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Erika Fromm

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AN EGO-PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS¹

ERIKA FROMM^{2,3}

The University of Chicago

Abstract: In this paper a new ego-psychological theory is proposed for the understanding of altered states of consciousness. The dichotomies of primary and secondary process, ego activity and ego receptivity, and automatization and de-automatization of ego functions in daydreaming, in the inspirational phase of creativity, in hypnosis, in psychedelic states, and in meditation are discussed; so are the roles of fantasy, imagery, and various forms of attention.

A brief look at the history of the definition and status of altered states of consciousness in psychological theory reveals that as late as 1885, psychology acknowledged only two states—the waking state and the sleep state. The waking state was defined as the state in which we operate with consciousness and, at the time, this was considered the only state worth investigating.

In the 1890's, Freud began to emphasize the concept of the Unconscious (Freud, 1900). He differentiated between three aspects of consciousness: the conscious (that which is in full awareness at a given time); the preconscious (that which is not in awareness, but can readily be brought into awareness by turning one's attention to it); and the unconscious (those contents, affects, and memories which resist being brought into consciousness). Far from seeing sleep-consciousness as insignificant, Freud (1900) thought of dreams as "the royal road to the unconscious."

At about the same time (1902), William James became impressed

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³ Reprint requests should be addressed to Erika Fromm, Department of Behavioral Sciences, The University of Chicago, 5848 South University Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

with the main variants of human consciousness; each of which seemed to have its own peculiar reality and its own peculiar *modus operandi*. James (1963) wrote:

Our normal waking consciousness. . . is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question,—for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness [p. 388].

From Kleitman (1939) and those who followed him in sleep laboratory research across the United States and Europe, we learned that the state of sleep has four stages during which mentation is going on in various, modified ways. In the dream state, imagery predominates while the linear, logical thinking characteristic of the waking state is de-emphasized.

In the 1960's, scientists who were in contact with the youth culture started to investigate its experimentations with psychedelic drugs and found that among the results of drug use is a reorganization of cognitive structures. The way in which perceptions of the outer and the inner world are represented in these forms of consciousness vary from the waking state. The changes include thinking, attention, memory organization, etc.

Recently, researchers have also shown a good deal of interest in other states of consciousness. The deepest form of sleep and full-waking consciousness now are considered as the opposite extremes of a continuum along which many other types of consciousness occur, each of which has its own typical characteristic and *modus operandi*; for instance, in full-waking consciousness, logical-cognitive processes are predominant. In the dream state, on the other hand, the dominant mode is imagery. In the last 10 to 15 years, we have come to call types of awareness that are different from the waking state *altered states of consciousness*. The altered states include: daydreaming and other relaxation states; the inspirational phase of the creative act; the hypnagogic or hypnopompic states; sensory deprivation states; hypnosis; psychedelic states caused by drug use; meditative states; states of rapture and religious ecstasy; states of dissociation; nocturnal dreams; fugue states; and psychotic states—particularly the hallucinatory states. They are "discrete altered states of consciousness" (Tart, 1975); i.e., each has its own specific characteristics. The last two (fugue states and psychotic states) are pathological.

PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO ALTERED STATES OF
CONSCIOUSNESS

The present paper will be confined to the discussion of five types of altered states of consciousness: daydreaming; hypnotic or quasi-hypnotic states; altered states induced by psychedelic drugs; meditative states; and the inspirational phase of creativity. But before we attempt to explore the particular nature of these five altered states, it might be useful to focus on and define a few of the psychoanalytic concepts which the author feels can usefully be employed in the analysis of the various states of consciousness. These concepts are: (a) primary and secondary process; (b) ego activity, ego passivity, and ego receptivity; (c) attention; and (d) automatization and de-automatization.

Primary and Secondary Processes

According to psychoanalytic theory (Rapaport, 1967a), cognitive modes and organization range on a continuum from drive-dominated, primary process to the reality-oriented, secondary process. Primary process is the cognitive mode typical of preverbal childhood. It denotes thinking in images, not in words and logical concepts. When it occurs spontaneously in the adult, it represents an input from the unconscious that transcends waking logic and ordinary modes of thought.

While most psychoanalysts conceive of primary process as an id mode, French and the present author (1964) have described it as the cognitive process of the unconscious ego. Secondary process, on the other hand, is a conscious ego function, a tool of reality-testing. It is goal-directed, verbal thinking and operates by logically ordered or abstract concepts. Secondary process is the dominant, everyday, cognitive mode of the adult.

