

A Concept Analysis of the Form that Trans-forms as a Result of Transformation

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Abstract

Two decades ago, renowned developmental psychologist Robert Kegan made a resounding call to investigate and make explicit, the form that undergoes fundamental change during human transformation. He explained that without precise understanding of the form, “there is no transformation” (Kegan, 2000, p. 48). A review of literature found that this literature gap remains and as such, this study aims to clarify “What form transforms as a result of human biopsychospiritual transformation?” The method to achieve this goal is a concept analysis, which constitutes an empirical examination of a concept described in literature, where a concept---transformation in this case---is the research object. The outcomes illustrate that three structures change form (i.e., transform): the ego, mind, and body. Results reject that consciousness is a human form that transforms. An unexpected finding suggests the content of the life-changing experience (e.g., epiphany) indicates the form that will transform (i.e., the mind) and also the form through which consciousness emerges (i.e., increased consciousness of the mind).

Keywords: transformation, initiation, consciousness, post-traumatic growth, evolution, peak experience, transpersonal, spiritual-growth

1. Introduction

Whether traumatic or sublime, transformative experiences activate considerable disequilibrium and periods of challenge. When approached with some dedication to growth, transformation causes a re-created person to emerge. This highly complex phenomenon constitutes a radical internal rearrangement via processes that are not yet understood by science. For this reason, scholarship continues to investigate the topic from various perspectives to better understand, “How does one become another?” and “How can this intervention facilitate transformation?” or “What about this experience is transformative?”

Scientific analysis of the transformation across diverse disciplines including anthropology; Turner, 1967; van Gennep, 1909/1960), business (Genmill & Smith, 1985), education (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Scott, 1997, 2003), physics (Prigogine, 1977/1993), psychology (Almaas, 2000; Grof & Grof, 1989; Jung, 1988; Kegan, 1982; Levine, 1976; Tedeschi & Calhoun 1995), nursing (Wade, 1998), mythology (Campbell, 1968), philosophy (Ouspensky, 1949/2001), physics (Prigogine, 1978), tourism (Kottler, 1997; Ross, 2010) and religious sciences (Eliade, 1958/2005; James, 1902/2004; Underhill, 1960) have for example, studied conditions, processes, and experiences of transformation. In particular, scholars have studied and theorized transformative or life-changing experiences (Assagioli, 1975; Churchill, 2011; James, 1902/2004; Maslow, 1999; Levitt, et al., 2004; Miller, 2004; Underhill, 1960; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). Others have explored what transpires after the pivotal experience or the process in its entirety (Aurobindo, 1963/1990; Boyd, 1990; Brinton Perera, 1981; Campbell, 1968; Eliade, 1958/2005; Genmill & Smith, 1985; Jung, 1988; Lincoln, 1981; Ouspensky, 1949/2001; Newman, 1972; Mezirow, 1978; Prigogine, 1977; Tedeschi, Calhoun & Groleau, 2015; Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Wilber, 1996; Woodman, 1985). Although this growing body of knowledge has clarified many facets of transformation, a thorough review of eleven disciplines named above yielded no study that addressed a foundational question, “What is the form that trans-forms as a result of transformation?”.

Nearly two decades ago, renowned developmental psychologist Robert Kegan from Harvard University made a resounding call to address this need when he stated, “The form that is undergoing transformation needs to be better understood; if there is no form there is no transformation” (2000, p. 48). This resolute statement brings to the fore

that *form* is the central defining feature of transformation and without discrete knowledge of it, all related research, theory, and practice is less complete.

Because a concept “has empirical meaning only if it stands for definite, concrete operations capable of execution by...human beings” (Stevens, 1935, p. 517), this paper aims to clarify the meaning of the root word “form” as it resides within the word/concept “transformation”. What is in question and need of resolution, is not the definition of the word *form* rather, an analysis and determination about the precise nature of the *form* that changes during human biospsychospiritual transformation. To accomplish the task, this inquiry uses a method called concept analysis (Baldwin & Rose, 2009; Nuopponen, 2010a; Rodgers & Knalf, 2000; Walker & Avant, 2010) that constitutes a comprehensive analysis of a concept described in literature, where concept---transformation in this case---is the research object (Baldwin & Rose, 2009, p. 9). The approach is well suited to explicate concepts that are defined differently across literature, lack definite meanings (i.e., trust, kindness, and resilience), and finally, are in need of operationalization (Baldwin & Rose, 2009).

2. Method

Used as a research method or an investigation within (or supportive of) a wider study, *concept analysis* is defined as a type of “inquiry designed to clarify or define a concept by identifying its constituent components and related elements” (Rodgers, Jacelon, & Knafl, 2018, p. 452). This method requires the use of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and literature to elucidate how the concept is understood in language, history, context, and science—followed by analysis that divides the concept into characteristics and properties, investigates relationships between subconcepts and the core concept, and builds the concept as a system or whole.

