

CHAPTER 4 – Transpersonal States of Consciousness

Chapter 4 TRANSPERSONAL STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS Learning Objectives

1. Describe the challenges that face mainstream psychology in its study of human and nonhuman consciousness.
2. Discuss the reasons for renewed popular and scholarly interest in the study of consciousness.
3. State the most common definition of consciousness.
4. Describe consciousness as a "span of apprehension."
5. Describe Roberto Assagioli's term "field of consciousness."
6. Distinguish the terms "conscious," "subconscious," "unconscious," and "nonconscious."
7. Identify three phenomena that provide experimental evidence for the distinction between "subconscious" and "unconscious" levels of consciousness.
8. Explain why the boundary separating conscious from subconscious is an arbitrary boundary.
9. Describe in what ways the so-called unconscious is conscious.
10. Identify and describe two methods of communicating with the personal subconscious.
11. Explain how normal waking consciousness is not one homogeneous, self-same state of awareness.
12. Explain how different states of awareness can occur within the normal waking state of consciousness.
13. Relate ultradian rhythms to the 24-hour circadian cycle and describe how they affect everyday states of consciousness.
14. Distinguish between "altered" states of consciousness and "alternate" states of consciousness.
15. Evaluate the assertion that waking consciousness is a defensively constricted state of awareness.
16. Describe the ambivalence that mainstream Western psychology has toward alternate states of consciousness.
17. Explain how peak experiences can be considered an alternate state of consciousness.
18. Distinguish between alternate states of consciousness and transpersonal experiences.
19. Define an alternate state of consciousness.
20. Tell how alternate states of consciousness are typically produced.
21. Give four examples of alternate states of consciousness.
22. Identify the common features of most alternate states of consciousness.
23. Identify the ten psychological structures that define any state of consciousness, according to C. T. Tart.
24. Describe the operation of the ten psychological structures in any alteration of a state of consciousness, according to C. T. Tart.
25. Define the term "state-specific science."
26. List and describe the four basic rules of "essential science."
27. Evaluate the "state-specific" paradigm.
28. Describe the phenomenological inquiry method of investigating qualities of consciousness in transpersonal experiences.
29. Provide one example of the application of phenomenological inquiry to the study of experiences with transpersonal qualities of consciousness.
30. Identify at least seven qualities of consciousness that characterize an experience as "transpersonal."
31. Describe the phenomenological mapping method of investigating qualities of transpersonal experience.
32. Tell how phenomenological mapping has been used to identify stages of consciousness beyond Piagetian formal operations.
33. Tell why the research of Stanislav Grof in LSD psychotherapy is important for understanding the nature of human consciousness.

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34. Explain how LSD is a "nonspecific amplifier or catalyst" of deep levels of the psyche.
35. Outline the four major types of experiences discovered by Grof during his LSD and holotropic research.
36. Distinguish transpersonal experiences from spiritual experiences.
37. Describe the two different forms of spiritual experiences that occur during psychedelic psychotherapy.
38. Define the term "spiritual emergency."
39. Identify two implications for mainstream psychology of Grof's pioneering consciousness research.
40. Identify five different types of expansion of identity that have been observed in LSD psychotherapy.
41. Explain why mystical experiences are interpreted as alternate states of consciousness.
42. Distinguish alternate states of consciousness, religious experience, and transpersonal experience.
43. Evaluate whether drugs are capable of inducing genuine religious experiences.
44. Assess whether a religious experience necessarily produces a religious life.
45. Describe the four qualities of religious experience identified by William James.
46. Describe William James' view of mystical experience.
47. Identify sources of descriptive accounts of mystical experiences.
48. Tell how mystical consciousness is described by transpersonal scholars Ken Wilber and Thomas Yeomans.
49. Describe the state of consciousness called "pure consciousness" and "cosmic consciousness."
50. Describe how meditation can stabilize awareness in sleep ("lucid dreaming")
51. Describe the state of enlightenment.
52. List the 14 healthy mental factors and the 14 unhealthy factors conducive to the effective practice of meditation.
53. Explain why meditation is considered to be the technique of choice for achieving an enlightened state of consciousness.
54. Define meditation.
55. Summarize how meditation has been studied as a topic of research in psychology.
56. Identify and describe the two popular kinds of meditation.
57. Describe some of the psychological and physical complications that may arise from meditation practice.
58. Relate how dreams are viewed from the various contemporary perspectives of psychology.
59. Describe how waking and dreaming experience are interconnected.
60. Describe the role of imagination in connecting waking and dreaming experience.
61. Describe the practical role that dreams play in waking life.
62. Distinguish between the symbolic and literal nature of dreams and waking life.
63. Describe the mechanics of out-of-body experiences as they occur in the dream state of consciousness.
64. Explain why people do not remember their dreams and describe one procedure that can aid in dream recall.
65. Defend the idea that dreams are coherent, purposeful, and creative.
66. Describe one way that dreaming and waking consciousness can be better integrated.
67. Explain how dreams are the "royal road to the transpersonal."
68. Describe how the technique of Active Imagination can be used to investigate the spiritual life of the mind.
69. Describe three transpersonal aspects of consciousness.
70. Explain why consciousness is not a self, the ego, identity, or some fiery brain product.
71. Evaluate the claim that there exists multiple, subliminal streams of consciousness in thought and behavior.

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72. Explain why open communication between conscious and subconscious portions of the whole personality is so important for health.
73. Tell why it is important to explore one's own consciousness if the nature of consciousness is ever to be truly understood.
74. Explain why learning what is a clear, alert state of consciousness so important for understanding what is an alternate state of consciousness.
75. Describe how the *Alpha One* exercise can be used as a psychometric scale for identifying different levels of consciousness.
76. Describe your experience of consciously constructing a dream and then interpret your dream.
77. Describe your experience of becoming awake in your dreams and tell what you discovered.
78. Identify the best conditions under which any serious investigation of alternate states of consciousness need to occur for best success.