Ego Activity, Passivity, and Receptivity

The ego can be defined as the reality-testing, choice-making apparatus. Rapaport (1967b) initiated the psychoanalytic theory of Ego Activity and Ego Passivity. He also distinguished ego activity and passivity from behavioral activity and passivity. The central element in the distinction between ego activity and ego passivity is the presence or absence of choice: the ego is active when the individual can make a choice, according to his own free will; the ego is passive, when it loses this autonomy vis-à-vis the stimuli it receives from the instinctual drives (Rapaport, 1967c), from the environment (Fromm, 1972), or from the superego (Stolar & Fromm, 1974). Ego activity

involves cathexis. One of the ways of measuring ego activity is to measure the amount of effort used.

The issue of activity and passivity of the ego is essentially tied to the concept of coping (or failing to cope). There are two forms of coping: creative coping and protective or defensive coping. In both forms, the ego maintains relative autonomy. In creative coping, the ego actively meets the demands coming from the instincts, from reality, or from the superego, and handles them masterfully at its own leisure and pace. In protective coping, the individual defends himself against these demands, but the action lacks the free, smooth elegance of sovereign mastery.

When the ego is passive, the person accedes to the demand coming from the instincts, the superego, or the external world and responds in accordance with the demands; the individual submits even though such action is ego-dystonic. Or, he may be so helpless in the face of demands that he feels overwhelmed and cannot act at all. The latter is a characteristic occurrence in catastrophic reactions, in psychoses, and in psychedelic "bad trips."

However, not all states in which active control and voluntarism are relinquished are states of ego passivity. Many of them are characterized by ego *receptivity* (Deikman, 1971; Gill & Brenman, 1959). In ego receptivity, critical judgment, strict adherence to reality orientation, and active, goal-directed thinking are held to a minimum and the individual allows himself freely to let unconscious and preconscious material float into his mind. James (1902) would have characterized ego receptivity as watching the stream-of-consciousness flow by. Ego receptivity is the prevailing state in many of the healthy manifestations of altered states of consciousness. Examples of these are states of profound cognitive relaxation such as the mystical, transcendental, revelation states attained through meditation. In the Eastern texts, these states are referred to as *satori* and *nirvana*. Ego receptivity is also characteristic of, and occurs spontaneously in, daydreaming, reverie—even in free association—as well as in states of relaxation associated with muscular relaxation.

Attention

Attention plays an important role in learning. There is a wide variety of conflicting psychological theories of attention, but most cognition researchers concede that "attention" deals with that selective factor which determines the significance of external and internal stimuli (Kahneman, 1973; Neisser, 1967; Norman, 1969; Silverman, 1968).

Certain minimal kinds of processes are agreed upon by most researchers. These include:

1. Intensity refers to the level of stimulus intensity necessary to reach a threshold of recognition (Silverman, 1968).

2. Expansiveness or span of attention refers to the range of stimuli sampled and processed. Is the attention focal, restricted to a single stimulus, or is there an expansion of awareness of the stimulus range that is attention-cathected?

3. The processes which in cognitive psychology are called selectivity, field articulation, and discrimination can be described in ego-psychological terms as ego activity spent in structuring the stimulus field.

4. Activity is the amount of effort – or the lack of effort – required to engage a stimulus in attentional processing.

5. In *serial processing*, a single stimulus, or a few stimuli out of the total range of possible stimuli are selected and processed, serially, one by one. In *parallel processing*, however, a large number of stimuli, or the entire range of stimuli which is consciously as well as unconsciously perceived, is given attention-cathexis simultaneously (Ornstein, 1972). Serial and parallel processing are characteristic of various stages of classical Eastern meditation.

Automatization and De-automatization

Automatization is the result of systematic habit-forming for the purpose of economy in the expenditure of conscious attention and energy. For instance, the child's acquired automatic knowledge of the multiplication tables, or the automatic reflex of the right foot that steps on the brake at the first sign of danger while one drives a car, renders superfluous having to determine the solution each time anew. With increasing exercise of an action, the intermediate steps at the perceptual and cognitive levels disappear from consciousness, and the related responses in the motor and cognitive systems are habitualized.