Using a modified approach to concept analysis (Nuopponen, 2010b; Rodgers & Knalf, 2000; Walker & Avant, 2010) as follows: (a) select a concept; (b) determine the aim and purpose of the analysis, (c) select appropriate sources for data collection; (d) determine defining attributes, relationships, elements, antecedents, and consequences/outcomes; (e) identify and investigate all substitute uses and concepts related to the concept; (f) investigate related terms, concepts, and relationships of which literature has not clearly defined; and (g) discuss the meaning and/or application of findings in relevant contexts.

Data collection entailed a comprehensive and methodical review of secondary sources (i.e., dictionaries) and literature across a wide variety of disciplines with theoretical and empirical contents. To establish foundational information, the analysis commenced with an investigation of definitions of “form” and all related subterms within secondary sources. The resultant definition of “form” served as a criterion through which I would at a later point, accept or reject descriptive data as constituting a direct response to the research question by scrutinizing, “Is this or is it not, a human form that can transform?”

I examined literature in psychology, education, nursing, physics, tourism, mythology, anthropology, transpersonal psychology, organizational development, cosmology, and spiritual sources. For inclusion into this study, publications had to respond to the research question, examine transformation as a phenomenon, be inclusive of individual and systems transformation, and scrutinize the antecedents, process, definitions/descriptions, or outcomes/consequences of transformation empirically or theoretically.

As a part of the review, I queried 12 scholarly databases (CINAHL Complete, Nursing and Allied Health Collection, ERIC via Ebsco, PsychINFO, APA, JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, Sage Journals, PubMed, ProQuest, Social Sciences Full Text, and SPORTDiscus with Full Text) using the key words “transformation” or “transform” in the article title. Of these databases, PsychINFO yielded the highest number of articles ($n = 298$) that, per title and abstract, appeared relevant; each article was reviewed for relevance and hence included or rejected. I also conducted a title search for the words “transformation” or “transform” within the archives of 24 psychology journals. The journals were selected purposively with the intent of capturing perspectives from a variety of countries (United States, Switzerland, Russia/East Europe, Canada, and Britain) and approaches to psychology (clinical, depth, positive, humanistic, evolutionary, individual, applied, theoretical, transpersonal and new ideas). This search yielded 318 articles. I then reviewed the content of all 318 articles to determine relevance and inclusion into this analysis. Of these publications, this paper cites twenty-three.

In addition, I conducted queries of the Internet using a general search using Google and Google Scholar by entering keyword combinations that, per discourse in literature, directly or indirectly pertain to transformation. The key words included “transform,” “transformation,” “psychology,” “systems,” “initiation,” “rites of passage,” “mythology,” “hero’s journey,” “post-traumatic growth,” “Dark Night of the Soul,” “peak experience,” “epiphany,” and “transformative learning.” All of the above searches yielded thousands of articles that *refer* to personal transformation and hundreds of articles that note the term in the title—but fewer than 60 contained sentences that define transformation and/or its characteristics. Of these, 18 publications directly analyzed the

phenomenon of transformation in order to scrutinize its nature or characteristics (Bray, 2013; Fosha, 2006; Freedman, 1985; Genmill & Smith, 1985; Gonzáles, 2004; Hart, 2000; Kottler, 1997; Leffel, 2011; Neal, Lichtenstein, & Banner, 1999; Persaud, 2000; Prigogine, 1978; Ross, 2017; Scott, 1997, 2003; Taylor, 2012; Wade, 1998; Weiss, 2013; White & White, 2004).

In order to maximize reliable descriptive and theoretical information, this paper replicated a strategy used in Doyle's (2008) concept analysis where the author identified seminal works about the topic from various perspectives/disciplines. The purpose in this action is to extend the investigation beyond a thorough keyword search and to analyze the content of the most relevant literature with the intent of recognizing seminal leaders and works. In other words, I discovered and included in the investigation, publications that greatly contributed to collective understanding of transformation, as a phenomenon. In total, I found 27 influential publications and/or authors (Note 1) dedicated solely to examining and/or comprehending transformation (Almaas, 2000; Ashby, 1956; Aurobindo, 1963/1990; Boyd & Myers, 1988; Brinton Perera, 1981; Burckhardt, 1997; Campbell, 1968; Dewey, 1964; Eliade, 1958/2005; Grof & Grof, 1989; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1959; James, 1902/2004; Jung, 1988; Kegan, 1982; Levine, 1976; Mezirow, 1978; Newman, 1978; Ouspensky, 1949/2001; Prigogine, 1977/1993; J. T. Siegel, 2013; Tedeschi & Smith, 1995; Tedeschi & Calhoun 1995; Turner, 1967; Underhill, 1960; van Gennep, 1909/1960; Wiethaus, 1985; Wilber, 1995).