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Chapter Outline TRANSPERSONAL STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- I. The Nature of Consciousness
 - A. What is Consciousness?
 1. Consciousness in psychology.
 2. Renewed popular and scholarly interest in the study of consciousness.
 3. No agreed-upon definition of consciousness.
 4. Consciousness as a state of being aware.
 - a. William James and the "stream of consciousness."
- II. Varieties of Consciousness
 - A. Consciousness as a Series of "Levels" or "Thresholds" of Awareness
 1. Consciousness as a "span of apprehension."
 - a. The field of consciousness.
 - b. Consequences of the habit of focusing awareness exclusively upon the world of outward things.
 2. Beyond the "margins" of the field of consciousness.
 - a. Distinguishing subconscious, unconscious, and nonconscious in the laboratory.
 - b. The boundary separating conscious from subconscious is arbitrary and changing.
 - c. The subconscious is hardly nonconscious.
 - d. Inner ego-self as the director of inner psychic activity.
 - e. Subconscious and unconscious distinguished.
 3. How much can we know of the farther reaches of human consciousness?
 - a. Communicating with the personal subconscious.
 - B. Consciousness as a General State or Condition
 1. The normal waking state.
 2. The normal waking state as a defensively constricted condition of awareness.
 - a. It is not the nature of normal waking consciousness to act in such a constricted, rigid fashion.
 - b. Waking consciousness and the ego-self have great psychological validity and purpose.
 - b. Waking consciousness is not an inferior state of consciousness.
 3. An "alertness exercise" for the reader.
 - a. Feeling the actual.
 - b. Experiencing the subjective point of one's own knowing.
 - c. Openness to what is present.
 4. Different degrees of awareness within the normal waking state.
 - a. Ultradian rhythms of everyday consciousness.
 - C. Consciousness as an Altered or Alternate State or Condition
 1. A continuum of states of consciousness exist.
 2. What is an ASC and how are they produced?
 - a. Examples of ASC and their common features.
 - b. ASC distinguished from transpersonal experiences.
 - c. Peak experiences as an alternate state of consciousness
 3. A wide range of alternate states of consciousness (ASC) are recognized by transpersonal psychology.

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4. Ambivalence by mainstream Western psychology concerning the status of ASC.

III. The Study of Transpersonal States of Consciousness

A. State-Specific Sciences

1. Four basic rules of “essential science.”
2. A state of consciousness involves various cognitive subsystems.
3. State-dependent learning.
 - a. How does one prove the existence of something one is not aware of?
4. Challenges of the “state-specific” paradigm.

B. Transpersonal - Phenomenological Inquiry

1. A case study - Phenomenological reduction.
 - a. That which is constant, identical, or invariant across transpersonal experiences of the mystical-type.
2. A case study - Phenomenological mapping.
 - a. That which is inconstant, different, variant across transpersonal experiences of the subtle-type.

C. Deep Structural Analysis

1. A case study.

IV. The Transpersonal Nature of Human Consciousness

A. Psychedelic States of Consciousness

1. A cartography of the psyche.
 - a. Abstract and aesthetic experiences..
 - b. Psychodynamic experiences..
 - c. Perinatal experiences.
 - d. Transpersonal experiences.
2. Spiritual emergency.
3. LSD as a non-specific catalyst or amplifier of deep levels of the psyche.
4. Spiritual experiences noted in psychedelic ASCs.
5. Implications for psychology.
 - a. Potential for broadening “official” concepts of the self.
 - b. The quality of identity is far more mysterious than we can presently comprehend.

B. Mystical States of Consciousness

1. Mystical experiences as alternate states of consciousness
 - a. Alternates states of consciousness, religious experiences and transpersonal experiences distinguished.
 - b. Are drugs capable of inducing genuine religious experiences?
 - c. A religious experience does not necessarily produce a religious life.
2. Qualities of religious experience.
 - a. Phenomenological accounts of direct illumination.

C. Meditative States of Consciousness

1. The enlightened state of consciousness.
 - a. Healthy and unhealthy qualities of consciousness.

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- b. Health mental factors and meditation practice mutually reinforcing.
 - c. Meditation is the technique of choice designed to help the individual achieve enlightenment.
 - 2. Meditation defined.
 - a. The practice of meditation
 - b. Two popular kinds of meditation practice
 - i. Concentration meditation.
 - ii. Insight (mindfulness) meditation.
 - 3. Meditation as an adjunct to psychotherapy.
 - 4. The physical and psychological effects of meditation.
 - a. Transcendental meditation and continuous consciousness.
 - b. Complications and ideal outcomes of meditation practice.
- D. Dreaming States of Consciousness
 - 1. Why we dream
 - a. Perspectives of mainstream psychology.
 - b. The separation of waking and dreaming consciousness is artificial.
 - c. The biological rhythms of waking and dreaming consciousness.
 - 2. The interconnectedness and continuity of waking and dreaming consciousness.
 - a. The hypothesis of "object constancy" in the dream state.
 - b. Imagination is the channel that connects waking and dreaming experience.
 - 3. Learning to control the direction of activity within dreams.
 - a. Dreams reinforce daily life.
 - b. The problem-solving aspect of dreams is important.
 - c. Dream therapy could be used to better advantage.
 - c. Challenges in daily life are also set in the dream state.
 - 4. Understanding dreams
 - a. Discovering the coherent, purposeful, and creative nature of dreams.
 - i. Distinguishing what is literal and what is symbolic in dreams.
 - ii. The symbolic nature of waking life.
 - b. Out-of-body-experiences during dreams remain a rewarding topic of study.
 - c. Why is it so difficult to remember and record one's dreams?
 - d. Dreams as the "royal road to the transpersonal."
 - 5. Investigating dream reality through Active Imagination.
- E. Transpersonal Aspects of Consciousness
 - 1. Consciousness is not a self, the ego, identity, or some brain product.
 - 2. Multiple, subliminal streams of consciousness in thought and behavior.
 - a. Realms of the human subconscious.
 - 3. Open communication between conscious and subconscious portions of the whole personality essential for psychological and physical health.
 - 4. Transpersonal aspects of human consciousness.
- V. The Nature of Consciousness: Its Personal Expression
 - A. Exploring Your Own Consciousness
 - 1. Experience is the best teacher.
 - 2. The supportive nature of subconscious portions of the psyche.
 - 3. The physical life of the spirit.

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4. The goal is to enrich experience of normal waking consciousness, not diminish it.
- B. Activities for Exploring the Nature of Your Consciousness
1. Exercise #1 - Alpha-One: A psychometric scale for levels of consciousness.
 2. Exercise #2 – Consciously construct a dream.
 3. Exercise #3 – Become Awake in Your Dreams

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Chapter Summary

The Nature of Consciousness. The study of consciousness in mainstream psychology has a long and checkered history, and has posed persistent challenges and problems for psychology. With the decline of behaviorism, the growth of interest in linguistics, human memory, developmental psychology, and the rise of the cognitive perspective, there has been a corresponding growth of interest in studying the nature of consciousness and altered states of consciousness in both mainstream and transpersonal psychology. Despite a great deal of discussion, published books and articles on the subject, and conferences and institutes devoted to its study, there is still very little agreement about what “consciousness” is. Although many different definitions of consciousness exist, it is most commonly defined simply as *awareness* – awareness of events and objects in the physical environment and awareness of our private experience including our individual perceptions, images, thoughts, memories, and feelings that we are able to verbally report. But even this definition is not as straightforward as it might initially appear because consciousness is also personal, continuous, constantly changing, selective, and purposive. Moreover, there is more than one kind of awareness (or consciousness) and there are degrees of awareness within each kind.