Gill and Brenman (1959) developed the concept of de-automatization. It may be conceptualized as the undoing of automatization, as the re-investing of percepts and actions with attention. Its negative effects can be illustrated by the plight of the centipede who had a nervous breakdown as a result of somebody asking him *with which foot* he started to walk each morning. Its positive aspects, however, can lead to heightened creativity. De-automatization dissolves the cognitive and reality structure ossified by habit and brings the individual into a fresh rapport with his "biosphere."

ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

An altered state of consciousness is a *cognitive* state which differs from the waking state. While there are many natural and very commonly occurring altered states of consciousness, altered states can also be induced by various psychological maneuvers or by drugs. Altered states of consciousness correspond to a change in the *intake* of sensory stimuli which can affect, among other things, the outflow of motor impulses, sense of time, emotional response to stimuli, mode of attention, wealth of an individual's imagery, organization of cognitive structures, and the formal characteristics of thought.

In the altered states, the person becomes receptive and allows into awareness "stream-of-consciousness" materials (James, 1902) that are usually unconscious. Cognitively, one moves back in the developmental hierarchy from the waking, rational, reality-oriented, secondary process thinking to primary process (i.e., allowing more imagery and fantasy to arise into awareness from within). In the waking state, the adult automatically thinks in a reality-oriented and rational-logical manner nearly all of the time. In altered states of consciousness, this customary (automatic) rational thinking is *de-automatized*; ego receptivity turns to imagery, fantasy, and suggestion increases markedly.

Altered states can be produced either by overstimulation — e.g., the annihilation of cognitive processes in the emotional frenzy caused by the overly great input of sensory stimulation from a hard-rock band; or by understimulation — e.g., the daydreaming of the bored child in school. There are certain types of altered states of consciousness in which there is an increased alertness, a heightened ability to work with preconscious and unconscious processes when conscious logic has come to an impasse. Such is, for instance, the inspirational phase of the creative process in art or in science.

Kris (1952) has termed this phenomenon "regression in the service of the ego." Hartmann (1958) has called it "adaptive regression." Both conceived of it as going a step backwards — from secondary process to primary process thinking — in order to be able to go two steps forward. The inspirational phase of creative thinking is characterized by ego receptivity rather than by ego activity. In this inspirational phase, active, goal-directed thinking is at a minimum.

Among the altered states of consciousness which occur naturally are the hypnagogic and the hypnopompic states (i.e., the states just before falling asleep and just before awakening). In the hypnagogic state, the state just before falling asleep, one is lying in bed and the ego activity of the muscular apparatus as well as that of the percep-

tual apparati is diminished; one lies quite still, the room is darkened and quiet, the eyes are closed, and thus there are fewer perceptual stimuli and motor tasks with which to meet and deal. In the cognitive apparatus, a shift then occurs: from the secondary process, reality-oriented, mostly logical type of thinking to thinking in fleeting pictures; pictorial, prelogical, imaginative thinking—that is, primary process takes over. In addition, associations flow more freely than they would in the waking state.

The same happens in daydreaming, but there is a minor, though important, difference. To some extent, the daydreamer can direct his daydreams. The person in the hypnagogic state—or the nocturnal dreamer—does not consciously or voluntarily direct his flow of imagery and associations.

Now picture two children, one intently listening to a fairy tale, the other making up a story. In both, there may be total absorption of attention. In the child who is absorbed in listening to the fairy tale, the ego allows itself to be more receptive than active with regard to imagery; in the child who is making up a story, the ego is more active.

Hypnosis is a method of relaxation and concentration in which ego activity, in the sense of reality perception (closed eyes!) and the making of choices, is diminished as compared to the waking state; but it is not fully abolished. There is greater suggestibility. What is suggestibility in ego-psychological terms? The present author conceives of it as a form of ego receptivity. The ego in hypnosis is particularly *receptive* to letting stimuli, coming from without, influence imagery, thoughts, behavioral action, and feelings. Let us consider, for instance, the hypnotic phenomenon of "age regression." The hypnotist suggests to his subject a particular affect, such as sadness, which the subject is to experience. He then suggests that this affect is a bridge, or a rope, or a chute, along which the subject may travel back in time to a moment in his life when he experienced that same affect. If the subject has a talent for hypnotic experiences, he will feel himself grow younger and younger as he imagines his backward journey in time, until at last he will be the little boy (or girl) who is feeling sad. He will re-experience his environment as it was "then." At the same time, some small part of his observing ego somehow remains adult, sits in the hypnotist's office, and observes the little boy who is so sad. However, the hypnotized subject does not judge this coexistence of the adult and the child as absurd or illogical; there is no difference to him between thought and action, between fantasy and reality. His imagery *has* reality, as it does to the young child in the waking state. Like in the young child, cognition in the hypnotized subject is again organized along the lines of primary process for as long as he is in hypnosis.

