or dramatic U-Turn. It is possible that the way the questions were being asked skewed that results or that people's perceptions of the process were not seen as extreme as Washburn's model suggests. This study found that Wilber's model of a gradual progression, fit the experiences of the participants more appropriately.

A.H. Almaas's Alternative view of Development

Almaas's work around regression is between the many small U-Turns, Wilber proposes and the great regression Washburn speaks of. Almaas is very precise and has many different ways to discuss the subtlety of the process, and introduced a personal essence, or Pearl Beyond Price, which is an individualized manifestation of the absoult (Almaas, 1990). This review will be a simplified overview of his work, which is vast and meticulous. Almaas, (1990) sees a similar process that occurs as the individual experiences more contact with their Beingness. Beingness is ones true nature, or the absoult. Beingness, has various essential aspects, or particular qualities or ways the Beingness can manifest, much like a diamond has facets. Some of the essential elements are: will, strength, clarity, nourishment, joy, merging, compassion, courage, love, and value (Almaas, 2004). These are not unique to this particular system, they are just being named and understood according to Almaas's perspective. Almass believes that psychological material is intertwined with the spiritual (Almaas, 2004) "The Diamond Approach begins with the idea that we need to work on our psychological issues, which will include

regressive process, but then the process becomes much more specific and much less linear"
(Almaas, 2004 p. 545). The regressions, Almaas says, do not happen just at once, but continue
into latest periods of spiritual development.

Almaas (1990) describes the inner process as oscillating between seeing ones
psychological material as interfering with Beingness, and contact with Beingness illuminating or
bringing to surface psychological material. The sense of Being, was recognized by early object
relationist most particularly, Guntrip, who realized that the child, being in the presence of safe
well attuned caregiver, allowed for the young child to be. The lack of being mirror by
caregivers, or recognized in adults, was seen as one of the roots of any adult suffering (Almaas,
1990). Once one begins to contact Beingness as an adult, it illuminates the deficiencies of the
ego. Very similar to the dark night of the soul and the regression in service of transcendence,
Almaas talks of how contact with ones true nature, or Beingness illuminates aspects of the
person and ego structure that are unpleasant. "The experience of expansion involves delight,
beauty and a sense of adventure. But sooner or later one does come upon one's personal
limitations… He starts feeling a sense of deficiency, smallness, weakness and inadequacy,"
(Almaas, 1990 p. 358). The ego, in Almaas's system is seen as inherently structurally flawed. It
is not that the individual is somehow flawed, but that the ego is structurally unsound,

> Essential realization puts a much greater pressure on one's capacities, and sooner or later
> a sense of inadequacy emerges. It usually does not indicate emotional disorder or
> immaturity, for go under normal circumstances this inadequacy would probably never
> surface to consciousness…it is a universal phenomenon. (Almaas, 1990, p. 359)

The process is very difficult and illuminates not only the primitive structures found in the ego but
also many of early object relations and childhood wounds that are unique to the individual

(Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004). This confrontation and discovery, can bring the individual to the brink of terror, disillusionment, hopelessness and despair. Therefore the spiritual development, according to Almaas consists of establishing contact with the personal essence, experiencing Beingness which then creates an awareness of the deficiencies that arise as the result of losing contact with ones essence, or true nature. This creates many "regressions" giving the person the opportunity to reclaim the missing aspects of oneself (Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004). Given Almaas's extensive work with others in this process, being a close guide for thousands of people over the last 30 years, and his understanding of psychology and spiritual systems, his perspective hold considerable weight (Almaas, 1990; Almaas, 2004).

Universality of Mystical Experience

There are elements of the mystical experience that can be recognized regardless of the context (Almaas, 2004; Blackstone, 2007; Carse, 2006; De Mello, 1990; Funk 1994; Koltko-Rivera; 2004; Torchinova, 2003; Trungpa, 1973; Wilber, 2000a;), This does not imply that all religions and people are the same or that the information will be processed and shared in a similar manner. There are unique contexts for the experience, an ability or inability to express the occurrence, and the various ways that the cultural or societal understanding may frame, validate or invalidate the experience (Torchinova, 2003). Judith Blackstone, (2007) a non-dual therapist, teacher and writer addresses some of the cultural aspects found within the non-dual or transpersonal realms. Blackstone explains how our experience is shaped by our cultural and linguistic background, acknowledging difference and conditioning, yet also pointing to an inherent underlying structure of consciousness that is not only limited to difference, but is not effected by it,

I have no argument with the view that imagistic, dual… types of mystical experience are

shaped by culture. However, descriptions of encounters with the self-existing

(unconstructed) dimension of nondual consciousness are recognizably the same across

cultures, even though the interpretations of the experience vary across cultures.

(Blackstone, 2007 p. 8)

Nondual consciousness is considered to be one of the transpersonal realms of consciousness

where the distinction of subject and object are no longer perceived as solid, (Blackstone 2007).

The symbols and metaphors that stem from ones internal experience are often culturally specific.

For example it is unlikely that someone would have a vision of Jesus as a white long haired man

in a robe, if they had grown up with an image of the divine being related to the sun, or a

Goddess, never having come across images of Christian ways of symbolizing the divine.

Nevertheless, the characteristics of the vision would be similar. From this perspective the self

and other are seen as concepts, not truth, she continues:

Forman, (1998) states that 'we are suggesting that some mystical experiences tap into a

fundamental human psycho physiological structure. Not created by culture, this

structure—consciousness itself, its ability to tie itself together through time, and the

intimate but non-conceptual acquaintance we each have with it—comes with the

machinery of being human. In consciousness itself and in the way it encounters the

world intentionally, we may have something that transcends cultures and eras'.

(Blackstone, 2007, p. 9)

Recently neuroscientists have explored the neurological correlations found in spiritual

experience. Regardless of external conditioning there are also corresponding neurological

changes which are commonly found in spiritual experiences, (Johnstone, Bodling, Cohen, Wegrzyn, 2012).

There is a concern that in attempt to find commonalities, many important and key distinctions are being lost, denied or privileged "Most universalist visions of human spirituality tend to distort the essential message of the various religious traditions, hierarchically favoring certain spiritual truths over others and raising serious obstacles for interreligious harmony and open-ended spiritual inquiry" (Ferrer, 2009 p. 140). There is a risk of looking for a melting pot of world spirituality, wanting to make categories and find commonalties and disregard differences. There are many possible different lenses for exploring humanity, while one can that preserves difference and look for distinctions; another can attempt to find commonalities. For example, Wilber highlights that people universally tend to sleep, dream, and be awake. Dreams may be different, but dreams are happening. There may be examples of individuals who are outliers, but generally these are all states of universal human consciousness. The idea of mystical aspects of consciousness which extend to the nondual levels (Blackstone, 2007), is very likely.

An interesting observation is that those who reside in or have regular access to nondual states and mystical experience often do not find fault with universal human experience. The critique seems to stem from very intellectual places that originate from the conceptual mind. It would be like someone who has never remembered a dream, saying that dreams don't occur, or that only some people dream. A possible follow up would be to determine if most critics of this experience had, in fact experienced significant mystical states of consciousness, to see if their interest were from a more philosophical or intellectual level, rather than an experiential level.

Deikman (1996) an expert in Sufism reports that, "The Sufis regard Moses, Christ, and Mohammed as Teachers of the same basic process; their external forms and means they

employed were different, but the inner activity was the same" (p. 254). Some believe that mystical experiences are in fact the root of all religions, (Torchinova, 2003). Certain pointers and pith teaching found in an 8th century text by Padmasambhava, an Indian sage who is credited with bringing Buddhism into Tibet, speaks of the illusionary nature of the ego mind, and the false sense of being a separate self. The message comes through and translates clearly, "the nature of the mind which has the capacity to know everything and be aware of everything is empty and clear," (Myrdhin Reynolds, 2000). These same realizations are shared in many contemporaries as well, (Almaas, 2004; Adyashanti, 2005; Blackstone, 2007; Carse, 2006; Frazier, 2007; Tolle, 2004). Anthony De Mello, a Jesuit Priest and mystic, reports, "all mystics— Catholic, Christian, non-Christian, no matter what their theology, no matter what their religion— are unanimous on one thing; that all is well, all is well. Though everything is a mess, all is well" (De Mello, 1990 p. 5). Llellywen Vaughn Lee, a Sufi mystic says that mystics regardless of their religious affiliation are connected in "a brotherhood and sisterhood in which there are no divisions" (Vaughn-Lee, 2012). This recognition of the sameness of experience while allowing distinctions allows for a rich and multifaceted experience of life.