Varieties of Consciousness. Consciousness may be identified with or defined in terms of the “span of awareness,” or a “span of attention” - that part *in* which we are aware and *by* which we are aware. In this sense, consciousness refers to a “zone of awareness” representing whatever we are aware of at any one moment of time. Transpersonal psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974) called this interior mental space that comprises immediate awareness the “field of consciousness.” Developments of both cognitive science and depth psychology has made it clear that the field of consciousness is only a small part of the whole, and that awareness “beyond the margin” (William James’s phrase) of the field of consciousness is possible. The terms “unconscious” and “subconscious” are important hypothetical constructs in transpersonal psychology’s understanding of the nature of human consciousness. The boundary separating the conscious from the subconscious (literally, “beneath awareness”) is arbitrary since that boundary is permeable and always changing (what is conscious one moment can be subconscious the next and vice versa). There are, therefore, degrees of awareness within consciousness. The subconscious portion of each individual’s reality is far more conscious than Freud supposed. As Myers and later Jung discovered, the subconscious, subliminal stream of consciousness is complicated, richly creative, infinitely varied, purposeful, and highly discriminating. Awareness or consciousness may be identified with the state of being conscious (or aware) as in the normal condition of “being awake” otherwise known as “normal waking consciousness” (NWC). Normal waking consciousness or awareness is not a single, homogeneous thing. There are different degrees of being aware even in the normal waking state depending on such factors as variations in alertness, degree of involvement with the physical environment, level of relaxation or attention, physical sensations, emotions, and way one thinks as one engages in different kinds of activities throughout the day. There are shorter 90-120 minute ultradian rhythms which govern a variety of autonomic and endocrine activities affecting brain function and normal waking consciousness throughout the 24-hour circadian cycle. Normal waking consciousness is often regarded in transpersonal psychology as a restricted and constricted state. Normal waking consciousness is far from rigid, however, and can become more fluid and resilient with proper training

The cognitive approach to consciousness has made it possible to form a type of continuum of waking consciousness ranging from alert and focused concentration to alternate states of consciousness (ASC). Mainstream psychology tends to have an ambivalent attitude toward alternate states of consciousness. An “alternate” state of consciousness may be defined as any mental state, subjective experience, or psychological functioning that is perceived by the individual or recognized by an observer as being significantly different from the usual, normal, or ordinary functioning of that individual during alert, waking consciousness. Alternate states of consciousness (ASC) can be produced in a variety of seemingly disparate methods. A range of ASC have been studied - drug-induced states, hypnosis,

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biofeedback, daydreaming, night dreaming, sensory deprivation, dreamless sleep, and paranormal experiences - with each state or condition of awareness consisting of many levels and functions.

The Study of Transpersonal States of Consciousness. Transpersonal psychologist Charles Tart proposes that normal waking consciousness as constituted by ten underlying psychological structures, which interact with one another to define a state of consciousness. Tart proposes the establishment of *state-specific sciences* to handle the fact that some knowledge may only be available when you are back in that same state of consciousness it was originally created in. Tart identifies four useful rules of scientific method that can be applied to transpersonal research into alternate states of consciousness: (a) Observation (or experiential apprehension), (b) public nature of observation, (c) theorizing, and (d) observable consequences. One challenge is to demonstrate that one hypnotic, meditative, mystical, psychedelic state of consciousness is equivalent to another.

The phenomenological approach can be applied to verbal reports of experiences with transpersonal qualities – experiences which often involve alternate states of consciousness. In a thematic analysis of seven phenomenological studies of experiences with transpersonal qualities, 11 common themes or elements were subsequently identified that are consistent with descriptions of cosmic consciousness, peak experiences, nonordinary states of consciousness, meditative experience, mysticism, experience of no-self, experience of enlightenment in sacred traditions, and spiritual realization. Using the method called “phenomenological mapping,” alternate states of consciousness and the variables that produce them may be categorized and compared along specific experiential dimensions to identify differences between states of consciousness that, on the surface, appear similar or identical. Transpersonal scholar Ken Wilber has pioneered the use of the transpersonal research method called “deep structural analysis.” Using this technique, Wilber has been able to organize and systematize a vast number of different states of consciousness into a relatively few number of deep structures. Different stages of consciousness each have their own corresponding deep structures that are responsible for generating the common phenomena experienced while in that stage of consciousness.

Psychedelic States of Consciousness. Transpersonal psychiatrist Stanislav Grof’s LSD and holotropic breathwork research has revealed a cartography of the psyche that includes not only the Freudian personal subconscious, but also Rankian birth memories, the Jungian collective unconscious, and deeper levels containing reincarnational and racial memories, and multidimensional encounters with nonphysical beings and entities. The transpersonal experiences observed to occur during LSD were not simply toxic effects manufactured or produced by the chemical action of the drug. Rather, the drug acted as a *non-specific catalyst* or amplifier that activated deep levels of the psyche. The “mind manifesting” agent simply intensified and accelerated the emergence of material from inner realms of the human unconscious to reveal aspects of the human mind unrecognized and unacknowledged by classical psychoanalysis or any existing system of psychology other than transpersonal psychology. Individuals encountering these various dimensions of the psyche during psychotherapy often experience significant relief of addictions, physical health problems, and psychopathologies. Stanislav Grof and his wife Christina Grof have coined the term *spiritual emergency* to help professionals differentiate mystical states from mental illness and have organized a national network of therapists to assist individuals who may experience emotional or psychological crises of a spiritual or transpersonal nature. Grof’s pioneering consciousness research into the psyche’s greater reality revealed by drug and non-drug alterations of consciousness hint at the multidimensional nature of the human psyche and indicate no apparent boundaries to the types of identifications or personifications of which the human psyche is capable.

Mystical States of Consciousness. Transpersonal psychologists tend to view experiences of “mystical union,” “enlightenment,” “nirvana”, and related experiences as natural and beneficial non-ordinary states of consciousness that may be subject to state-dependent learning effects. Although there is considerable overlap between alternate states of consciousness, religious experiences and transpersonal experiences,

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they are not identical. All transpersonal experiences involve some alternate state of consciousness, but not all alternate states of consciousness are transpersonal. Some, but not all, transpersonal experiences are experiences of the sacred, but not all religious experiences are transpersonal. Psychedelics can induce genuine mystical experiences, but only sometimes, in some people, under some circumstances.