In addition to increased primary process and ego receptivity, hypnosis is characterized by dissociation of the observing ego functions from the experiencing ego functions, embodied in that split between the observing adult and the experiencing child.

In the altered states of awareness induced by psychedelic drugs, rapid changes of utterly clear imagery are projected out onto unstructured outside stimuli. Reality objects such as a piece of bark or the glowing coals in the fireplace may be seen as constantly changing beautiful faces, cathedrals, or demons. One of the main characteristics of the psychedelically induced altered states of consciousness is that the rate and vividness of experienced imagery is highly increased. Two realities are superimposed upon each other in awareness and perceived simultaneously: the ordinarily hidden, private, prelogical, and unconscious reality of the inner drives and the reality of the outer, objective world.

In the altered states of consciousness associated with concentrative meditation, the individual goes back in the developmental hierarchy from cognition to perception. Cognition—a higher structure—gives way to inner perception, that is, imagery; the active, intellectual mode is replaced by a more receptive, perceptual one.

The yogi, after years of concentration, is able to hold his mind to a single stimulus for very long periods and to exclude any other mental content from coming into awareness. Tibetan texts call this "one pointedness." The object to which the meditator devotes his total attention may be a repeated sound (*mantra*), the breath, an external object, or an internal image.

Such concentrative meditation, found in most Indian Yogic and in orthodox Buddhist systems as well as in the currently fashionable offshoot, Transcendental Meditation, initially requires unusually great ego activity. Attention must strenuously be focused and held on the chosen object, and all other stimuli must actively be prevented from entering awareness. Thus, concentrative meditation, at least for quite a number of years, requires much ego activity. Later, this attentional stance becomes automatized.

In two meditation systems, Transcendental Meditation and contemporary *vipāsyāna* (which means, "to see more," "beyond"), the aim is not to concentrate but to expand awareness of the range of stimuli as far as possible by alternating between periods of being totally ego receptive to whatever stimuli might drift into consciousness, and periods of ego-active restriction of the range of mental events.

In the more advanced meditative states, the shift in hierarchy goes away from perception with its constancies and definite structure to a mere a-symbolic and a-perceptual awareness in which the subject-

object differentiation has been obliterated. Thus, the perceptual processes have become de-automatized.

In general, the main factors in meditation are either expanded periods of ego activity in restricting attention and motility (as in the lotus position), or long periods of ego receptivity to stimuli coming from within. In some forms of meditation these processes alternate. These processes lead to cognitive changes amounting to a regression in the developmental hierarchy, from cognition to perception of imagery – or even further to non-cognitive, non-perceptual experiences.

The Role of Imagery in the Various States of Consciousness

Imagery is the expression of unconscious wishes as well as a form of cognition. Imagery may be helpful in situations where there is a lack of conscious knowledge, or where there is a problem to be solved. Assume, for instance, that you are requesting the services of a window-washing firm. Before accepting the order they ask: How many windows are there in your house? If you do not know, how else can you answer the question but by picturing the house in your mind's eye and imagining that you walk from room to room and count the windows (Shepard, 1966, cited in Sheehan, 1972)?

Imagery also plays a major role in daydreams, in nocturnal dreams, and in free association. It is particularly vivid in hypnosis, in psychedelic states, and in certain forms of meditation.

According to Gordon (1949), imagery can be "bidden" or it can be "unbidden." Bidden imagery is ego-actively produced and stems from the preconscious; unbidden imagery stems from the unconscious. The present author differentiates "unbidden" imagery into ego-receptively and ego-passively experienced imagery. In the former, the ego still is in charge but *allows* imagery to arise from the unconscious into conscious or preconscious awareness. In ego-passively experienced imagery, nightmares or psychotic hallucinations flood and overwhelm the ego (see Fig. 1).