Transpersonal across Cultures

In the study by Thomas, et, al. (1993), they found that there were cross cultural similarities found in their study of spiritually recognized elders in both Hindu and Christian contexts. There were similar experiences that fit into the standard measure they were using regardless of the cultural context. This is the very strength that makes transpersonal psychology more open to other modes of seeing and doing. Transpersonal is already outside of the mainstream and what is considered "normal" within the transpersonal community has, until very recently, been seen as rather fringe and abnormal within more traditional Western perspectives.

A psychologist who works in South Africa feels his attunement to the transpersonal approach is helping to bridge traditional and nontraditional ways of thought and practice. "Transpersonal psychology, with a perspective which is much less Eurocentric than many other approaches in psychology, provides a basis of theory and practice which allow for genuine dialogue with African Traditional Healers (Edwards, as cited in Lukoff & Lu, (2005 p. 185). Bynum, (1992) also traces transpersonal roots back to ancient Egypt and West Africa, and see's current day transpersonal therapists as continuing lineage.

There is a concern that the transpersonal community privileges other more exotic cultures and perspectives. One of the most common religions that is privileged and subject to xenophilia, a fascination and attraction to what is foreign or exotic, is Buddhism (H. Friedman, 2009). Buddhism, has been adopted by many cultures since it's inception in India. Bringing Buddhism to a Western culture is not that conceptually different from its evolution in the East, however there are certain challenges. The Buddhism that American practice range from Theravada from the south east Asian countries to Zen in China and Japan to various forms and lineages in found in Tibetan Buddhism. Each culture integrates the teachings of Buddhism, into a form and perspective that is unique to itself, while primarily maintaining common aspects which allow it to be seen as Buddhism (Robinson, Johnson, Wawrytko, & Ṭhānissaro, 1996). To become a new form of Western or American Buddhism, it must find its own voice and expression within a new framework preserving and honoring the traditions and at the same time fitting into the unique culture it is being practiced in. The have access to mystical teaching from the western perspective, has been greatly limited "There are well-known Christian mystics and Western mystics, but for centuries mysticism was banished in most Christian and Western circles. This led to an enormous, unmet need in Western consciousness to reclaim this note of mystical love"

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(Vaughn-Lee, 2012). There could be fascination with the exotic, however when someone stumbles into a mystical process or glimpse beyond normal egoic perspective, what matters is having a framework to understand and help conceptualize the experience (Carse, 2006; Grof &Grof, 1990; Lukoff; Solowoniuk & Nixon, 2009; Segal, 1996). In someway the transpersonal community is seeking a form of psychologically oriented contemplative practices that will allow useful teachings and perspectives to be integrated with a western psyche and culture.

Healing and Growth Within Transpersonal

Many aspects of growth and transformation have been described as difficult and painful, although this is only one aspect of the path. There is a promise that life can be lived from a place of more grace, joy and connection. This is what often compels people onto the spiritual journey, and what transpersonal psychology strives to support in individuals. An 83 year old former clergy member reports that the spiritual journey, "is a loving…benign, gracious process. Even when the process seems to lead you into suffering, which it does, there is a joy. There is a deep, a feeling of unity and wholeness, in spite of the sorrow or suffering" (Thomas et al., 1993, p. 73). The ability to be with whatever difficulty is arising is often a capacity that occurs, as one is more in touch with their transpersonal nature. This allows a greater ability to tolerate and welcome life, regardless of whether it is enjoyable or painful. "What a delight, what a joy and a lightness, is this personal presence without heaviness. One feels in direct open contact with everything, without barriers between one's presence and the rest of the universe" (Almaas, 1990, p. 410). Without barriers, one is more open, caring leading towards truly selfless service, "One does not think of helping or try to help. It is one's nature to help, love give and serve" (Almaas, 1990 p. 479).

There are many who believe that the only real way to address the conflict, suffering and distress in the world is through the transpersonal (Adyashanti, 2005; Grof & Grof, 1990; Louchakova, 2007). Most of the problems within ones life and society are seen as stemming from limited, defensive, fear based egoic distortions of life. Frances Vaughn, a leading transpersonal psychologist believes that our past ways of dealing with difficulties are ineffective and that in our individual awakening it is possible that we can begin to heal effect greater change and healing, "We have learned the hard way that evil cannot be conquered in battle. Doing battle perpetuates the problem. It is rather, our mutual capacity for transcendence that must be recognized if we want to transform present danger into opportunity for renewal" (Vaughn, 1993, p. 216) While this may sound idealistic, she clearly states that staying in wishful thinking without actual action or transformation is not the key. Stanislav Grof and Christina Grof, pioneers in the transpersonal movement, are in agreement with Vaughn, they report that transpersonal experiences tend to lead to an appreciation of the interconnections of life and greater tolerance of and compassion towards others, regardless of difference (Grof &Grof, 1990). Almaas believes that the inner transformative work is what will generally effect change

> The capacity of this teaching to transform your own life can extend out to affect your environment, changing the way that you relate to other people and the world at large…In my experience, this is the most effective way to support a deeper change in the condition of consciousness in our world. (Almaas, 2008 p. 225-226)

Many other approaches ranging from politics to education, attempt to eradicate these forces, without actually addressing what transpersonal theorists see as the root of the problem, the limited egoic perspective. This is much like trying to cut off the top of a plant you don't want without pulling the roots. In fact some believe that if one is attempting to eradicate the problem,

and operating from the ego's point of view, then even well intentioned efforts are creating more division and discord in the world (Adyashanti, 2005). Marianne Murray, in her doctoral thesis writes how amazingly difficult it is to address racism, especially for a white individual without some understanding or experience of one's true nature:

The power of white supremacy and the difficulty of addressing it is that it is so deeply and pathologically rooted in the cultural psyche. For a white person, and for many people who are not white, to begin a deconstruction of such a fundamental mental structure involves a radical deconstruction of one's entire world view. In my view, it requires going beyond the autonomy of the ego-centered consciousness. The process of inquiry can evoke enormous emotional and psychological resistance, and unresolved personal psychological issues can be easily triggered when reality as it has been known is questioned. It seems imperative to have some ground of knowing of the transpersonal, or at least a view that can see beyond ego-centricity, in order to deconstruct the conditioned personal self. (M. Murray, 2001 p. 23)

Transpersonal movement takes seriously that for life on the individual and societal level to improve and suffering be reduced, one must directly address the fundamental cause: the complete identification with ones ego.

Awakening to the greater self can often create a shift allowing one to be less involved in narcissism and feel a greater connection to the whole. (Almaas, 2008; Geig, 2009; Louchakova, 2007; Vaughn, 1985). In a recent study Huber & MacDonald (2012) not based in transpersonal, but closely related, found that spiritually based, nonreligious cognitions were positive associated with both empathy and altruism. There are many other reasons for altruism and concern for the welfare of others, however it is shown that these transpersonal developments lead in direction of

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connection to a larger sphere than the limited sense of self. Huffman (2007) makes a comparison between the social scientist experiment where participants found a dime in a phone booth and were more willing to help a stranger afterwards, with individuals who have a spiritual perspective. Individuals with greater transpersonal perspective, may experience the simple act of breathing as a gift, and this tends to ripple outwards in gratitude and with more concern for others. The research was limited to speculation based on the original study with the dime, which points to the lack of solid research related to spirituality and in transpersonal psychology.

Research in Transpersonal

There is not a great depth of research into transpersonal phenomenon. Some of this is related to the non-ordinary states of consciousness that are inherent in the transpersonal realm, (Cowley, & Derezetoes, 1994). Some of the lack of empirical studies has been due to a resistance of the community to use measures to evaluate the intangible.

> In general, humanistic and transpersonal psychologies have eschewed the use of objective tests, formalized assessment, and conventional empirical research methodologies on the grounds that they are reductionist and unable to do justice to the inherent richness, complexity, and often ineffability of subjective human experience. (McDonald & Friedman 2002 p. 104)

There has been as shift to using tools for qualitative forms of research, to study transpersonal experiences (Brooks 2010; Gleig, 2009). There are also skilled sentence completion tests which stem from ego development that are able to move into the transpersonal areas of consciousness and can provide a different lens (Cook-Greuter, 2011). There are a variety of different measures and self reported test that can determine the effects of spirituality and measure influence of the

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transpersonal (McDonald & Friendman, 2002). One specifically is the Self-Expansiveness Level

Form (SELF) which measures

> three levels of self-expansiveness derived through using a spatial temporal cartography
>
> in which there is a personal level of the here-and-now, a transpersonal level in which
>
> identity expands beyond present place and time such that self dissolves as a separate
>
> entity, and a middle level between the personal and transpersonal. (Pappas & Friedman,
>
> 2007 p. 38)

Research is challenging since there is a desire to have internal experiences be validated and

proven (Furrer, 2009). The lack of research is considered to be one of the main flaws in

transpersonal psychology since it is considered to be a social science. There are further areas of

research that need to be developed. The next section will account for some of the bias that

comes from the diverse field of transpersonal psychology.