With this collection of sources, I conducted an iterative thematic interpretive analysis as a hermeneutic process that considers the parts and the whole (Takala & Lämsä, 2001) to elucidate themes in terms of definitions, characteristics, and antecedents (Nuopponen, 2010b). An interpretive analysis "describes the concepts and their use" (Nuopponen, 2010b, p. 13) as does a content analysis, but goes a step further "to find out the reasoning behind the conceptual structures" (p. 13). This approach is a particularly useful way to discover perspectives, relationships, and elements that may contribute to theory development.

As I collected, organized, and documented descriptive terms, concepts, subconcepts, interrelated concepts, processes, and perspectives, I identified those that were not thoroughly described or defined. I conducted secondary and tertiary rounds of investigation of literature until further review of literature yielded similar content and no new information. The purpose of these rounds of analysis is to extinguish any sense of mystery or address a lack of definitive (or a plethora of diverse) interpretation. These iterative processes produced a scaffolding of interrelated properties, subconcepts, and concepts "belonging to a whole" (Nuopponen, 2010a, p. 6) concept system (p. 11), in accordance with this study's purpose.

To make absolutely certain that the literature best reflects "the concept's [true] attributes rather than a synonym" (Baldwin & Rose, 2009, p. 782), I conducted another round of analysis. I analyzed the final themes juxtaposed the definitions of *form* to ensure that indeed, the results did were aligned with the definitions.

3. Results

To establish foundational information, a description of the results of this study include definitions of "form" and related subterms, a determination of the form that changes form due to human biopsychospiritual transformation, and an unexpected finding.

3.1 Defining Form

The Living Oxford dictionary defines transformation as "a marked change in form, nature, or appearance" (Transformation, 2016, Definitions 1). The root word "transform" combines the word "form" with a prefix of "trans-". A form is defined as "the *visible* shape or *configuration* of something, the *body* of a person, or *essential nature* of a species or thing, a person's mood and state of health" (italics added) (Form, 2016, Definitions 1, 1.1, 2.3 and 8.2). In the context of this inquiry, "trans-" means "across, beyond, on or to the other side of, through, into another state or place, surpassing, transcending" (Trans', 2016, Definitions 1 and 2.2). Translated into the context of transformation, trans- and form, when combined, connote a human's configuration or essential nature goes beyond or transcends, into another state or place.

The etymology of the verb *form* derives from the Latin and Old French word "formen" meaning "to create (something), to make (out of nothing); to give life to someone, create (a person, a soul), to give shape or structure to (a person, a beast, a part of the body); formed" (Formen, Middle English Compendium, OED). This information illustrates that the presence of a form is resultant of a creative force and insinuates that transformation builds structures and creates life. From topology, the mathematics of geometric objects, a form is equivalent to a "topological boundary," which is "the part of a system's structure that allows the observer to identify it as a unity" (Zeleny, 1981, p. 2), which highlights that form is a *recognizable whole*.

A structure, when defined as a noun is “an *arrangement* of and *relations between* the parts or elements of something complex” and, as a verb is “to construct or arrange according to a plan; *give a pattern or organization to*” (italics added) (Structure, 2016, Definitions 1 and 2.2). These descriptors clarify that transformation produces a new pattern, arrangement, and organization of the constitutive elements of an entity’s form causing new relationships between these elements.

From a systems science perspective a structure is “a particular spatiotemporal arrangement of particular components through which the underlying organization is realized in a given space and at a given point in time” (Zeleny, 1981, p. 2). Structure and organization “are mutually interdependent” and together constitute “a unity” or system. When a system undergoes autopoiesis---re-constructs itself---“a topological boundary [i.e., a new form] emerges” (Zeleny, 1981, p. 2). These definitions elucidate that transformation---going beyond and making a new structure---brings into existence an underlying pattern or arrangement into a unified whole. This summons the question, “From where or what does the underlying pattern derive?”

Form has two opposing meanings; the first is “the outward ‘shape’ of a being” and second is the essence of a thing, that which fills or is contained (Burckhardt, 1967/1997, p. 61). It is the latter perspective that further elucidates the question about the origins of the pattern that gives rise to the new structure. In ancient hermetic sciences, the intellect or spirit of a thing, is a receptive “form-giving cause” (Burckhardt, 1967/1997, p. 62); that which creates form. In other words, a change in the form of a thing (i.e., transformation) originates from the actions or substance of its spirit. Spirit is “the synthesis of the qualities which constitute the essence of a thing and is quite independent of the thing’s material existence” (Burckhardt, 1967/1997, p. 61) and is “the expression of a living unity” (p. 60). Burckhardt goes one step further and points out that spirit, the essence of a thing, is irreducible and derives from the substance (ousia) of God (p. 36). The spirit is at its core is “pure potentiality...and has no discernible characteristics whatsoever. Pure potentiality is the substance that takes on or emerges as form. It can only be known at all in its relationship with ‘form’” (Burckhardt, 1967/1997, p. 62). This theory outlines a conceivable origin of transformation processes that suggests that a creation is made when pure potentiality, existing within the configuration of an individual’s spirit, “impresses its stamp on matter” (Burckhardt, 1967/1997, p. 62). The outwards shape of a thing is the result of the interplay between active and passive, matter and spirit, “where their opposition...dissolves into a higher unity [and] they cannot be separated from one another” (Burckhardt, 1967/1997, pp.63- 64).