William James's review of anecdotes, textual studies, and typical examples of mystical experiences led him to identify four qualities that characterized all mystical states of consciousness: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. The writings of Christian contemplatives, mystics, and saints and non-Christian contemplatives, mystics, and saints, and many contemporary examples provide excellent descriptive accounts of individual illumination, enlightenment, and direct apprehension of insights that confirm the presence of these four qualities during mystical states of consciousness. Through advanced meditation practice, one can allegedly access so-called "pure consciousness" by developing a silently observing portion of the self that witnesses all other states of consciousness (waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep). An advanced practitioner of Transcendental Meditation™ demonstrated enhanced awareness of dreams (called "lucid dreaming") and the ability to the maintained heightened awareness in unbroken continuity throughout a twenty-four-hour cycle of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (a state of consciousness called "The Great Realization").

Meditative States of Consciousness. Enlightenment has been considered an optimal state of consciousness, particularly in classical Buddhist thought. The classical Buddhist treatise, Abhidhamma, identifies 14 unhealthy and 14 healthy qualities of consciousness, mental factors, or states of mind that work for and against the achievement of an enlightened state of mind. These 14 healthy mental factors and 14 unhealthy mental factors were identified empirically as conditions which either facilitated or inhibited the practice of meditation. Meditation is a set of techniques that aim at quieting the mind so that it can effectively and efficiently look within to understand the nature of reality -- both physical and nonphysical. Two forms of meditation practice can be distinguished: concentrative and mindfulness. Psychological sciences has identified numerous psychology and physiological effects of meditation practice. As with all psycho-technologies, meditation can have both beneficial and less than beneficial effects upon the practitioner without the proper set and setting.

Dreaming States of Consciousness. The answer to the questions, "Why do we dream?" and "What do dreams mean?" will vary depending on what perspective the question is viewed (biological, psychodynamic, cognitive, behaviorist, social-cultural, evolutionary, transpersonal). Dreaming is native to our being. Waking experience and dreaming experience are much more interconnected and continuous than recognized by mainstream psychology, as the continuance of the 90-to-120-minute periodicity of dream (REM) sleep into waking life suggests. We work out in our dreams the issues, challenges, and problems that have been set for us in the waking state. From a transpersonal perspective, the reverse is also true – we express wishes and desires and work out the issues, challenges, and problems that we have set for ourselves in the dream state. Just as waking life activities have meaning and purpose, so also does dreaming despite all appearances to the contrary. Dreams are coherent, highly discriminative symbolic messages from one portion of consciousness to another with many-layered meanings that can be deciphered, if we want to take the time and energy to use the methods that are available. The rigid division between waking and dreaming consciousness is not basically necessary but is the result of custom and convenience with a good deal of cross-cultural variation. If waking and dreaming were more systematically integrated with one another (e.g., integrating sleep-waking cycle in a more spontaneous, natural fashion through more frequent, briefer sleep period) then the benefits and insights of our nightly dreams would be more available to waking life. Dreams are one avenue to this unknown land and "the royal road to the transpersonal" (Walsh's phrase).

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The Transpersonal Aspects of Human Consciousness . Consciousness is neither a self, the ego, or a brain product. The further study of its transpersonal aspects -- consciousness's expression through the mediumship of the body, its existence independent of and separate from the physical organism, and its panpsychic origin -- can be of great help in understanding the further reaches of human experience and behavior. Multiple subliminal streams of awareness exist just beneath the surface of normal waking consciousness. The subconscious portions of the personality consists of many layers. communication among and between all layer, areas, or regions of the whole personality is essential for psychological and physical health. Establishing an intimate working relationship with one's own personal subconscious will be of great value. There is no need to fear the conscious personality's complete immersion into other portions of its own identity, for the conscious mind with its intellect will indeed stand guard. Such experience actually strengthens not only the egoic aspect of the personality, but opens up communication between the ego and the subconscious, allowing for a much greater flow of energy from the inner, transpersonal self.

The Nature of Consciousness: Its Personal Expression. The best way to learn what consciousness is by studying and exploring one's own awareness, by changing the focus of attention, and by using awareness in as many ways as possible. In order to be able to do this, however, we must first give up any ideas we have about the unsavory nature of the unconscious. Transpersonal psychologists correctly understand that we can indeed depend upon seemingly unconscious portions of ourselves. The seemingly "unconscious" portions of ourselves are not to be feared but are to be sought as an aid and helper and supporter in solving life's problems. Those spontaneous processes that knew how to grow us from a fetus to an adult provide for our physical and psychological life, and "represent the life of the spirit itself." The unconscious deals with a different kind of psychic reality than the comprehending ego, but with which that ego *is* natively equipped to deal, if it is flexible enough.

The exercises in the last part of the chapter and presented throughout provides the individual experience with his or her own consciousness as it is oriented in different directions. *Alpha-One*, for instance, creates a kind of subjective psychometric scale for mapping out alternate "levels" of consciousness (A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.). Another exercise gives the reader practice in a dream interpretation technique that is similar to the dream interpretation method developed by Carl Jung called "active imagination. Another exercise aims to develop the individual's the ability to become "awake" in his or her dreams (called "lucid dreaming). Alternate states of consciousness and use of the "inner" senses to focus upon inner reality in no way denies the importance or validity of normal waking consciousness, or the physical senses, or the exterior environment. A series of exercises are presented that should help enrich experience of normal waking consciousness, allow the perception of oneself and one's daily life from a another perspective, and permit the individual to understand the nature of physical reality better.

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Chapter 4

TRANSPERSONAL STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Introduction

Ever since the publication of the inaugural issue of *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* in 1969, transpersonal psychology has concerned itself with the study of consciousness or “conscious awareness.” Of particular interest is the experience of *altered* or *alternate* states of awareness and the role they play in sensation and perception, learning and memory, motivation and emotion, thought and language, personality development and psychotherapy, “spiritual emergence” and “spiritual emergencies,” and in social influence and behavior. Transpersonal states of consciousness, when adopted, take the conscious personality “beyond ego-self” to a more expansive, fluid and resilient focus of awareness than is usually operative in one’s accustomed, ordinary wake-a-day state of consciousness. The waking state of consciousness is typically under the directing influence of the personal, egoic “I” that focuses much of its attention and energies upon what the physical senses can perceive in the here and now. It is the necessary and beneficial nature of the ego-self’s peculiar directive abilities in relation with the physical environment that brings the conscious mind with its reasoning abilities to bear in the manipulation of physical matter in service of the physical survival of the bodily organism.