Bias in Transpersonal

The transpersonal movement came out of the 1960's and was pioneered by many men

and is still very heavily dominated by men (Brooks, 2010; Hartelius et al., 2007) This may

privilege a certain way of looking at the world and emphasize certain values over others (Brooks,

2010). Additionally since the western perspective has informed transpersonal psychology, it is

inherently privileging a certain type of development, specifically a trans-personal "spiritual"

development. This privileging values nondual consciousness over other types of religious and

spiritual experiences and is not very inclusive of a wider range (Ferrer 2009). There is a concern

about the lack of inclusivity in general; transpersonal is heavily Westernized. Haretlius et al.,

(2007) believes, "it is not enough to live in the West and 'honor the Traditions' of the East, of

Africa, and of indigenous peoples. The West cannot do this for the world; it can only do it with

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the world" (p. 152). Furthermore, the transpersonal literature is heavily written in English and there is not a lot of translations from other languages into English. The transpersonal is not "trans-English. In other words, what is not in English does not exist" (Almendro, 2009 p. 83). The most harsh critiques come from Frerrer (2009) who is disenchanted with current transpersonal movement and believes it is, "possessed by a naïve pernnialism, misreading of religious texts, lack of methodological sophistication, weak epistemology, and some would claim, promotion of narcissistic self-absorption" (as cited in Parsons, 2003).

Some bias possible in transpersonal theory is the concept of a universal or fundamental "ground of being," which is inherent in all individuals. This is an assumption based on studies of the esoteric traditions found in many different cultures that there is a fundamental truth that is accessible to all humans (Almaas, 2004; Almaas, 2008; Blackstone, 2007;Funk, 1994). This perspective is again, not a popular one (Brooks, 2010; Ferrer, 2009) with the post-modern perspective as stated by Nicholas Burbules and Suzanne Rice which holds that there are no absoult truths and that no one can separate themselves from their perspective (as cited in Kegan, 1994 p. 324). There seems to be a conflict between the postmodern perspective, found in much of contemporary social work philosophy (Noble, 2004) that states that all perception is constructed based on subjective experience, and a claim of overarching human development pointing to the existence of a fundamental non-dual level of consciousness which is at the core of all people (Almaas, 2008; Blackstone, 2007; De Mello, 1990; Funk, 1994; Kovovska, 2006). A truly accurate portrayal of this inherent ground does not dismiss or deny the differences associated with societal and cultural factors. If not careful, however this common ground could lead to a denial and avoidance of the social inequities and oppression that occur based on marginalized social groups (DiAngelio, 2010). It is possible that the transpersonal is guilty, at

times of its own "spiritual bypass," and does not acknowledge individuals suffering enough

(Hunt, Dougan, Grant & House 2002). This could arise on the individual level, leading a

clinician to discount a clients individual "story of struggle," or on a more societal level, not fully

acknowledging the implication and actuality of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism

and other forms of discrimination. Ann Geilg as a doctoral candidate in religious studies,

explored the Diamond Approach, the teaching of Hameed Ali (A.H Almass) and agreed that

there needed to be a greater exploration of how the socio-cultural forces impact each individual,

she states that the "the project of liberation," must extend to all areas, including the political

(Gleig, 2007, p. 84).

Potential Commoditization within Transpersonal Psychology: Other concerns are

about the current New Age market place of western society, which seeks to appropriate and

commodify various other spiritual and religious traditions (York, 2001, Young, 1998). It is

common to have restaurants named after Asian religions or concepts, to drink tea called Zen or

to buy bobble headed Buddha's for your car. The exploitation and commoditization is rampant.

There is additionally a more subtle materialism that Trungpa Rinpoche termed "spiritual

materialism," which has to do with the internal commoditization and collecting of spiritual

practices and associations to add to ones identity, resulting in a spiritually inflated ego (Trungpa,

1973). This occurs when it is seen as cool or interesting to be studying meditation or taking a

yoga class; it can become another badge to wear and conversation to have. The transpersonal

movement is well aware of these challenges, attempts to distinguish itself from the New Age,

and the commoditization of "exotic" and "cool" religions. However there are certainly patterns

that would be lumped in this category and seen as co-opting and appropriating other cultures

heritage due to the poverty of the current Western culture, or lack of clear identity. There are

certain dangers involved in the misuse and dilution of various practices into a different culture. Friendman, (2009) is concerned that the privileging of Buddhism found in the transpersonal movement, is a form of xenophilia, attraction to the exotic, and is not good for either the culture of origin nor transpersonal psychology.

The critique does not stop at Westerner's. York (2001) not only finds eager "spiritually hungry" (p. 368) Westerner distasteful, he also points his finger at the Tibetan Lamas who have recognized reincarnated tulkus as westerns or Hindu Swami's and Chinese martial arts teachers who have "consciously marketed," (p.368) their cultural practices. This critique is also a form of ideological imperialism to assume that someone can know what is best or most authentic for these teachers. Either York's view would have to be accommodated to account for a wider range of possibilities than exploitation of exotic cultures, or the Lama's and Swami's are being equally as accused and guilty. This framework doesn't account for multiplicity. It denies any genuine connection between teacher and student or the universality of the teachings and practices. The key seems to be able to have a flexible view that can hold multiple factors at once. There is inevitable corruption involved in this global information age, where ancient and previously held secret teachings are now available on Google. People are trying to get rich by exploiting "exotic foreign religions." Exploitation and commoditization as well as a sincere communication and integration are all possible. Gloria Anazaldua, who clearly holds paradox and multiplicity, understands the potential for commercial misuse in addition to respectful possibilities for the connection,

> Instead of surreptitiously ripping off the vital energy of people of color and putting it to commercial use, whites could allow themselves to share and exchange and learn from us in a respectful way. By taking up curanderismo, Santeria, shamanism, Taoism, Zen and

otherwise delving into the spiritual life and ceremonies of multi-colored people, Anglos

would perhaps lose their white sterility they have in their kitchens, bathrooms, hospitals,

mortuaries and missal bases. (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 91)

If one seriously understands the realization the transpersonal perspective is offering, certain rigid

boundaries and divisions can no longer make sense, and while difference can be seen and

appreciated, there is a sense of a humanity that is deeply personal, unique and transcendent

simultaneously. In the final chapter, the transpersonal as well as constructivist developmental

perspective will be applied to the work of Paul Rezendes who explores his own inner journey.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

This current study is a theoretical investigation of prosocial shifts in worldviews. The focus is about transformational change of one's organizing principals and construction of reality. The research confirmed that individuals do experience a range of shifts in worldview and they these shifts tend to fall into several different categories. The categories were broadly related to shifts of insight, and mystical or spiritual experience. These shifts resulted often in interpersonal, intrapersonal and cognitive changes. The research explored different lenses to make sense of the shifts that occurred, using constructivist developmental theory and transpersonal psychology. This chapter discusses how these two theories can be applied to make sense of significant changes in Paul Rezendes's life, as described in the book *The Wild Within* (1998). Constructivist developmental theory will be used primarily for the early parts of his life and transpersonal for later parts. In the application of the theories, the understanding of how shifts can lead to more prosocial orientation in one's life will become more clear.

Within the spirit of social work, holding multiple perspectives and taking a non-pathological view of people, this study highlights different shifts and how this corresponds to individual's goals, values and relationships. It also gives a frame for understanding mental health in a wider view. This can occur in two ways. Since there is evidence that growth often comes from stressful or difficult circumstances (Wethington, 2003; Linley et al., 2008; Mamali & Dunn, 2011) clinicians can help clients hold their suffering in a way that could facilitate

change and growth, and not shy away from difficulty. Another aspect is related to the challenges involved in transitions and in the various regressions that may accompany genuine growth and transcendence (Almaas, 1990; Washburn, 2003). This study has shown that intensely difficult mental states such as anxiety, despair and even terror can be signposts on the way to significant and profound shifts in consciousness. The process of change of worldview can involve incredible loss and yet it is ultimately an optimistic and worthwhile endeavor and ultimately is necessary for dealing with the vast amount of suffering and disparities in our current world. In this study, social change is seen as a change in consciousness. Any political or social action that is successful would create a different paradigm for the way that individuals perceive themselves and the world. This study is an exploration of how individual's worldview may change and how the change may occur from the inside out.