In summary, a form in the context of transformation constitutes a tripartite: a noun (i.e., passive/receptive essence of a thing), a verb (i.e., autopoietically and actively builds new structures and life) and a product/noun (i.e., the observable shape of a re-created unity). Moreover, the essence of a thing passively exists and receives an underlying pattern---derived from comingling of its spirit and pure potentiality---which determines the new configuration and actively self-constructs new structures based on the pattern.

3.2 Themes: What Form Changes Form?

When viewed in aggregate and in summary, a thematic analysis of transformation indicates there are four structures that have the capacity to transform during human transformation: the mind, ego, consciousness/spirit, and/or body. The following is a rich description of each theme.

3.2.1 Mind Can Transform

Literature in adult learning theory and some perspectives in psychology discuss and study transformation as a phenomenon of the mind (Mezirow, 1978; Tedeschi & Calhoun 1995). From these perspectives, is triggered by an epiphany that causes “a qualitative shift in one’s life view and/or worldview,” which constitutes a shift in *thinking* and or *perception* (Anderson and Braud, 2011, p. xvii) about one’s self, one’s place, or the world/beyond. In some of his final work, Abraham Maslow clarified that “peak experiences transform the person *only when they contain a cognitive* element, whereas mere ‘emotional bursts’ do not” [italics added] (Panzarella, 1980, p. 70). One investigation reported that the mind transforms in four ways: (a) a new meaning/purpose in life, (b) reappraisal and reconstruction of fundamental assumptions about self and others, and the world, (c) profound changes in ideologies, beliefs, attitudes, and values or, (d) stronger religious faith (Parappully, Rosenbaum, Van den Daele, & Nzewi, 2002, p. 37). Psychologists specializing in post-traumatic growth observe that transformation causes “revisions in the way individuals *think* of themselves, their worlds, the future, the universe and their place in it” [emphasis added] by challenging “previously held views of one’s life” (Tedeschi, et al., 2015, p. 559).

Kegan’s theory of human development (1982), which is inclusive of transformative learning theory, states that adults must undergo transformation in thinking in order to move from one social-emotional developmental level to the next. He posits that development includes advancing through five levels (each made possible through a

transformation), with the majority of people only achieving the first three. Kegan suggests that the individual must undergo what Mezirow calls a perspective transformation, which causes a fundamental shift in the ways the individual goes about thinking and making meaning (Kegan, 1982; Mezirow, 1978). Transformation from the third to the fourth level causes the individual to transcend the “socialized mind,” which is influenced and informed by social norms (Kegan, 2000, p. 65). Transformation from the fourth to the fifth level occurs when the person adopts a “self-authoring mind” that is based on self-reflection and awareness and is internally guided (p. 65). According to Kegan, the culminating transformation to the fifth level--- accomplished by small percentage of people endows the individual with capacities to be mindful of complexities, contradictions, and personal perspectives in any given situation, without need to act, judge, or assume one’s own reality or another’s is true or best. Business management scientists David Rooke and William Torbert (2005) built upon Kegan’s, Loevinger and Wessler (1970), and Cook-Greuter’s (2000) work, creating “seven transformations of leadership” and eight levels of development where only 1% of their sample of thousands of managers in the United States and Europe reached capacities of the seventh level.

3.2.2 The Ego Can Transform

Theorists, clinicians, and researchers in the realm of psychology and related fields explain that transformation involves a change in: identity (Illeris, 2014; Hefferon, Grealy, & Mutrie, 2009; Henderson, 1995; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Miller, 2004; Noy, 2004; White, 2004), self (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995; Voigt, Brown, & Howat, 2011; White & White, 2004; Wilson, 2006), ego (Gunn, 2000; Jung, 1946/1966; Rohr, 2011; Weiss, 2013; Wilber, 1996), or some combination of these such as ego identity or self-identity (McDonald, 1997). Because a concept analysis “clarifies and describes” concepts “belonging to the whole” (Nuopponen, 2010a, p. 6) and distinguishes irrelevant terms, I will define each of the terms mentioned in literature to determine whether or not it constitutes a form that can transform.

Identity is different from ego in that ego is a structure of the self that is more difficult to change (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970), whereas identity is a matrix of ideas that can more easily change (McAdams, 1995). Identity is an inner story that we have about who we are and of what we are comprised. The ego and any part of the psyche can generate an identity but that identity usually changes over time as the individual grows. Because the identity is circumstantial, this study eliminates it as a structure that transforms.