As a result of such an exquisitely precise focus, the waking state of awareness tends to be relatively limited, narrow, and rigid in its operation. Contrary to current opinion, however, it is not the native nature of normal waking consciousness to be so rigid. Habits of perception learned over a lifetime can be unlearned through the practice of certain techniques and actions -- for example, meditation, active imagination, self-hypnosis, directed association, entheogens, lucid dreaming – that are designed to expand conscious awareness and to open up channels of communication among various portions of the whole personality. It is no accident that it is the *subconscious* portions of the whole personality which take care of almost all biological processes necessary for the survival of the physical organism. The whole efficiency of the personality can be much improved if the subconscious portions of its own identity are listened to and taken into consideration by the conscious ego-self. This sort of communication can most efficiently be achieved by turning the spotlight of awareness inward and adopting an alternate state of consciousness.

It is important to recognize, psychologically speaking, that transpersonal states of consciousness carry the individual through, behind or beneath, and then *beyond* (or trans) the surface threshold of his or her characteristically personal waking state to other subliminal streams of consciousness and channels of awareness that exist at the “margins” or “fringes” of normal waking consciousness (Taylor, 1996). In transpersonal states of consciousness, the self looks in another direction and becomes conscious of other actualities that exist in those vast subliminal (“below the threshold”) and supraliminal (“above the threshold”) areas beneath or within the individual’s personal subconscious. The spotlight of awareness is turned away from outer, sensory-apparent physical reality and toward those vast inner, psychic realms in which the transpersonal self resides, and out of which our daily waking experience and behavior spontaneously springs, and upon which psychological and physical health so importantly depends.

Transpersonal states of consciousness refer to those states of awareness that occur when we switch the direction of our awareness inward toward those psychological intangibles that are nevertheless quite real and valid -- thoughts, emotions, and dreams -- that occupy no physical space and cannot be perceived by the physical senses, that have an objective as well as subjective existence within the psyche, and that can have definite and often enduring effects upon waking experience and behavior. In sleep, for example, when the ego-self is quieted, then the self looks in other directions, and becomes conscious of its dreams. If we hypothetically infer the same quality of object permanence to dream objects located in imaginal

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space that is applied to physical objects located in physical space, this means that the dreams have existed even while the self was not conscious of them, and that dreams do not cease to exist when the self is no longer conscious of them (Roberts, 1998a). The perceptive scope of the conscious ego-self simply cannot tune into that range of psychological action while in its usual, outer-focused waking state of consciousness, and so becomes psychologically invisible to us during the day, although the individual does make occasional forays into that ongoing, subliminal psychic realm during moments of the alternate states of consciousness known as "day-dreaming."

In order to better understand the transpersonal nature of consciousness "beyond ego-self" and its value in daily life, it is important know how consciousness is defined in psychology, how it is studied in and out of the laboratory, and what the study of alternate states of consciousness has disclosed about the unexplored creative capacities and depths of psyche present in every individual. Accordingly, this chapter begins with an examination of the nature of consciousness as it is perceived from the standpoint of conventional mainstream psychology. A variety of states of consciousness are described and consciousness as a general condition and altered state are distinguished. Several transpersonal research methods are illustrated with examples and four transpersonal states of consciousness are examined: psychedelic, mystical, meditative, and dreaming. The chapter concludes with activities and exercises designed to open up channels of communication between the conscious ego-self and the personal subconscious for the more effective functioning of the whole personality.

I. The Nature of Consciousness

What is Consciousness?

Consciousness in psychology. The study of consciousness in mainstream psychology has a long and checkered history (Hilgard, 1980, 1987). Its birth as a topic of scientific study began with Wilhelm Wundt's (1912/1973) declaration of consciousness as *the* proper subject matter of experimental psychology in 1879. Its study grew under functionalism at the turn of the century (Angell, 1904; James, 1890/1950), but came to a sudden and abrupt demise in the 1920's and 1930's at the hands of behaviorists such as Watson (1913) and Skinner (1938) who favored objective observation and measurement of behavior alone. The study of consciousness experienced a subsequent reincarnation in the 1950's and 1960's as a valid area for research with the reinterpretation of perception as information processing (Cherry, 1953; Miller, 1956; Sperling, 1960) and the return of imagery in memory studies (Holt, 1964; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960; Paivio, 1971; Shepard, 1978).

The challenges that face psychology in its study of consciousness. Despite its homecoming, the study of the nature of human and animal consciousness remains problematic for mainstream psychology and continues to pose significant challenges for a discipline that seeks to model itself upon Newtonian physical and natural sciences (Hilgard, 1980, 1987). Recognition of a thing as intangible as "consciousness" has been viewed by some as a threat to the scientific legitimacy of the discipline, opening the door to all kinds of fantastic "anything goes" theorizing about the nature of mental life (Coon, 1992). New questions arise about the age-old philosophical mind-body problem as it is revisited by psychologists and physiologists who have new tools (e.g., brain imaging scanners) and new arguments at their disposal. A "new introspectionism" of the phenomenological variety has emerged that no longer requires the restricted introspections of trained observers, but permits a free-flowing "think-aloud" commentary of the ongoing stream of consciousness that offers new opportunities and challenges for understanding the life of mind and consciousness (Ericsson & Simon, 1984; Liberman, 1979). Important issues of experimental control in the study of consciousness become significant as represented in studies of divided attention and modes of consciousness (active versus passive). The problem of the self and how it is to be conceptualized and methodologically studied is with psychology again. Terms such as "conscious," "nonconscious," "subconscious," and "unconscious" require reinterpretation and further

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distinction, and their relationship clarified. Problems in defining, characterizing, and classifying altered or alternate states of consciousness now need to be investigated experimentally. As the meaning of the correlations observed between brain activity and conscious cognitive processes become clarified, psychological knowledge continues to advance.

Renewed popular and scholarly interest in the study of consciousness. With the decline of behaviorism, the growth of interest in linguistics, human memory, developmental psychology, and the rise of the cognitive perspective, there has been a corresponding growth of interest in studying the nature of consciousness and altered states of consciousness in mainstream psychology. Every introductory psychology textbook addresses the topic of consciousness and may have an entire chapter devoted to the topic. The American Psychological Association's *Psychological Abstract* has a category called "Consciousness States" in which multiple and diverse research studies that fall under that heading are summarized. The *Journal of Consciousness Studies* has been in publication since 1994 with the goal of bridging the divide between biological and phenomenological perspectives toward consciousness. The University of Arizona has graduate degree programs in Consciousness Studies devoted to its study. International conferences with titles such as "Science and Consciousness," "Business and Consciousness," and "Altered States of Consciousness" have been held in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico since 1998 to discuss the nature of consciousness from both mainstream and transpersonal perspectives. The Institute of Noetic Sciences, founded in 1973, supports research and education on human consciousness and disseminates its findings through its publication *Shift* (formerly *Noetic Sciences Review*) to broaden knowledge of the nature and potentials of mind and consciousness, and to apply that knowledge to the enhancement of the quality of life on the planet. An entire industry of mind/brain products, audio and videotapes, and CDs -- such as the "Gateway Experience" which attempts to produce synchronization of brain waves in the two hemispheres -- have emerged to introduce the public to psychotechnologies designed to produce expanded states of awareness in the individual.