There is hope for the continued development of adults, and recognition of the resilience possible in individuals. People can have multiple significant changes in their worldview (Almaas, 2004, Kegan, 1994; Rezendes, 1998) that can open one up to a wider range of options, reduce the amount of suffering and create changes that are prosocial and positive for individuals and those who are close to them. Many of the stories and studies of shifts point towards a shift that can only be described in a mystical or spiritual fashion, because they involve a feeling of love, profound interconnectedness, peace, or the presence of the divine (Degloma, 2010; Miller, 2004; Schlitz et al., 2007; White, 2004). The shifts do not have to be limited to spiritual experience and may also be related to a change in values, learning something new about oneself, or perceiving a person or group of people differently. Within the theories used to explore these shifts, transpersonal theory is primarily focused on spirituality and constructivist developmental

theory does not explicitly address these aspects, but offers a perspective of growth and developmental through the various stages adulthood.

Theories

Constructivist developmental theory explores how people construct and make sense of their life and surrounding world. It was developed by Robert Kegan, (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994) and posits that change of worldview becomes increasingly complex and that there is a developmental sequence or orders which one progresses through. Rezendes's story begins on the cusp of second and third order, in his early twenties. For this analysis, the earlier orders are not relevant and are primarily related to childhood (Kegan, 1982). The second order (imperial) is usually found in teenage years, and characterizes the early days when Rezendes was a biker. The third order (institutional) occurs when one begins to place the value of one's relationships and desire for mutuality over one's wants and preferences it also signifies abiding by societal rules. The fourth order (self authoring) allows one to decide their own values separate from ones family, culture, religion that one grew up with, to have values about values and have more intentionality about ones choices in life. The fifth order (self transforming) involves deconstructing dominant paradigms and beliefs in the early stage, to becoming more comfortable with paradox, contradiction, and seeing the self as an incomplete every changing system in the later part of the stage. Each of these transitions involves the loss of something and gaining of something else. There are challenges and joys involved in the process (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 1994).

Transpersonal psychology also understands that one can go through phases and stages in a process of change (Almaas, 2004; Rowan, 2005; Wilber, 2000). There is additionally an acknowledgement that challenges and joys are part of the process of growth (Grof &Grof, 1990

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Lukoff, 2007, Washburn, 2003). The main premise behind the transpersonal perspective is that

there is a development, or fundamental nature not bound by the limited ego cognitions and

defenses (Almaas, 2008; Robbins et al., 2012; Rowan, 2005). Koltko-Rivera (2004), finds that

"research literature indicates that mystical–peak–transpersonal experiences can be associated

with changes in the way that the experiencing person perceives reality; these changes, in turn, are

associated with other changes in cognition, affect, and behavior" (p. 25). Research has shown

that individuals who experience these changes in cognition have a greater concern for the welfare

of others (Huber & MacDonald, 2012; Louchakova, 2007; Schlitz et al., 2007). Transpersonal

psychology is a perspective that is keenly aware of the challenges and promises of transcending

ones ego. If it were an easy process, then there would not be much of a need for a related

psychology or as much discussion about navigating the internal terrain.

To ground the theories and perspectives around shifts, I will be applying it to *The Wild*

Within, an autobiography of Paul Rezendes (1998). Rezendes interweaves details and insights

from his life while writing of the book with reflections on his early adulthood and the various

phases and changes in worldview he experienced. There are elements of this account that fall

into both constructivist developmental theory as well as transpersonal theory. There certainly are

other theoretical lenses that could be used to explore Rezendes's life and process, and the

omission of these perspectives is not meant to imply that the chosen theories are the only way to

look at Rezendes's life. Constructivist developmental theory concepts relevant to this analysis

are: *orders,* the *transitions and challenges*, and the *subject/object balance*. There are also aspects

of lines of development that will be touched upon in Rezendes story. Constructivist

developmental theory will be used to primarily to understand Rezendes during his younger years.

Some of the concepts are still relevant throughout the story and into later phases of his growth,

however the analysis of his later adulthood will be primarily transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal concepts that help to understanding shifts related to Rezendes are: *ego*, *development beyond ego*, *the absoult or true nature* and the *essential aspects, dark night/ regression, challenges/transitions*. Overall there will be an understanding and appreciation for the positive and prosocial qualities that are possible through such shifts.

It is important to emphasize that Rezendes's life and story is much more complex and nuanced than can be captured by any theory, or surmised from reading his book. I can only attempt to piece together a patchwork of his story and try to apply these theoretical lenses. The impossibility and presumptuousness of applying theories to someone's life I have never met is not missed. Using his story is done with the utmost respect for his courage, humility and honesty in the sharing of his journey.

The Wild Within

Within the story of *The Wild Within* there is a progression; Rezendes (1998) experienced a number of shifts in his life. Some of the shifts were related to external experiences, which triggered new perceptions of his life, other were more related to increasing awareness and ultimately a shift on the mystical or spiritual level which profoundly changed his perception of the world (Rezendes, 1998). These occurred on interpersonal, intrapersonal and cognitive lines and insight, spiritual, or mystical levels. His story corresponds with much of the literature from the shifts and turning points research (Clausen, 1995; Wethington, 2003) crucial life experience (Mamali & Dunn, 2011) as well as quantum change (Miller & C'de Baca, 1994) and worldview transformation (Schlitz et al., 2007). There were periods of great difficulty, loss of identities, and periods of questioning and growth.

Rezendes's chronological account begins in his early twenties when he was the leader of a biker gang. His younger years fit amazingly well with the constructivist developmental theories second order, the imperial (Kegan, 1982; Eriksen, 2007). Constructivist developmental theory is focused on what one is aware of. Each order allows one to have access to different levels us of self awareness. The imperial order is primarily concerned with itself; one can be very aware of one's needs and wishes, but little empathic awareness of others needs and wishes (Bartone, Snook, Forsythe, Lewis & Bullis, 2007, p. 503). Decisions are often made based on what one can get away with. If there appears to be little repercussions, little chance of being caught or getting in trouble, then all is fair game. The concern is not how their actions may impact others. The typical teenage is often in the imperial order, they may stay out way past curfew and try to sneak in without getting caught, with little regard for how their parents may have been worried or angry, waiting for them, two hours after they were due home. There is little concern for the social order, and while there is the ability to take the perspective taking of another, it is not an empathic perspective, and it can often feel like a manipulative understanding (Eriksen, 2007; Kegan, 1994). In his younger days, Rezendes did not have a great concern for others and was primarily focused upon his own image, needs and wants.

Rezendes was a leader of a notoriously violent motorcycle gang that was involved in various criminal pursuits. He lived within a code of conduct that was tightly enforced by the rules of the gang. The most important thing was saving face and protecting the code. In many ways it was a very "me" focused code that gave little concern for the humanity of others. (Rezendes, 1998). Rezendes writes about this period of his life "all I cared about was my self-image. If someone supported my image, I liked him. If he didn't support it, I didn't like him"

(Rezendes, 1998, p.155). Other aspects that seem to highlight this perspective include the desire

for dominance and control of others:

> Some people are very good at claiming territory. Those who are able to expand their
>
> territory into other people's lives have an incredible sense of power, supremacy and
>
> dominance. I knew this feeling as the alpha biker in my gang. When I walked into a bar
>
> with my gang strung out behind me, the room would grow silent, everyone's head would
>
> turn, and then they would quickly look at the floor. I'd see their shoulders slump and
>
> watch how they contracted themselves into submissive postures. (Resendez, 1998, p.112)

Rezendes was the alpha in the bar, the power and domination was clear. Others' submission was

due threat of violence that may have resulted from anyone asserting themselves. It is thought

that many people who wind up in jail, especially for violent crimes, are operating from the

imperial order (Kegan, 1994; Ericksen, 2006). Kegan (1994) believes adults who appear to have

sociopathic characteristics, who do what they want and are not concerned with others feelings,

may not be neurologically or psychologically impaired, they may just be developmentally

immature, and operating from this order (Kegan, 1994). Eriksen, a therapist who uses Kegan's

model, speaks of prisoners she has worked with who appear to be operating at the imperial order,

and her description matches Rezendes perfectly during his biker days,

> One might say that the imperial label fit these men beautifully. They were "kings" in
>
> their world. They focused only on their own needs and wishes and on the events in their
>
> lives. They were able to control their impulses intentionally enough to get what they
>
> wanted. However others only existed in their world to "serve" their interests and needs.
>
> The notion that laws or principles ought to guide their behavior so that people or property

didn't get hurt was beyond them. The felt they were 'above the law'. (Ericksen, 2007 p.177)

The use of Eriksen's experience seems to apply to people only from lower class status, who may wind up in gangs, or prisons, but it also could describes a lot of upper class individuals in corporate and political positions who just have different ways of demonstrating their domination and self serving ways. For example, in light of the current banking and mortgage crises in our country, many individuals in a very imperial manner, seemed to be focusing on their own wealth without much of an awareness of the negative impact or concern for others wellbeing. Kegan does not talk much about how class impacts the manner or presentation of different orders, and this would be beneficial to explore further.