The term *self* or *the self* is an archetype of wholeness (Jung, 1968) and is the center and circumference of the entire psyche (Kohut, 1975) including all unconscious and consciousness aspects of a living being, and is the reflexive “I am.” The self is inseparable from the psyche but can be distinguished in a way that *the self is the form* and the psyche is the awareness that resides *in the form*. Jung differentiates that the ego is the visible aspect of the self (Jung, 1988, p. 981) and “lives in space and time and must adapt itself to their laws if it is to exist at all” (Jung, 1946/1966, p. 379).

The *ego* is the central complex in an individual’s conscious mind (Jung, 1983) and according to Jung, consciousness is “anchored in the ego complex” (Schipke, 2018, p. 1). Ego coordinates and controls all mental activity and from a developmental perspective, ego is a structure of the self and can undergo growth. An integrated ego is evidenced when one has attained an existential identity where incompatible realities can coexist without feeling threatened. The unexamined ego is, according to the teacher Sri Aurobindo (1963/1990), is “a partial and insecure superstructure” (p. 124). Importantly, Jung (1946/1966) states the ego is the “medium in which the unconscious [can] be integrated and in which the work of realization [can] take place” (p. 379) and Burckhardt (2002) suggests that the ego is a form “of the subtle world” and is “espoused” by dynamic consciousness (p. 49). Based on these definitions, I deduce that the psychological structure that changes form during transformation is the ego (i.e., the self). I will now report in further detail, processes related to transformation of the ego.

3.2.2.1 Processes Related to Transformation of the Ego

From a western perspective of psychology, transformation of the self and ego occurs through individuation. Self-actualization or individuation is defined as a process of “conscious realization of one’s unique psychological reality, including both strengths and limitations. Individuation leads to the experience of the self as the regulating center of the psyche” (Brinton Perera, 1981, p. 95). Before individuation is achieved, the ego believes itself to be master of the psyche, yet ego “is not master in its own house” (Süsske, 2003, p. 1). When one’s ego discovers this misperception, the seeker can experience significant strife or even trauma sometimes referred to as ego death. In actuality, the ego does not die during individuation; rather, the ego integrates into the self with newfound awareness of its smallness and unfounded omnipotence. The historian and interpreter of religious experience, Mircea Eliade clarified that Carl Jung “stressed the fact that the process that he terms

individuation...constitutes the ultimate goal of human life, [which] is accomplished through a series of ordeals of initiatory type” (Eliade,1958/2005, p. 135). In other words, individuation occurs through transformation(s). When a person makes this radical shift the “principle of opposites no longer predominates” (Newman, 1970, p. 36).

Sri Aurobindo’s psychospiritual perspective suggests the ego transforms when it is replaced by the soul or ‘true being,’ which is a Divine spark within each person that innately knows a pathway to transformation (Aurobindo, 1972, 1963/1990). The transformation of the ego and integration of the soul has also been termed *soul fusion* (Lea, 1997) or *passive conception* (M’Clintock & Strong, 1883, p. 509). Prior to the ego’s transformation, the soul is typically unnoticed by the ego and can be felt as spiritual aspirations. In order for the ego to transform, it must come in direct contact with “Reality” through experiences (as opposed to thoughts) that synchronistically transpire by seeking intellectual realization, opening to one’s loving adoring heart, or developing pragmatic vital will of action. When transformation occurs, the self shifts its “centre and its...position from the surface to the inner being...joining the depths to the surface” (p. 70). Once this transpires, the soul takes the place of the ego as the central organizing structure (also see, Ross, 2019). The individual who has this transformation is in contact with her eternal true being, which causes a “sense of liberation” (Aurobindo, 1970a, p. 283) and a “deep source of psychological strength and sustenance” (Miovic, 2004, p. 128).

3.2.3 Consciousness Can Transform

Authors from diverse disciplines identify that consciousness transforms (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Danielou, 1964; Dewey, 1964; Grof & Grof, 1989; Newman, 1978; Osland, 2000; Siegel, 2010; Wade, 1998; Wilber, 1996). Theorists of transformative learning Morrell and O’Conner (2002) posit that transformation is “a *shift* in consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world” (emphasis added) (p. xvii). This perspective corroborates with a nursing theory that suggests health as *expanding* consciousness (Newman, 1978). The notion of expanding consciousness is also highlighted by the scholar of education John Dewey (1964), who wrote that transformation is a *reconstruction* of consciousness through experience.