No agreed-upon definition of consciousness. Despite a great deal of discussion, published books and articles on the subject, and conferences and institutes devoted to its study, there is still very little agreement about what "consciousness" is. Many different theories, definitions, and models of consciousness have been proposed in both mainstream and transpersonal psychology depending on what functions, structures, states, traits, causes, effects, and correlates of consciousness are focused upon (see, for example, Baruss, 1990; Bock & Marsh, 1993; Burns, 1990; Deikman, 1971; Hampden-Turner, 1981; Hunt, 1995; John, 2003; McNeill & Guion, 1991; Ornstein, 1973; Rao, 1993; Shear, 1997; Stapp, 2004; Tart, 1972; Valle & von Eckartsberg, 1989; Wilber, 1977; Wolman & Ullman, 1986; Zinberg, 1977). Most contemporary perspectives in psychology ignore or overlook the role that consciousness plays in experience. Biological perspective considers consciousness a relatively unimportant by-product of a fiery brain or an ineluctable problem to be solved (i.e., how can living consciousness come from a brain composed of inert chemical and molecules?). Behaviorists tend to ignore it as something that occurs in a "black box" not publicly observable using the physical senses. Psychoanalysts view conscious awareness as a stepchild of more important unconscious processes. For cognitivists, *what is conscious* is what consciousness *is*. Social-cultural perspective considers the moment-to-moment stream of awareness a socially-constructed fiction shaped by the language of our culture.

Consciousness as a state of being aware. Although multiple and diverse definitions of consciousness have been proposed (see, for example, Natsoulas, 1978), it is most commonly defined simply as *awareness* – awareness of events and objects in the physical environment and awareness of private experience, including individual perceptions, images, thoughts, memories, and feelings that we are able to verbally report (Davies, 1999; Hobson, 1997). Consciousness defined as *focal awareness* is the starting point for psychology in understanding why people ordinarily think, feel, and act the way they do. Conscious awareness is both the context *within* which and the process *by* which the contents of experience are made known to the personality (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980). In these terms, without consciousness, there would be no experience *per se*. Consciousness is the ground out of which the

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contents of experience emerge and the process or action by which those contents gain their meaning for the person.

William James and the "stream of consciousness." This definition of consciousness as "a state of being aware" is not as straightforward as it might initially appear. Concepts, terms, and definitions have little meaning unless they are related to other terms, concepts, and issues. Consciousness conceived as "a state of being aware" is defined in one context only, for we know that consciousness is also to some extent subconscious. There is more than one kind of awareness (or consciousness) and there are degrees of awareness within each kind. In this particular context consciousness needs to be considered in its relationship to other levels, thresholds, and frameworks of awareness. William James (1890/1950) complicates the matter further with his concept of "stream of consciousness."

In the first place, said James, *consciousness is personal* It reflects the experiences of an individual, and therefore it is foolhardy to search for elements common to all minds. . . . Second, *consciousness is continuous and cannot be divided up for analysis*. . . . Third, *consciousness is constantly changing*. Even though consciousness is continuous and can be characterized as a steady stream from birth to death, it is also constantly changing. . . . Fourth, *consciousness is selective*. Some of the many events entering consciousness are selected for further consideration and others are inhibited. . . . Finally, and perhaps most important, *consciousness is functional*. . . . its purpose is to aid the individual in adapting to the environment. . . . Consciousness, then, is personal, continuous, constantly changing, selective, and purposive. (Hergenhahn, 2005, pp. 313)

II. Varieties of Consciousness

Consciousness as a Series of "Levels" or "Thresholds" of Awareness

Consciousness as a "span of apprehension." Consciousness in the psychological literature is often identified with or defined in terms of a "span of apprehension," "span of awareness," and that portion of available experience of which we are actually aware. In this sense, consciousness refers to a "zone of awareness" representing whatever we are aware of at any one moment of time. Cognitive psychologists identify the capacity of this span of awareness to be limited to 7 ± 2 "chunks" of meaningful information that we can retain in working "short-term" memory storage at any given time (Miller, 1956).

The field of consciousness. Transpersonal psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974) was founder of the school of transpersonal psychology called "Psychosynthesis" that incorporates the idea of "soul" explicitly into its theory of human personality (Assagioli, 1988/1991, 1973/1992, 1965/1993). Assagioli called this interior mental space that comprises immediate awareness the "*field of consciousness*." The field of consciousness defines the parameters of the ongoing stream of waking awareness and its various contents -- daydreams, fantasies, images, sensations, desires, impulses, memories, ideas and emotions that are observed and witnessed, analyzed and reflected upon, verbalized and judged by the conscious verbal mind. The field of consciousness represents the changing *contents* of our consciousness -- the seen, the imagined, the sensed, the desired, the remembered, the felt, and the thought. It is the zone of awareness within which we live our waking existence in the work-a-day world of everyday life. It is the cognitional area in which the operations of working memory occur. This is the region of the conscious personality, and is that very small portion of the whole self with which mainstream cognitive psychology deals.

Consequences of the habit of focusing attention exclusively upon the world of outward things. Without further reflection, the "field of consciousness" or "span of apprehension" may be the only region of one's consciousness that an individual may recognize, acknowledge, or accept, because it is most accessible for verbal report and because we have been conditioned by culture and society to pay almost exclusive attention to the exterior environment and behavior. Interior dimensions are most difficult to describe

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because even our language has been exclusively developed to describe the world of outward things. Individuals may have been told by various agents of socialization that other aspects of our consciousness are unknowable, dangerous, or unreal and do not really exist, and if they do exist, then they should be avoided. Structuring perceptions so that only the topmost surfaces of events are seen, and organizing one's life according to that exterior pattern, much of the individual's inner psychic life become psychological invisible and those other "unknown" portions of one's own consciousness thus escapes awareness. As a result of such a prejudiced perception brought on by years of cultural conditioning and socialization, individuals come to view themselves as mainly products of biological and environmental influences, or at the mercy of interior events and inner forces that they do not understand and cannot control.

Beyond the "margins" of the field of consciousness. Developments in both cognitive science and depth psychology -- especially following the application of psychedelics and hypnotic techniques as tools in scientific psychotherapy and the experimental psychology of the subconscious -- have confirmed that limiting consciousness to the single "span," "field," or "stream" of normal waking awareness tells only a part of the story of consciousness. Awareness "beyond the margin" (William James's phrase) of the field of consciousness is possible for the individual human being through dreams, religious experience, dissociative disorders, disintegrations of personality, acts of genius, sleep, hypnotism, trance and possession states, sensory and motor automatisms, psi experiences, and creativity of every kind (Taylor, 1984, 1996). This is where the waking field of consciousness blends into and intermingles with "subconscious" or "subliminal" channels of consciousness that are, so to speak, "below" or "above" the subjective threshold of conscious awareness.