An individual can be in several stages at once and there are actually sub stages that highlight the transition one can make in between orders (Berger, 2011). There were also aspects during Rezendes's biker days that seemed to be more third order, institutional (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1994,). The institutional order is interested in following rules and relationships. Within the field of awareness, other people can emerge with their own feelings and needs. This is in part because one's identity is closely tied to relationship. There seem to be elements of a gang that are institutional. Within the Devil's Disciples, Rezendes's biker gang, there was a hierarchy and a set of rules and behaviors that were accepted and rejected. As a result there required a sense of the relationship, and self-sacrifice. One could not just go against the rules. Belonging was very important, and there was a great sense of connection, although primarily within the gang:

Inside the fraternal order of the gang there was a real sense of compassion, but outside it there was almost no compassion. The compassion of the gangs is an extreme instance of compassion that is conditional, circumstantial, or bound to a particular situation. But it's

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important to recognize that a gang is a microcosm of feelings of nationalism, racism, or

religious fanaticism, all of which create a lack of sensitivity and compassion. (Rezendez,

1998, p. 134)

The rules ascribed to were certainly values related to imperial rules, societies greater rules, and

third order values were actively rejected. An institutional perspective is present when he sees two

of his gang members being beat up by a group of teenagers, and without thinking runs into the

fight sacrificing himself to help protect his friends. This could have been somewhat imperial,

needing to be seen as dominant and fearless, however the response seemed more based on

loyalty and concern for his friends, over himself. There are risks to the position of the

institutional perspective. Since one is oriented to the group, it can very easily become focused

on protecting itself from "other groups," Rezendes (1998) talks more about the overall sense of

the institutional order that can lead to more contraction on in and out grouping, since the values

are often related to a certain limited social network:

At its root, the identification of a gang with its colors, graffiti and emblems is not

different from the nationalism with its graffiti and colors. Instead of DDMC (Devil's

Disciples Motorcycle Club), it might be USA. We wear uniforms, pledge allegiance to

the flag in school, and espouse the ideas of democracy and capitalism as though these are

God-given truths. We proudly proclaim our identity as Americans. The ideals may be

different, but the attachment, pride, honor, and need to belong to something powerful is

the same. (p. 113-114)

To belong and ascribe to rules that dictate relationships is important for the institutional order.

Rezendes appeared to be teetering on the cusp between the imperial order reflected by the gang's

violence and self-serving actions and the institutional which is able to appreciate and forgo ones

own desire for a greater good. For Rezendes his first major shift, described in his story, which tipped him into the institutional order, was on an interpersonal level. It occurred one night when he was watching a young mama (a female member of the gang) being initiated, which involved being humiliated and abused by both male and female members alike. Rezendes (1998) writes about the moment that she walked up to him, pleading for help and how it impacted the future of his life:

> As that young woman walked toward me in the firelight, I swore to myself that I would live out the compassion that I felt for the girl. The way I put it to myself at the time was that I was going to stand up for truth, for what I believed was right, even if that meant that the image I had of myself would be damaged and I would be perceived as weak or soft. (p. 137)

Rezendes didn't stand up for her that night, he feared for his image, feared that he would have been attacked or threatened if the gang members knew he was soft. However his heart was touched. A moment of humanity and openness transcended the fraternal order of the gang, that allowed for a wider understanding of human connection and compassion. The compassion spurred a new orientation, or in constructivist developmental language, a new object of awareness, creating a significant change for him. This was a shift from being focused primarily upon oneself and the confines of the gang's rules, to being able to empathize with another and have a more encompassing frame of concern. This is one of the shifts of going from primarily "I" focused to "we" focused that is spoken of by Vieten, Amorak, and Schietz (2006), "Results of our analysis suggest that altruism and compassion may arise as natural consequences of experiences of interconnection and oneness" (p. 915). The sense of empathy and concern for another human pierced the tough guy persona and the biker gang's code. The shift in perspective

changes one's sense of self and self in relationship to others. While there was a long way to go, Rezendes began to move in the right direction.

This is an example of a shift in perspective that was spurred on by a difficult and challenging situation that then started a longer series of changes and challenges. Shortly after he realized he had to live his life differently, almost got shot in a police raid of his home. After narrowly escaping a five year prison sentence, for drugs and weapons, his way out was more clear and he was able to leave the gang without any repercussions. This shift corresponds to some of the turning points that people describe after difficult or stressful events (Mamali & Dunn, 2011; Pillemer, 2001; Wethington, 2003). It is a kind of hitting bottom, which spurs a shift in values, priorities relationships and orientation to life. As with all shifts in orders, and new perspectives, there is also a loss (Kegan, 1982). Rezendes realized that he could no longer be in the gang. It was not possible with his new lens, new values and new understanding to continue to live the life he had been living. His whole sense of self and community changed that night, he gained an awareness of empathy for others however he lost his gang, and his whole way of knowing himself.

While this in many ways fits very well within the constructivist developmental framework, the compassion shown for the young mama and the courage live out that compassion could be seen as transpersonal elements. Compassion is what Almaas calls an essential aspect, which is one of the particular manifestations or flavors of one's true nature (Almaas, 2002). Rezendes doesn't take credit for the action, which is also an indication of the essential component which is transpersonal, "I didn't know it at the time, but what I was doing was one of the most courageous acts of my life. It was compassion itself that was courageous, not me"

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(Rezendes, 1998, p. 137). A calling, a strong fire to know what is true and to live an authentic life (Washburn, 2003) was ignited for Rezendes.

Eriksen (2006) reports that the holding environment for people to transition out of the imperial order towards the institutional is often very strict and with strong moral values. There need to be clear guidelines, incentives and repercussions (Eriksen, 2006). Some organizations that tend to create the structure and rules are the military or churches, but sports teams or other systems that stress accountability and concern for others over oneself, can serve the same purpose. Rezendes found this holding environment in his Catholic roots (Rezendes, 1998) blending the spiritual coloring of his insight had, with an intuitive sense that it would be a transitional space. While there are different types of religious institutions and churches, a commonality is their ability to help people transition from imperial to institutional order because many of them have top down rules. They can provide community and direction; they can tell you to think of other people, and demand accountability. Meaning that is internalized from an authority, and helps reinforce societies norms, is of institutional quality "If I became a good Catholic and went to church, took the sacraments, and led a pure Christian life, I thought I would come to know who I was and life would have meaning" (Rezendes 1998, p. 205). In the Catholic tradition, hell is a pretty severe repercussion for one's sins. Rezendes applied himself fully to the church. He took vows of celibacy, prayed, studied scripture and did everything that was asked. He stated "All I wanted was to be a good Catholic" (Rezendes, 1998, p. 210). This could have been the end of a successful progression from outlaw biker to honest citizen, but there was breaking point, which forced him to make yet another shift. In spite of his dedication and sacrifices, the Church refused to annul his first marriage. It was now up to him to determine and make sense of what was important, since in the eyes of the Church, he was not pardoned.

Seeking salvation from the Church transitioned to deciding the he needed to find his own truth

and beliefs. This began the beginning of self-authoring, the fourth order (Baxter Magolda, 2010;

Kegan, 1994).

Rezendes's decision to reject the Church's authority, was not out of a second order

rebellion, or a third order allegiance to his family, but out of a fourth order's self-authoring

desire to makes his own rules. The rules of the Church had been subject for a period of time.