If an individual in the waking state decides to imagine vividly a friend's face – and the face appears in front of his "inner eyes" – he has been ego active. He has made the choice to imagine the face and has done so. In meditation, if an individual allows the stream-of-consciousness to flow by, he is ego receptive, allowing imagery to rise from the unconscious or preconscious into conscious awareness. In the psychotic, hallucinatory states, however, the ego is passive, overwhelmed by unbidden imagery.

In the psychedelic states, imagery plays a most important role and is only partially under the voluntary control of the ego. In most instances, the images just appear. That is, like in a nocturnal dream,

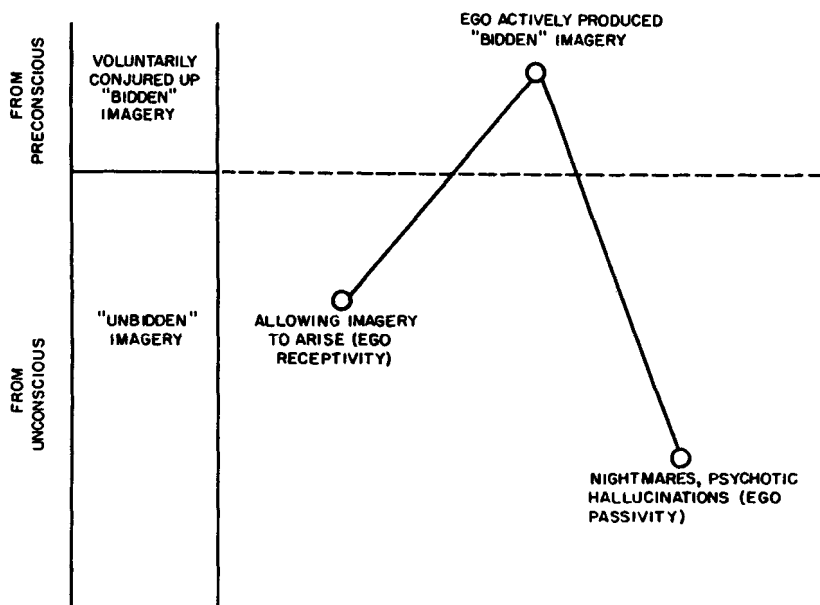


FIG. 1. The psychodynamic structure of imagery.

the ego is open and receptive to letting images come up and be experienced in awareness. Any unstructured surface can easily serve as a stimulus for imagery in the psychedelic state: a cloud formation, the glowing coals in a fireplace, a stone, a shell, or a leaf. Under the gaze of the psychedelic observer, they all turn into enchanted, intricate, architectural structures, ever changing faces, pieces of art, etc.

In the psychedelically induced altered states of consciousness, the system perception becomes infused with material stemming from two other systems: that of imagery and that of memory. Imagery is perceived with such vividness that it passes for real perception. The hallucination of the psychotic and the dream-image of the dreamer also is taken for real perception. Why the imagery in the psychedelic states is usually so highly aesthetic is not yet clear. To date, not enough research has been done on this aspect of psychedelic states.

Altered States of Consciousness and Learning

In considering the relation of altered states of consciousness to learning, two distinctions must be made: the distinction between minor altered states of consciousness and major altered states of consciousness, as well as the distinction between intellectual learning and emotional learning.

To the minor states of consciousness we assign states of being absorbed in reading a book, viewing a piece of art, watching a sunset, or observing the life in an anthill; also, daydreaming, light hypnosis, and beginning stages of Transcendental Meditation. The major altered states of consciousness comprise medium and deep hypnosis; psychedelic states; and classical, Eastern meditation.

Let us deal first with intellectual learning, that is, learning about reality. Intellectual learning requires ego activity and focused attention. Knowledge needs to be actively acquired. And attention must be paid to a rather narrow range of outside stimuli in order to gain that new knowledge. Therefore, I feel the obtaining of intellectual knowledge best takes place in the two waking states which have been designated in Table 1 as (1a), the normally alert and concentrated waking state, and (1b), that waking state in which a person feels fascinated with and entranced by a piece of reality he has newly discovered.