Distinguishing subconscious, unconscious, and nonconscious in the laboratory. The terms "subconscious," "unconscious," and "nonconscious" have been operationally distinguished in laboratory experiments (Cheesman & Merikle, 1984, 1986). The "subconscious" is conceived to be immediately "below" the threshold of the field of conscious awareness and is operationally defined as that condition or state in which the person reports being aware of the presence of a stimulus and behavior indicates an appropriate response to the stimulus's meaning. The subconscious is distinguished from the "unconscious" which is operationally defined as that condition or state in which the person verbally reports being unaware of the presence of a stimulus, but behavior shows better than chance level of responding to the stimulus's meaning. The "nonconscious" is the condition or state in which the person reports being unaware of the presence of a stimulus, and behavior shows only chance level of responding to its meaning. Phenomena such as *subliminal awareness* in which people show no verbal awareness of a meaningful stimulus, although their behavior shows better than chance levels of responding to its meaning (Cheesman & Merikle, 1984, 1986), *perceptual defense* in which an individual is unwilling to verbally report perceiving unpleasant materials despite having indicated done so through his or her subsequent behavior (Garner, Hake, & Erikson, 1956), and *blindsight* in which a brain-damaged blind individual cannot recognize objects but retains the ability to detect their presence and movement (Weiskrantz, 2002) are all instances of experimental evidence documenting the fact that "subconscious" and "unconscious" layers of awareness operate beneath, behind, or beyond the subjective threshold of conscious awareness.

The boundary separating conscious and subconscious is arbitrary and changing. The terms "conscious" and "subconscious" are important hypothetical constructs in transpersonal psychology. The boundary separating what is conscious and what is subconscious (literally, "beneath awareness") is arbitrary since that boundary is permeable and always changing from one moment to the next, from one day to the next. Nonphysical thoughts and emotions or physical objects and events of which one is now aware and that fall within the span of apprehension or field of consciousness at this moment can become subconscious and fall outside the span of apprehension or field of consciousness the next moment. And what once was subconscious can become conscious again, depending on the direction in which one turns

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the focus of one's awareness. Consciousness in this sense is very much an action or process, not a thing. Consciousness is like a spotlight, so to speak, whose beam of awareness or focus of attention can be turned in different directions, and that can be narrowed or broadened to include or exclude specific psychological content (e.g., sensations, perceptions, thoughts, images, emotions, dreams, memories, and so forth). Generally speaking, individuals are only aware of those fragments of events that intrude or appear within the focus of their own personal, selective, continuous, constantly changing, purposive spotlight of awareness. Everything else is psychologically invisible (or subconscious) to the comprehending ego until attention is drawn to it. All boundaries between conscious and subconscious, then, are the result of the limitations of perception. Spans, fields, streams of consciousness merge one into the other and all boundaries shift and zones of awareness seem to end where perception of it ceases.

The subconscious is hardly nonconscious. It would be inaccurate to conceptualize the subconscious as an impersonal, unthinking machine that can be manipulated to carry out the orders of the outer-focused, ego-self, as if it were some cardboard figure that can be bullied or pushed around. Although Sigmund Freud tended to see the subconscious portions of the personality as “nonconscious,” some transpersonal theorists, such as C. G. Jung and F.W.H. Myers, moved beyond such a formulation, while retaining Freud's important concept of the personal subconscious. The subconscious portion of each individual's reality is far more conscious than Freud supposed. According to transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts (2002),

There is one large point, underestimated by all of your psychologists, when they list the characteristics or attributes of consciousness. . . . [Jung, for instance,] presumes that consciousness must be organized about an ego structure. And what he calls the unconscious, not so egotistically organized, he therefore considers without consciousness, without consciousness of self. He makes a good point, saying that the ego cannot know unconscious material directly. He does not realize however, nor do your other psychologists. . . that there is an inner ego; and it is this inner ego that organizes what Jung would call unconscious material. . . . When you are in a state that is not the normal waking one. . . *you are nevertheless conscious and alert.* You merely block out the memory from the normal waking ego. . . .The unconscious is conscious. . . . Creativity is one of the most important attributes and aspects of consciousness. We will differentiate between normal ego consciousness then, and consciousness that only *appears* unconscious to that ego. (pp. 434-435)

Inner ego-self as the director of inner, psychic activity. On this view, just as our usual, waking conscious mind is directed by an outer ego-self, so is the inner subconscious mind directed by what may be termed an *inner ego-self* that organizes so-called subconscious and unconscious material, including dreams. F. W. H. Myers called this inner ego-self the “subliminal self;” Jung simply called it the Self (Jung, 1934/1960; Myers, 1976). As Myers and later Jung discovered, the subconscious with its many and varied subliminal streams of consciousness is complicated, richly creative, infinitely diverse, purposeful, and highly discriminating (Jung, 1934/1960, Myers, 1976). “The unconscious perceives, has purposes and intuitions, feels and thinks as does the conscious mind. We find sufficient evidence for this in the field of psychopathology and the investigation of dream processes” (Jung, 1964, p. 56). In these terms, then, the subconscious portions of the self are hardly nonconscious but simply appear that way as a result of the limitations of the perceptive focus of normal waking consciousness. The waking ego-self is simply not aware of ongoing, spontaneous, and simultaneous subconscious psychological action because memory of it is blocked and because the conscious mind is simply does not have enough capacity to be able to hold “the vast knowledge that belongs to the inner conscious self from which it springs” (Roberts, 2002, p. 435). Moreover, it is the nature of consciousness at this stage of its development to shut out certain stimuli in order to concentrate on other stimuli. This limited capacity of conscious awareness is not only evident in the waking state but in the dreaming state as well, for example, when we shut out during

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dreams physical stimuli usually available in the waking state and become aware of imaginal stimuli in dreams that we do not perceive in the waking state.