They could not be reflected upon, which ultimately would becomes the lens for seeing. They

were now an object, something that can be seen and assessed, so he could decide what made

sense. It is important to note that being a member of a church does not mean that one is

operating from a third order. There are many ways to be members of churches from second to

fifth order, however the relationship and way that the experience is understood and evaluated

will vary depending upon perspective. For Rezendes, it seemed to create the structure and

beginning spiritual container for him to transition from his biker days. It appeared to have a third

order role. For him, the fourth order, the self-authoring phase corresponded with a fervent

spiritual search that seemed to propel him upon a quest for truth.

The self authoring system is about finding what makes sense and what works for oneself,

as well as, finding ones inner voice (Kegan, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 2010) It also means, having

a deeper sense of being able to take responsibility for ones life and work on ones self (Kegan,

1994). In an interview with Elizabeth Debold, Kegan shares more about the self-authoring,

> We are called on to have an internal authority by which we ourselves are able to name
>
> what is valuable, or respond to the claims and expectations on us, sort through them, and
>
> make decisions about which ones we will and will not follow. (Debold, 2002, p. 2)

By rejecting the Church's absolutes and deciding what was important to him, he was exercising this aspect. Rezendes used the self-authoring energy to explore what was true, on a deep existential level. As a result he dove into philosophies, sciences as a self-directed search for a meaning (Rezendes, 1998). This need to know, to understand is a very powerful motivator, as a result, Rezendes started a yoga ashram, with the desire to create his own system of understanding. At some point, he became an expert wildlife tracker, wrote books on tracking and taught others. It is unclear how the timing of these events unfolded, but there were changes of values, and increased self-awareness, that allowed him to set his life up in a new way. This phase of life corresponds to many fourth order orientations (Baxter Magolda, 2010; Kegan, 1994).

As time went on and the ashram became more settled, Rezendes talks about some of the patterns that became established within the ashram. There were still strong elements of self-authoring, Rezendes reports that he would give talks on the nature of spiritual practice, teach yoga, practice for many hours a day, and strive to be spiritual. From the constructivist developmental perspective, the subject in this situation is the idea of a self that is trying to get enlightened; the ego that is trying to be spiritual. This is a fourth order subject, the self and its roles are not seen as constructs; they are taken as true. There also seems to be elements of a deconstructive post modern/anti-modernist, (Kegan, 1994) or the post-modern self-authoring (Berger, 2005) orientation that characterized some of his experience. There was an intentional lack of hierarchy, and moving against the mainstream and a rigid sense of the how life is supposed to be lived. There are not a lot of details about this time period that would give more of an indication of the deconstructive nature of this time, however it does seem to be alluded to. The underlying desire for increasing self-awareness continued allows for additional shifts.

From the constructivist developmental perspective, the next shift begins when the actual sense of self begins to be able to be taken as object. The part of the self that became more objective or able to be seen was related to his life style and spiritual ideals he was practicing at the ashram:

> I had to question the kind of spirituality that I had practiced in the ashram, a holier-than-thou posture that said to the rest of the world, I am above you! I am purer than you with my nonviolent honey and these full lotus asanas that are wrecking my knees. I realized that it was egotistical to think that we're above killing. (Rezendes 1998, p. 167)

Rezendes gained greater awareness, creating significant movement towards a new worldview. The insight required him to change some core assumptions about himself, the world and how to live. In some ways this could be equated to the spiritual shift that everything is connected, although it seems to point more to an insight type of shift, related to increased awareness and understanding about himself. Rezendes realized that everything had an impact and that it really was not possible to live up to his spiritual ideas to avoid causing harm. While eating an orange, Rezendes was able to see some of the limits of his previous beliefs.

> What do you think the farmer did to make sure you got this orange? Herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, eradication of voles. I sat in horror. The list was endless. What about transporting the orange? The construction of roadways, the filling in the wetlands, the decimation of woodlands? What about the truck, the fuel, the insects slamming into the windshield? *Okay! Okay!* I thought. *I get the message.* (Rezendes, 1998, p. 167)

A simple orange contained a much more complicated narrative. His lofty spiritual ideas about being pure and holy, which were previously subject were then seen as an object, to be a limited thought construct. The impact of such an understanding cannot be underestimated.

When someone sees something about the way they are living their life, or relating to others, in entirely new light, it can, as it did in Rezendes's case, spur a series of changes. When this insight is generalized, not taken as a single event, but applied in a meta awareness, it becomes difficult to really believe any set of thought constructions. It is similar to Henry David Thoreau's view on fashion, shared in Walden, "Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new (1951 p. 40). Do we see through the old only to adhere fully to the new? Or is this whole process seen through, with the understanding that our worldview can shift, that what is adhered to so strongly and taken as an absoult can be seen through and re-evaluated. The whole idea that there is one actual true lasting narrative of ourselves and the world we live in can be given up "we take our way of *composing* reality to be *reality*. The great embarrassment or liberation of transformation itself is the recognition that what we have been taking as reality is actually only a *construction* of reality (Kegan as cited in Debold, 2002, p. 2). This insight could still be turned into another construction of reality, however when seen clearly this is more of an orientation and meta-awareness than another concept. For Rezendes, this insight tipped him towards the reconstructive postmodern worldview (Berger, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Zaytoun, 2010).

One of the distinctions between the deconstructive postmodernist and reconstructive postmodernist seems to be related to how much of the self one is identifies with. Early fifth order allows for more insight into the self as a system and more ability to reflect upon parts and conditioning; although the self was still, for the most part, subject, and unable to be reflected up. The idea of self and it's ideas are closely tied, so that adhering strongly to beliefs is like adhering strongly to one's self. Even the idea that there are no truths, no absolutes, can be guarded, defended and totally identified with (subject), and seen as an absoult, which is the great irony of this view (deconstructive postmodern). Once the self or ego starts to move more into the light of

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awareness, into being object, then something else can happen. The reconstructive postmodern, or fifth order perspective begins to allow for more humbleness, a sense of not-knowing, a comfort with paradox and contradiction, and a curiosity to observe the self which is always incomplete (Berger, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Zoytoun, 2010).

Overlaps between transpersonal and constructivist developmental

At this point in the discussion, the constructivist developmental system and transpersonal begin to overlap. When the self begins to be an object of awareness, it opens the doors to seeing through the egoic identification. The deconstruction becomes focused upon the personal self, which will lead to a *trans*personal experience. Rezendes, reflecting a fifth order insight, reports that his whole sense of self, with its quirks and fears had fundamentally remained the same "I hadn't yet realized that the territory of the self had simply transferred itself from being an alpha biker to a spiritual savant" (Rezendes, 1998, p. 116). The insight that the self as an incomplete system and not solid is a self-transforming, fifth order perspective. Interestingly Rezendes (1998) was engaged in a process he called "tracking self" (p. 193) a form of self-inquiry and a contemplative practice, that from a constructivist developmental perspective could be thought of as facilitating the self to becoming more and more of an object.

There are oscillations between orders (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1994; Murray, 2011) and fluctuations in embodying insights or realizations (Nixon, 2012, Washburn, 2003, Wilber, 2000a). The self transforming order's oscillation may be observing the self at times and identifying with self at other times. In the process of moving from self-identity, or ego identity to true nature, the ego will use whatever material is available to maintain its territory, or image. Kegan doesn't as clearly come out and say it in his books, although in an interview he shares that one's entire self can become subject, and no longer be identified with which is what the

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transpersonal movement focuses on (Debold, 2002). It is unclear how much the fifth order in

Kegan's model overlaps with the transpersonal theory. The focus during Rezendes's early years,

has clearly been constructivist developmental theory. There were some elements of the

transpersonal in Rezendes's life, both prior to and during the fifth order.

Elements of the Transpersonal

The early stages of Rezendes's story appear to fit more into the constructivist

developmental model than the transpersonal, although there are areas that do have transpersonal

elements. In the early stages, and period of time shortly after the biker gang days, it doesn't

seem like Rezendes was having peak experiences, experiencing his true nature (Almaas, 2004) or

dynamic ground (Washburn, 2003) or reaching upwards into the transpersonal bands of

development (Wilber, 2000a). However it is certainly possible this was occurring and he just did

not write of it. It does seem that he was in contact with essential aspects that Almaas described

(2002). It is possible that one can access transpersonal states regardless of the level of

development one is operating from (Almaas, 2004, Wilber, 2000). Similar to how ones culture

will influence the perception of ones mystical experience, ones level of development may

condition one's spiritual or religious experiences or desires. James Fowler, (1981) a stage

theorists who looks at how religious or spiritual development, in conjunction with morality,

follows a path which happens to share a similar progression with Kegan's theory. It would be

possible to explore Rezendes's (1998) spiritual process from this lens as well.