Transpersonal psychologist and theorist Ken Wilber (1996) proposes that humans develop through transformation from one consciousness to another (Wilber, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2006; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986). Inspired in part by the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, an ancient Tantric Buddhist text, “each level of consciousness consists of a *deep structure* and a *surface structure*” (Wilber, 1996, p. 46). A deep structure equates to a paradigm and a surface structure to a particular manifestation of that paradigm. He uses the metaphor of a building to explain that deep structures are analogous to each floor and surface structures are the rooms and objects within each floor. A transformation constitutes a change in floor (e.g., using an elevator), and a *translation* is a movement within a floor (e.g., as in rearranging furniture), the former process being vertical and the latter horizontal. In this framework, transformation necessitates quantum change of discovery or remembering, triggering a *shift of consciousness* and translation requires linear change of learning or cause and effect that affects the mind.

Wilber’s concept of translation— is defined as a fresh self-understanding or “a new way to think or feel about reality...a new belief” such as choosing “forgiveness instead of blame” (Wilber, 1997b, p. 2). If the person chooses to grow, he or she disidentifies with the present structure and self-identifies with the emerging, next order of consciousness. Once the individual is living with the new consciousness, the lower level is “subsumed...[such that] what is the *whole* at one level becomes merely a *part* of the higher order whole” (Wilber, 1996, p. 94).

Because these the ego and consciousness are interconnected and embedded in one another, some perspectives posit that transformation affects the ego *and* consciousness (Aurobindo,1972; Jung, 1988; Wilber, 1996). For example, Jung explained that the purpose of a rebirth ritual is to attain a “transformation of consciousness, a *widening* out and emphasizing of the ego in a sort of transfiguration” that results in knowing one’s self “in a new order of things” and a “new ego” (1988, p. 938). Transpersonal therapist and theorist Carla Clements (2016) combined ego and consciousness when she stated, “transcendence of egoic consciousness is by definition, transformational” (p. 78).

3.2.4 The Body Can Transform

The fourth form that can be fundamentally altered through psychospiritual transformation is the physical body because it is “the expression of our individual and conscious existence” (Jung, 1946/1966, p. 378). A specific psychotherapeutic approach called Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP) has evidence-based practices and theoretical framework designed to help clients transform during therapy sessions. The therapist uses specific techniques to help the client to experience a series of two emotional breakthroughs

that trigger what Diana Fosha calls a *state transformation*. The subsequent state " is discontinuous with the one that preceded it. It is not just that the individual is feeling more or less or better or worse: the way the individual goes about feeling is different" (Fosha, 2006, pp. 570-571). AEDP relies upon strategies including *metatherapeutic processing* that emphasizes the central role of the relationship and felt-experience internally. The state transformation causes the client to have "bodily rooted emotional experiences" (p. 571) and culminates with a visceral sensation of one's core identity. An experience of core identity is a state of being not an insight or perception of the mind and produces new awareness of self, others, and the world.

A different therapeutic modality called somatic experiencing (Levine, 1976) also facilitates transformation by helping the individual to focus attention to internal feelings and sensations and using a skill called *interoception* (Payne, Levine, & Crane-Godreau, 2015). This approach uses an assortment of nine psychobiological processes that help the individual to unwind and transform "core physical experiences of trauma" (Levine, 2010, p. 73) that cause the individual to be "captive of one's own entwined fear and helplessness" (p. 74).

Anthropology, psychology, and various cosmologies purport that psychospiritual transformation can transform the body and doing so, constitutes the highest human evolutionary achievement (Aurobindo, 1963/1990; Eliade, 1958/2005; Ouspensky, 1949/200; Ross, 2019; Turner, 1967). According to one Eastern Indian cosmology, the purpose of human life is for the soul to experience, grow, evolve, and physically integrate into the body, eventually bringing "Divine into Matter" (Aurobindo, 1970a, p. 452). Moreover, humans can achieve this goal of bodily transformation through three distinct and "great" transformations. The first is that of the ego, next the mind, which has been compared to enlightenment, and finally, spiritual transformation, which transforms the body (for more, see Ross, 2019). Spiritualizing the body-surpasses transformations of the mind and ego that constitute peak, emancipating, or cathartic experiences.

"Though they [transformation of the mind or ego] can be powerfully illuminating, ecstatic or liberating, [they] are by themselves insufficiently effective: for the full spiritual transformation more is needed, a permanent ascension from the lower into the higher consciousness and an effectual permanent descent of the higher into the lower nature" (Aurobindo, 1963/1990, p. 74).

In other words, to transform, the body must become a receptacle, an embodiment of consciousness received (Aurobindo, 1963/1990; Eliade, 1958/2005; Jung, 1988; Lea, 1997; M'Clintock & Strong, 1883; Ouspensky, 1949/2001). Eliade (1958/2005) concurs that this type of transformation is evidenced when, "one becomes truly a man in proportion as one ceases to be a natural man and resembles a Supernatural Being" (p. 132).