Some literature, as yet not quite unequivocal, indicates that hypnosis may aid the learning process. Hypnosis is a state of highly focused attention-cathexis and a state in which there is ego activity as well as heightened ego receptivity (suggestibility). One could be tempted to doubt that learning about reality can be improved in hypnosis, a state that is characterized by allowing oneself to let the

TABLE 1
TYPOLOGY OF WAKING STATE AND SEVERAL ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS BY ATTENTION MODE

State	Range of Attention/ Arousal ^a	Ego Activity/ Receptivity ^b
Waking, normally alert, and concentrated	N	a
Waking, fascinated, entranced	F	a
Free association	UF	r
Daydreaming	UF	r
Dreaming	H-A	a/r
Psychedelic drugs	H-A	r
Hypnosis	F	r > a
Self-hypnosis	F	a/r
Biofeedback	F	a/r
Transcendental Meditation	F	a/r
Concentrative meditation	F	a
<i>Satipatthana</i>	E	r
Classical <i>vipasyāna</i>	E	a

^a N = normal average, baseline attention; F = focussed—restriction of attention-cathected stimulus range; UF = unfocussed; E = expansive—wide stimulus range is attention cathected; and H-A = hyperaroused with narrowed fluid attention.

^b a = ego active, r = ego receptive, a/r = alternating between activity and receptivity, and r > a = more receptive than active.

general reality orientation fade into the background. The reader should remember, however, that in hypnosis attention-cathexis is withdrawn from the normal, average range of its distribution in order to concentrate it with full intensity on one single spot. If this spot is a piece of reality, much better knowledge about it can be gained than in the waking state, where it has to share attention-cathexis with a much wider range of objects. Thus, in hypnosis a college student can be told to "concentrate so well on the content of a scientific book he is reading that the material will burn itself into his memory and he will not forget it for years to come." Besides being able to concentrate better on the material in hypnosis because he does not allow himself to be distracted from his book by extraneous stimuli, the student is also being helped by the hypnotist's cleverly built-in, posthypnotic suggestion ("It will burn itself into your memory so you will not forget it for years"); that is, if the student accepts the suggestion and if he reacts to it with ego receptivity rather than with active resistance.

What holds for hypnosis with regard to intellectual learning also holds for self-hypnosis and probably for all those altered states of consciousness which are characterized by restriction of the attention-cathexed stimulus range and by alternations between ego activity and ego receptivity. Transcendental Meditation, biofeedback, *samatha*, and contemporary *vipasyāna* are such states. The intellectual learning in these states takes place during phases of ego activity.

Emotional learning, on the other hand, finds its optimal conditions in states of unfocussed attention, with the ego open and receptive to promptings from without (such as the suggestions of the hypnotist or the evocative and interpretive comments of the hypnoanalyst) or from within. That is, emotional learning also occurs in altered states of consciousness in which, by means of the induced relaxation, unconscious material is allowed to float into awareness. In these altered states of consciousness, the gates of the barrier between conscious and unconscious open wider than in the waking state. Then, the observing and judging ego must work at evaluating and integrating these newly arising contents. The latter is a *conditio sine qua non*. Feeling without thinking does not lead to (emotional) learning or to an emotionally corrective experience.

As stated previously, emotional learning, takes place when the ego is receptive and open to promptings from without, such as the evocative interpretive comments of the psychoanalyst and from within (unconscious and preconscious material that floats into awareness). That is why Freud invented the therapeutic method of free association, a very minor altered state. In (permissive) hypnosis, frequently

a major altered state of consciousness, the ego is much more receptive to inner and outer promptings. Therefore, the hypnoanalyst can help the patient to learn emotionally and to gain deep insight more quickly than in psychoanalysis. And because of the vascillation between ego activity and ego receptivity that appears to be a characteristic of permissive hypnosis, emotional learning can rather easily be integrated with intellectual learning and deep "working through" takes place quite rapidly.

What holds for hypnosis with regard to intellectual and emotional learning also probably holds for Transcendental Meditation and biofeedback, *samādhī*, and contemporary *vipāśyāna*, as all of these are altered states of consciousness characterized by restriction of the range of attention-cathexis to stimuli from without and more importantly by alternations between ego activity and ego receptivity. The intellectual learning in these states takes place during phases of ego activity; the emotional learning takes place during phases of ego receptivity.

In conclusion, there are many different altered states of consciousness; how many is as yet unknown. The states of consciousness range on a continuum, from those that are very different from the waking state (e.g., the highest states of Eastern meditation) to those that are close to the waking state (e.g., daydreaming).

Altered states of consciousness————waking state

And here let me close the circle toward my point of departure and indicate the interrelatedness of the conceptual continua which have been discussed in this paper.