The transpersonal and the spiritual are often lumped together and have many similarities

yet not all spirituality is necessarily related to the transpersonal phenomena. Transpersonal

psychology is about moving beyond the ego and reducing its influence, however it is very

possible to practice spirituality or religion and be strengthening the ego, and the sense of being a

separate self. In fact, this is in many ways inescapable (Almaas, 2008, Fenner 2011, Trungpa, 1973). It is very likely that one's egoic sense of self will attempt to use all of its defenses to avoid a truly transpersonal process. It may seek mystical transpersonal experiences, but the actual surrendering is another story. Rezendes (1998) speaks of this in another manner in his reflection on his biker days. While he is talking about actual physical territory, it is the same as the internal process of the ego

> If the self perceives a threat, it vigorously attempts to damage, remove, or supplant the threat, or it throws up all kinds of defenses. It is one of the sad ironies of our world that the bigger the territory the self claims, the more threats it perceives, as other selves compete for territory and the more defenses it throws up. Someone insults our country, religion, or gang, or burns our flag, and we're ready to kill over it. (Rezendes, 1998, p. 115)

The experience of the absoult is often perceived as a threat to the ego. Almaas, (1996) similarly describes the threat that the ego perceives upon contact with the Absoult, in this example the absoult is referred to as the quality of stillness, which appears to threaten the ego's very existence, "The self reacts to the stillness as a death, and intensifies its activity by which it generates its sense of self-recognition. The ego activity becomes furious agitation and feverish inner obsessiveness" (Almaas, 1996, p. 340). There are many different ways the ego reasserts itself that can be increasingly subtle and seamless, "You may even create an image of yourself as being a person who is beyond images! You may devise an exercise to get rid of the images, while all the time you'll be creating new ones" (Rezendes, 1998, p. 155). The process is slippery and many times ungraspable.

Within the transpersonal community it is understood that the seeing, or the place that is aware, becomes more of the orientation from which one operates. Ones identity is no longer taken as true and solid and does not need to be clung to. The belief and construct of a separate self is the most difficult to see through. It is tied to association with ones political and societal expectations and understandings, with ones upbringing, and especially with ones physical body (Almaas, 2008; Powell, 1987). One of the insights that occurs along this exploration is that what we think about things is not necessarily the way things are. Our way of perceiving the world is not actually the world. This is why the world looks differently depending on what lens we are using, "The world has not changed. It is the looker who has changed" (Frazier, 2007 p. 11). When one is able to see this clearly about the self, then one may ask, what is it that is perceiving, what is aware of the self as object "Self is an idea. It is all we think we have, so we hold on to it tenaciously" (Rezendes, 1998, p. 179). The ego is afraid of non-existence, which is part of the reason that it is so frightening to let go, and why transitions can be a challenging part of growth.

Dark Night, Transitions and Dissolution

Transitions are both exciting and challenging, and at times painful. This is another overlap between transpersonal psychology and constructivist developmental theory and is core to the understanding of growth (Almaas, 1990; Kegan & Lahey 2009; Washburn, 2003). The difficulty can occur on various levels, from the profoundly personal, to a more existential level. Early on, when Rezendes wanted to learn about love, his wife left and moved out with his two-year-old daughter. He was able to be open to the pain and dissolution, which allowed his heart to open more,

I would cry out for the woman that I loved and for our child I felt an actually tearing , as if my flesh itself were tearing…My loss was an opportunity to learn about detaching,

about giving something up. I embraced it. I did not push it away, I did not suppress it. I

just cried…I let the pain move through me, until it moved into every cell, until it

penetrated every aspect of who I was. (Rezendes, 1998, p. 61-62)

This process just described doesn't necessarily fall into a clear constructivist developmental

perspective. It could be related to the transition between the third and fourth order when one's

identity is with relationships, and the loss of relations is very much like the loss of a self, and

could be deeply painful. Although the loss of close loved ones no matter what order, will

understandably create deep grief.   This can, however be applied or related to any transition. As

Kegan has said, object finding is subject losing, (Kegan, 1982) which means there is always a

loss or grief involved in any transition (Eriksen, 2006). This transition at this point is occurring

more on the level of the personal, around losing his family. Further on in his story, Rezendes

(1998) falls into, something like what the transpersonal theory calls, the dark night of the soul.

Rezendes's experience is very similar to the phase called dark night of the senses that the 16th

century Christian mystic of the Carmelies Order, St. John of the Cross speaks of. Rezendes,

(1998) describes how difficult this was:

I had discovered the falseness of self, but as self dissolved, I was left empty. It became

clear to me that in my own life, thought was tracking thought. This was a torturous

realization, a period of time that I likened to a desert—bleak, empty, and remorseless.

Wherever I looked was emptiness… I wondered whether I would ever emerge from this

desert. (Rezendes, 1998 p. 194)

Not all realizations are pleasant, they can often look like the U-turns that Wilber speaks of, they

can be the large regression in the service of transcendence (Washburn, 2003) or many

regressions Almaas describes (2004). Sometimes what looks like a back step is actually moving

forward. Sometimes that experience of losing ground is actually a positive experience (Chodron, 2002) Bernadette Roberts (1993) writes of her experience of moving beyond the self, and how it relates to the dark night of the soul "This is not a journey for those who expect love and bliss, rather it is for the hardy who have been tried in fire and have come to rest in a tough, immovable trust in "that" which lies beyond the known, beyond the self, beyond union, and even beyond love and trust itself " (p. 14). This movement may be similar to organizing a desk full of papers, which were neatly stacked and filed, but without proper structure. At first all appears to be tidy, but as one begins to open drawers, place papers in different piles, and remove all objects to clean the desk, things are no longer tidy and the surrounding area has become a mess. If one were to only look at the surface appearance, the underlying process would be missed, and one would think that the directional movement is towards disorganization, instead of towards a reorganization.

In breaking down the process of shifts in consciousness, we begin to understand more about the nature and movement of consciousness, thus normalizing a very human experience of transition and struggle. Without this awareness, potentially painful and confusing transitions could be pathologized leading to a DSM-IV diagnosis. The fear of anxiety, depression and the sense that something must be wrong if one is feeling these states can keep someone in a developmental arrest. As Washburn (2003) notes:

> The descent into the underworld or to the dynamic Ground is not only a dangerous odyssey but also an essential stage of a longer journey. It is a dangerous odyssey because it poses the risk, variously conceived, of destruction, damnation, ensnarement, or psychosis. (p. 55)

It is certainly possible that the process of seeing through self as a construct can be mistaken for psychosis, or even lead to psychosis (Grof & Grof 1990; Lukoff 2007; Wilber, 2000a). And while those who are involved in spiritual communities or have access to counseling services that have a wider frame of reference are understood and supported through their process while others maybe institutionalized, heavily medicated or wind up in jail. More socially advantaged white individuals have in general, a greater privilege to explore themselves without as many barriers. It is certainly possible that people of lower socioeconomic status, or who are of color are more likely to be stigmatized and have their experience be seen as related to mental health issues, rather than as having a transformative process. Even within the transpersonal world the pathologizing process is spoken about (Wilber, 2000a) in terms of pathologies of the higher realms. Others normalize the process and see it as evidence of growth and development (Almaas, 1990, Nixon, 2012; Washburn, 2003). The difference between being pathologized or supported can be the difference between a reintegration, or realization of ones true nature, and being lost within the tumultuous resulting from one's psyche dissolving. The transpersonal literature and Kegan's work, have done a great job of showing just how the movement towards growth is often something that appears to be a disintegration or a step backwards.

Prosocial

While something may appear to be making an individual more unhappy, or causing distance in relationship, it can be moving towards a more positive prosocial direction. The relationship with the person and the world is important to explore. Gloria Anazaldua, (1999) who embodies a rather transpersonal and self-transforming perspective share her views, and the importance of doing inner work.