Jung's (1988) explanation of individuation asserts that the "body becomes the vessel for an incarnation of which we become one" (p. 200) meaning, the wisdom received during transformative peak needs to "take on a body, existence" so that which is new, can have life, "a body to appear in for itself" (p. 197). The esoteric philosopher Pyotr Ouspensky interpreted, "It is just this transformation of the physical body into the astral [becoming a body made of energy and matter] that alchemy called the transformation of the 'coarse' into the 'fine' or the transformation of base metals into gold" (1949/2001/2001, p. 256). The mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg explained that when the soul "melts" into the senses "the body must also gain its share so that it will be refined in all things" (1993, p. 4). Jung suggests a succession of transformation begins with "freeing the ego-consciousness from contamination with the unconscious" because "the unconscious can be integrated only if the ego holds its ground" meaning, remains connected to the body (Jung, 1946/1966, p. 380). The body is literally, "the medium" through which the unconscious is integrated and purified in order to unite the body with the soul. He explains that purification of the body "is impossible without a human partner" who reflects aspects of the self that can be "noticed by the other person" and then "really felt" and recognized (p. 380). The culmination of transformation is integration or embodiment (Ross, 2017), which is recognized when "the body has taken on...spiritual form and ...is not so very different from spirit (Jung, 1946/1966, p. 375).

3.3 Conclusion: What Human Form(s) Transform?

In order to be absolutely certain that the four themes were indeed forms that transform, I conducted another analysis of the four themes using the definition of form as a criterion to evaluate the form's elements. The subsequent discourse represents the final results of this study.

A thematic analysis of data concludes that the mind, body, and ego are forms that change during transformation and rules out consciousness as a form that transforms. The following is a clarification of these findings. Both the brain and the body are aspects of anatomy. Anatomy is defined as a "bodily structure of an organism" (Anatomy, 2016, Definitions 1.1). Bodily structures allow individuals to function, interact, and create; they are essential, structural, or in alchemical terms, irreducible and therefore, constitute the scaffolding of human survival. The

mind and body facilitate primary or basic functioning and as such constitute structures of human functioning that can transform. Finally, this analysis suggests that the self transforms and that the ego is the fundamental structure of the self (Jung, 1988), and therefore the ego is a form that transforms.

3.4 Consciousness is Ruled Out as A Form that Trans-forms Due to Transformation

The results report that consciousness is not a form that reconfigures during human transformation for two reasons. First, a human can function with little or no consciousness (i.e., self-awareness or ability to discern or sense unity), which is not the case for other stated structures (i.e., ego, mind, or body). For example, it is possible that a person could be moderately successful in many different of professions yet have very little consciousness about themselves, the feelings of others, and/or the impact of their choices on the health of others and the earth. From this perspective, consciousness is not a primary structure, irreducible. Instead, the functions of sensing and relatedness transpire through the body and brain, which are structural.

Secondly, consciousness is distinctly defined in depth psychology and spiritual teachers as a power/force comprised of unity and discrimination that can be mobilized by humans (Aurobindo, 1963/1990; Jung, 1988; Mother, 1971, p. 142) and as such, is not a human structure. More accurately, this study submits that consciousness is a *capacity* (i.e., power) to recognize the difference between one thing, sensation, or idea and another (i.e., discrimination/awareness) and the *ability* to feel and understand interconnectedness or interrelatedness of ideas, people, and situations. Jung states “consciousness is and remains the tool...[that] will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body” (Jung, 1970, p. 315). Jung’s deliberate use of the word “tool” accentuates consciousness as *separate from* the human system rather than *of* the system. Consciousness *identifies* itself with subtle forms and “is affected by their tendencies” (Burckhardt, 1960/199, p. 48). According to Aurobindo (1963/1990), in its most pure state, the essential nature of consciousness is *unity* itself. From these references, this study defines consciousness as a mobilizing power/force (i.e., the power to take precise action guided by awareness) that unifies that which it inhabits (i.e., unites polarities existing within the mind) and is made functional by the configuration of the structure (i.e., the mind).

In conclusion, this analysis asserts that a transformation can give the illusion that consciousness has changed form when it is the container that has changed (i.e., mind, ego, or body), which causes the residing consciousness to have “new” capacities due to its new configuration and spaciousness. In other words, the vessel or structure curtails the function of consciousness. Aurobindo alludes to the literal way an expanded body, mind, and ego affect consciousness when he stated, “If it is not wide, it cannot house the effective power and creative force of the Truth” (Aurobindo, 1963/1990, p. 12).

4. Discussion

4.1 The Role of the Life-Changing Catalys

Because this investigation analyzed the concepts as a whole system with interrelated elements an unexpected finding about the form that transforms developed. In order to discuss this finding, I first recount two known aspects about transformation. First, the hallmark of a personal transformation is a life-changing or transformative experience, a peak or trauma. Examples of a peak might include discovering that you have a long-lost brother or purchasing the home of your dreams for the first time and examples of life-changing trauma are contracting a serious illness or surviving a natural disaster. Secondly, much of transformation processes occur deep within the individual rendering its progress problematic to observe. This means that *the form that changes* may not be apparent until the individual has nearly transformed.