Ego Receptivity————Ego Activity
 Primary Process————Secondary Process
 Fantasy————Reality Orientation
 Imagery————Conceptualization
 Unfocussed, free-floating attention————Focussed attention

All are parallel to each other; each continuum spans a particular parameter of ego functions or processes. Frequently, two of these continua must be considered as working in tandem as, for example, primary/secondary process and imagery/conceptualization. Pure primary process thinking is thinking in pictorial forms only; pure secondary process thinking is devoid of imagery; it is abstract or purely logical. The way I see it at this time, ego receptivity/activity is the guiding principle for all of the continua in the sense of allowing into awareness, more or less unconscious and preconscious material.

It would be too simplistic to say that the deeper the altered state of consciousness the more it is characterized by the categories on the

left-hand side of the continuum; too simplistic because of the differences between the various altered states of consciousness, such as that imagery is extremely vivid and fast-changing under psychedelic drugs, while in many forms or stages of meditation a single image—the *mantra*—must be held in mind for days and weeks on end. But, in general—except perhaps for meditation—the following rule holds for altered states of consciousness: the deeper the altered state of consciousness the more primary process, the more imagery, the more ego receptivity, and the more free-floating or freely hovering attention.

What does this mean for hypnotherapy? Certainly not that the deeper the hypnotic state the better for hypnotherapy. There are only very few hypnotic methods—such as for instance abreaction—which require a very deep state of trance. In general, the present author strongly feels that the advantage of hypnotherapy over therapy in the waking state is that hypnosis allows the therapist to help patients work with more primary process thinking, more fantasy, more imagery, more ego receptivity than they would employ in the waking state. But the maximum is not the optimum. After all, hypnotherapy—any type of depth therapy—should help to make the unconscious conscious, and to solve reality problems. To solve problems, we need ego activity, secondary process, reality orientation, conceptualization, and focussed attention. To help make the unconscious conscious, we need ego receptivity, primary process, fantasy, imagery, and unfocussed, free-floating attention. In hypnosis, being able to go back and forth on the continua between these two types of activity—the more unconscious and the more conscious ones—is what creates the advantage of hypnotherapy over waking-state therapy. What helps the therapy is not the depth itself; it is that in the hypnotic state there is greater mobility, a greater ability to dip into the unconscious and to bring the unconscious material back into the waking state of consciousness.

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Eine ichpsychologische Theorie für geänderte Zustände des Bewusstseins

Erika Fromm

Abstrakt: In dieser Abhandlung wird eine neue, ichpsychologische Theorie zum Verständnis von geänderten Bewusstseinszuständen vorgeschlagen. Es werden hier die Dichotomien des primären und sekundären Prozesses, der Ichaktivität und -rezeptivität diskutiert, und die Automatisierung- und Entautomatisierung der Ichfunktionen beim Träumen am hellen Tage, in der Inspirationsphase des schöpferischen Akts, in Hypnose, in psychedelischen Zuständen und in der Meditation; so auch die Rollen der Phantasie, Bildvorstellung und verschiedenen Konzentrationsformen.

Une théorie psychologique du Moi adaptée aux états modifiés de conscience

Erika Fromm

Résumé: Dans cet article, l'auteur propose une nouvelle théorie psychologique du Moi dans le but de comprendre les états modifiés de conscience. La discussion porte

sur les dichotomies des processus primaire et secondaire, de l'activité et de la réceptivité du Moi, et de l'automatisation et de la dé-automatisation des fonctions du Moi dans la rêverie, dans la phase d'inspiration du processus créateur, dans l'hypnotisme, et dans les états psychédéliques. Les rôles respectifs de la fantaisie, de l'imagination et de diverses formes de l'attention sont également étudiés.

Una teoría psicológica del yo acerca de las alteraciones de la conciencia

Erika Fromm

Resumen: En este artículo se propone una nueva teoría psicológica del yo para la comprensión de las alteraciones de la conciencia. Se discuten las dicotomías proceso primario-proceso secundario, actividad-receptividad del yo, automatización-desautomatización de las funciones del yo durante el ensueño, la fase inspiradora de la creatividad, en hipnosis, los estados psicodélicos, y la meditación; también se discuten los papeles respectivos de la fantasía, las imágenes y las diversas formas de atención.