The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (p. 109)

For Rezendes (1998) at some point in the dissolving, he realized what the transpersonal theory says, that much of humanities problems were related to this identification with the ego,

The belief that self is something real is at the crux of the whole human dilemma and all the unnecessary suffering we have created—all the pain of our crippling psychological fears, our inability to love one another, the hurt we inflict, our crushing sense of isolation. (p. 194)

Truly prosocial development, is understood to be the surrendering of egoic defenses allowing for a wider embrace of life, and others. The impact of moving from a more integrated and connected orientation can be profound modern day spiritual teacher Adyashanti says:

Human beings are coming from separation, not unity, in ninety-nine percent of the activities they do, whether they think they are doing something good or bad. When you come from separation, that's all you're transmitting. When you come from unity, you might still be called and be drawn to do the same things you were called to do when you were stuck in separation. The activity may look very similar. You may still be writing senators or flying across the world, but it's so different when it's done from unity. (Adyashanti, 2005 p. 188)

There is an assumption that the directional movement of prosocial growth and development will always looks positive. While this may be the case at times, one must not get caught in the surface appearance of the transition. Sometimes can seem totally opposite, or down right crazy:

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When I was in my mid-twenties, if someone had tried to convince me that *my* thoughts

made *me* up, I would have probably suggested that he see a shrink. But after a few

decades of self-inquiry, it's sometimes other people who look at me as if I should see a

shrink. (Rezendes, 1998, p. 192)

The interesting thing is that a traditional mental health provider, would not have much of an idea

what to make of someone like Rezendes who walked into his office. And while it is possible that

the risks become greater as one continues on the development (Wilber, 2000a; Marquis, 2008) it

is also likely that ones suffering and self-centered ways will be greatly reduced.

Final Shifts

Rezendes spent a great amount of time in the woods, both tracking animals, doing

conservation work, and photographing. There was obviously a strong connection he felt to

nature and animals. One of the shifts that occurred was through contact with a coyote. The

connection was transpersonal as well as "transhuman," in that it involved a different species.

Their eyes met and something was recognized that had a profound impact.

Since that day, when I close my eyes I can see the pupils of the two rust colored coyotes.

There was something secret there, a wildness that didn't only belong to the coyote but

that I recognized as my fundamental nature. It was who I was but it didn't belong to me.

IT was the intelligence of all beings. IT was uncultivated, unbiased and unconditioned. It

was true intelligence. (Rezendes, 1998, p. 189)

This true intelligence is what was watching the tracking of the self all along. It was what

witnessed the shifts as they occurred, it was what the ego so wanted and feared. It was what

Rezendes refers to as "the wild within." This was not the final realization that Rezendes writes

of. He had another great shift, a seeing through the construction of the separate on a deeper level, while walking in the woods,

> It was as if I had been asleep all my life and had been dreaming about being a gang leader and a yoga teacher in an ashram. I had woken up and realized that I was not just the gang leader, yoga teacher, thinker of thought—I was the universe, every rock, tree, cloud, animal and person on the planet. I was the moon and stars, intelligence, awareness, compassion, love, direct communication, the dance of life and death and the web of life. (Rezendes, 1998, p. 212)

Rezendes echoes the spiritual teachers he had been studying. He is embodying what the transpersonal theorists point to as ones true nature (Almaas, 2004).

Methodology Critique

Shifts can be explained very well using constructivist developmental theory and given the reported spiritual and mystical nature of many types of shifts, transpersonal psychology is an appropriate lens. The theories involved in this discussion are complex and multifaceted. There are many different interpretations and conflicting ideas about stage theories, unified perspectives and what the ultimate nature of the self actually is. Theories that attempt to sum up human development are controversial. They are popular because many people enjoy maps and categories, and they are unpopular because maps and categories can become limiting and rigid. It can be seen as narrow-minded or presumptuous to try to place a wide variety of people or experiences into concepts like orders or stages.

This was an exercise to explore how these theories, can be applied to one individual's life in one particular angle. It is amazing that Paul Rezendes's life follows a progression, which moves through the stages Kegan proposes, in order, and then begins to move into the

transpersonal process. While this is a (N=1) example, it is not a solo story. Rezendes's story certainly followed a very masculine course of development, and other parallel progression for other men or women would certainly be different. A more feminine development may look significantly different, and involve different roles and struggles. However the main process, the themes of the orders and the experience of shifting worldviews would share many similarities. Others have done significant research and they seem to find the development to be consistent (Baxter Magolda, 2010; Cook-Greuter 2011; Ericksen, 2006; Hofer, 2010; Weinstock, 2010) this developmental progression not an uncommon process.

There is much more to study and learn about adult development within and beyond the ego. The ultimate concern is to help understand, facilitate and support people who might be undergoing these changes. There is little understanding of this process and the idea that development continues beyond the ego is still not accepted in most mainstream schools of psychology or social work. It is important to understand how ones social environment can support or hinder such an unfolding and how the outcome impacts others who are in close relationship. And as with any theory, exceptions and alternatives are always important to consider.   The study only partially addressed many of the social constructions of reality. The underlying message found in the transpersonal literature is that the root cause of the division in the world, is not actually political, economic or social, it is the adherence to a egoic perspective which see's itself as separate and there for, different from everything else. The transition from ego identity to ones true nature is not taken lightly or glamorously. It is not to be expected and most who strive for it do not even come close, however it is possible.

Conclusion

The overlaps between shifts, transpersonal and constructivist are plentiful. Shifts are a phenomena that can be seen in a variety of ways from a variety of lens, and occur on a variety of levels. Constructivist developmental offers a frame for understanding what one experience of worldview change could look like. The process of having subject become object opens up a new way of seeing. What was previously hidden is not in the open. Shifts can occur within the ego structure as it become more flexible and is able to see things in different ways. This follows Kegan's theory up to and into the fifth order, self-transforming. At some points along the way, individual's shifts may include: peak experiences, transpersonal states and mystical events. How experience is conceptualized, varies, however the is an understanding that these glimpses into the transpersonal realm are possible and are a common for people having shifts (Miller, 2004; C'de Baca & Wilbourne, 2004, Schlitz et al., 2007; White, 2004).

Other overlaps amongst the phenomenon of shifts, constructivist developmental and transpersonal theory include the understanding that challenges may occur, either leading up to during or after the experience, and that the shift can either be a glimpse or ongoing. From a constructivist developmental perspective, a temporary shift, is about understanding that the shift was a movement into another order, however the center of gravity was different and it pulled them back. From a transpersonal perspective it could have been an experience of an essential aspect (Almaas, 2004) or seen as a glimpse of state (Wilber, 2000a) as a preview of a further developmental stage. Areas of further study would include theorists like Suzanne Cook-Greuter who has a similar developmental model as Kegan's yet extends further into transpersonal bands. There are still questions about the development process and if transpersonal states are actually a process of personal development, or something altogether different (Cook-Greuter, 2000).

From this study, most frameworks can be seen as a partial truth, as one way of seeing the world. This certainly applies to the field of mental health, and human development. By exploring the concepts of shifts in worldview there are more options available for conceptualizing growth. As clinicians, hopefully this understanding can help inform and create a new understanding of how to support people in transitional spaces, in addition to allowing for a wider view of normality and development. By understanding which order someone is in, or if they are experiencing transpersonal states, one can approach their clinical work in a more informed and thoughtful manner. Overall this study is an invitation to continue to explore what lens is coloring the world we perceive. To see how concepts we take to be absolutes, or that we are totally identified with, may be reflected upon and let go of. Like last decades clothes, we can wear our current worldview with an understanding that it is only one small reflection of the world.

What I have learned

In many ways during this thesis, I embodied the title of Kegan's book (1994) *In over our heads*. The area of study was vast and there is a great amount of overlap as well as conflicting ideas about growth, and large topics like fundamental nature and development. I often felt like I had just taken a much larger bite than I could chew in the short eight-month window that I had to write the thesis while dealing with professional and personal challenges and negotiating areas of growth. I feel that there are too many unknowns and not a lot of agreement about transpersonal theory. It was challenging to integrate and digest these somewhat abstract and intangible internal states that are generally not agreed upon.

I am glad that I got to digest and learn more about development and change. I am not certain, that development does always occur in the linear and progressive manner that Kegan, or

some of the transpersonal theorists suggest. Yet it is certainly amazing when talking with others, or reflecting on my own life, I see the progression much as described. How much of this is like looking at the stars and seeing the big dipper, I am not sure. I learned about looking at things through different lens, it was enjoyable to reflect upon the material as it related to my own life and journey. I thought often in terms of what I was being subject to and what I was able to be aware of as an object. This study has further exploration and area to explore. In the end, as I sit on this couch and type, there is relief in the completion and irony that this moment, whether these theories are correct, accurate or true, or not, seems inconsequential; they are all but one more way to see the world.

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