This analysis indicates that the form that changes is recognizable as a result of the transformative experience for the following reason. If for example, the individual grasps a personal insight, epiphany, or perspective transformation during a transformative peak, the mind is the form that transforms. If the ego [self] becomes aware of itself (i.e., through insight of awareness or healing) resulting in greater self-awareness and/or self-acceptance, the ego is the object of transformation. Whereas, if knowledge emerges out of bodily sensations via interoception (i.e., attention and awareness of felt visceral impressions) (Payne, et al., 2015), then the body is the transforming structure. In each of these examples, the structure changes because it receives knowledge and/or experience so novel that the structure must reconfigure in order to contain it.

In order to investigate the inquiry to a definitive source, I then questioned, “What is the essence of the life-changing experience/knowledge that comes through or into the form?” The notion of pure potentiality mentioned earlier, is theorized to create form. Inherent to the concept of potentialities is the notion that given a circumstance of growth, a potential materializes *into form*. Many seminal authors across different disciplines conclude that consciousness instigates and arises through transformation (Ouspensky, 1949/2001; Newman,

1978; Jung, 1988; Prigogine, 1997; Wilber, 1996). Consciousness is moved by its impulse to emerge (Wautischer, 2008, p. 476) and propels growth, illumination, and evolution (Aurobindo, 1970; Aurobindo, 1963/1990; Jung, 1988; Kegan, 1982; Miller, 2004; Neal, et al., 1999; Ross, 2019; Wilber, 1996). It is not yet clear, the difference if any, between potentialities (as referred to in this context) and consciousness however, one physicist states that the consciousness is an “irreducible whole” of “tangled hierarchical’ potentialities” that cannot be reduced, is more than its parts, and “can make a representation of consciousness that we experience as a self” (Goswami, 2019, para 9). Aurobindo differentiates, “what is a possibility on the mental plane becomes a potentiality” at the “supramental plane,” which is the realm of an evolved or illuminated mind (Aurobindo, 1972, p. 7).

Based on this discourse, findings from this study contend that during catalytic life-changing experiences, consciousness emerges from subtle realms and expands a fundamental human structure (i.e., ego, mind, or body) (Newman, 1978). The form reorganizes and incorporates new and existing consciousness through autopoiesis or re-creating itself. Specifically, the outdated structure dissolves during a phase identified by Ross (2017) called dismemberment and rebuilds a new form during a succeeding phase called surrender and healing.

5. Conclusion

This article contributes to collective understanding of human transformation by responding to the question, “What form trans-forms as a result of human biopsychospiritual transformation?” The outcomes show that three human structures transform: the ego, mind, and body. An unexpected finding suggests the content of the life-changing experience indicates the structure that will transform and also the structure through which consciousness emerges (i.e., if a person has an epiphany that exposes the individual to a new worldview, the mind is the form that will transform and also, will increase in consciousness). This analysis gives precise language about the form that changes during nature of the *form* nature of transformation in order to contribute to practice, empirical research, and theory.

Using these outcomes, clinicians can facilitate healing and growth towards a permanent change of condition: a transformation. For example, if the client is more cerebral, attention can be made to foster an eventual transformation of the mind. Clinicians can be better equipped to accomplish this task if future studies interpret the myriads of ways that existing strategies from within and external to psychology (i.e., transformative learning) can be effective towards this aspiration. Coincidentally, a consumer who has established considerable ego strength prior to encountering a psychological/spiritual crisis (Grof & Grof, 1989; Ross, 2017), might be in the process of ego transformation and can be therapeutically guided towards that goal.

Because transformation is ceaselessly transpiring inside and all around us, any given circumstance in our lives and/or a system is in service of an eventual and miraculous transformation---the creation of a new being. Future research and practice can analyze the problems, pathology, and conditions *by assuming that transformation is the driving force causing change*. Moreover, professionals can identify the client/system’s phase of transformation (Ross, 2017) and endeavor to support the needs inherent to that phase.

Although this and related studies (Ross, 2020a, 2020b) make strides towards classifying terminology from diverse disciplines, there is considerable need to clarify the meaning of transformation-related concepts and their interrelationships as a system and to corroborate inclusive and precise vocabulary. Finally, psychological and social system paradigms have an opportunity to be fundamentally re-formed or even trans-formed by examining transformation as an archetype by using lenses from natural, systems, and spiritual sciences, that already analyze subtle, yet predictable and surprisingly organized phenomenon of transformation.

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Notes

Note 1: Many of the authors listed with seminal papers actually produced numerous publications relevant to and used in this study. For brevity, I only reference one publication per author here. Other publications can be found cited in text.

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