Subconscious and unconscious distinguished. So-called “subconscious” portions of the psyche are areas of psychological reality that are potentially available to the egoic (or conscious "I") portions of the personality and to the conscious mind or intellect, even though the individual may not be aware of such content at the present moment, but could be with the proper direction of attention. There will always be certain portions of each individual’s psyche that will never be consciously known by the intellect alone, however. These areas are truly “unconscious” in so far as the conscious mind is concerned. The comprehending ego will never become familiar in any conscious way with this vast inner psychic realm, even though it may know intellectually that these portions of the self exist. This is not to minimize the value of either the conscious ego-self or the intellect in understanding the nature of consciousness. Although the intellect or conscious mind may indeed grasp some understanding of the deep, interior parts of the whole self from the intuitions, such understanding simply does not follow logical, cause-and-effect lines of reasoning. The outer ego-self, operating on its own as a separate unit, is aware of only minute portions of the whole personality for several reasons: (a) the ego-self cannot tune into that perceptive range, (b) it refuses to assimilate certain experiences or use such information even when it is available, (c) it denies its dependency upon its more extensive subconscious portions, and (d) it attempts to overzealously and misguidedly set itself apart from the whole personality to gain an independence, stability and permanence that is ultimately illusory. When the personality is well integrated, the subconscious and so-called unconscious purposes and intents of the whole self become more available to the ego-self who then *uses* such information. This is why communication between the so-called conscious, subconscious, and nonconscious areas or layers of the whole self is so important.

How much can we know of the father reaches of human consciousness? The question is: What portions, areas, layers, and regions of the psyche are consciously unknowable (truly unconscious) and what portions are indeed capable of becoming consciously knowable (simply subconscious)? From a transpersonal perspective these are important questions. Transpersonal psychology builds upon the insights of humanistic psychology in recognizing the existence of inner-directed impulses toward value fulfillment that are inherent in all creatures and creation (Cortright, 1997, chap. 1). The unfolding of these impulses toward self-actualization is a process of self-discovery and becoming more of the self that one is. The individual at any moment in time does not know all of himself or herself. It is through the process of self-discovery that the subconscious becomes conscious, that the unknown aspects of the self become known and added to the self that one knows. "The more you discover of yourself, the more you are" (Roberts, 1995, p. 68). One aim of transpersonal psychology is to aid this process of self-discovery by disclosing to the egoic portion of the self the subconscious transpersonal (beyond ego-self) realities in which whole personality dwells.

Communicating with the personal subconscious. Figure 4-1 presents several "uncovering methods" that are fairly reliable methods of reaching the personal layers of the subconscious that lie just beneath the surface of normal waking consciousness (LeCron, 1964, chap. 2).

Insert Figure 4-1 here

The Chevreul Pendulum and finger movement technique are responsive to unconscious muscular movement, mental imagery, and external stimulation (Easton & Shor, 1975). Both methods do give reliable and valid answers from the subconscious (LeCron, 1964, Rossi & Cheek, 1988). Unless a trance state is utilized, these two techniques are much less effective as methods of reaching those subconscious layers that lie, so to speak, beneath and beyond the personal subconscious. They are, however, excellent methods for conversing with the personal subconscious layers of one's own personality and for becoming

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intimately aware of this not-so-silent partner of the outer ego-self. There are many small beneficial ways to use the pendulum and finger movements, if it is worked with seriously (LeCron, 1964). Foremost is the opening up of channels between the conscious and subconscious layers of the personality. The experience of establishing an intimate working relationship with one's own personal subconscious will itself be of great value. The pendulum and finger movements can eventually be dispensed with, if a habit of communication develops. As the conscious personality learns to listen to the inner voice of the subconscious and develops facility in communication with the subconscious portions of one's own identity, then many difficulties one experiences in waking life may be avoided. The efficiency of normal waking consciousness and overall behavior becomes much improved, as the inclinations of the inner, transpersonal self become communicated in a manner that the comprehending ego can understand and takes into consideration. Transpersonal writer and channel Seth-Jane Roberts (1998b) identifies other benefits of opening up channels of communication between the conscious and subconscious portions of the personality.

The easier the communication between the ego-self and the personal subconscious the greater the strength, abilities, potentialities, and value fulfillment of the present personality as a whole. . . . Such easy communication with the subconscious will also allow the subconscious to be more flexible, in allowing various information through to the ego-self from the deeper layers of the whole self. As a further benefit there will be increased joy, and a feeling of oneness with the self, and with reality in general. (pp. 19-20)

Consciousness as a General State or Condition

The normal waking state. For much of the history of psychology and for most contemporary perspectives in mainstream psychology (with the notable exception of the psychodynamic perspective), consciousness has been exclusively identified with the state of being conscious (or aware) in the normal condition of “being awake” -- otherwise known as “normal waking consciousness” (NWC). This is the definition of consciousness usually assumed in general psychology textbooks, especially in the field of psychology called “cognitive psychology” -- “Consciousness [is] your awareness of the external world, as well as your thoughts and emotions about your internal world” (Matlin, 2005, p. 22). Normal waking consciousness or awareness, however, is not a single, homogeneous thing. It isn't the same for all of us. As William James (890/1950, p. 225) noted, the stream of consciousness is a *personal* consciousness. “My thought belongs with my other thoughts, and your thought with your other thoughts. . . . The only states of consciousness that we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousnesses, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and you's” (p. 226). What one person experiences as their usual, ordinary, normal waking state of consciousness may fall into the region of another's altered state and what one person experiences as an altered state may fall into the region of another's ordinary consciousness. We do not all start from the same baseline awareness or consciousness. As we have seen, even within the same individual, consciousness changes and varies from one moment to the next, and from one day to the next. What is conscious now, may not be conscious tomorrow.

The normal waking state as a defensively constricted condition of awareness. Many mainstream psychologists tend to view the normal waking state of consciousness as the “best” and most optimal, real, valid, and legitimate of all possible states of consciousness of which a human being is capable. Other psychologists believe that “our usual state of consciousness is severely suboptimal. . . dreamlike and illusory” and that “we are prisoners of our own minds, totally and unwittingly trapped by a continuous inner fantasy-dialogue which creates an all-consuming illusory distortion of perception and reality” (Walsh, 1983, p. 43). On this view, normal waking consciousness is “a defensively contracted state. . . . with a continuous flow of largely uncontrollable thoughts and fantasies in accordance with our needs and defenses” (Walsh & Vaughn, 1980, p. 54). When you look at a cup, for instance, you do not see the cup but only a chain of conditioned associations, emotions, fantasies, and so forth and it is these which are

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experienced rather than the cup per se which elicited them. Our awareness and thus experience of the world and of ourselves is not a clear perception but rather an actively constructed interpretation or "illusion." Freud's psychodynamic theory of personality supports this view of a contracted state of normal waking consciousness and the needs and defenses that can shape our sense of self. The Eastern trait theory of personality known as *Abhidhamma* describes those "unhealthy" mental factors that keep us constricted and identifies meditation as the method of choice for removing obstacles to the realization of our ever-present potential to become more. The only way out of this prison of the mind is "letting go this defensive contraction and removing obstacles to the recognition of the expanded ever-present potential through quieting the mind and reducing perceptual distortion" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980, p. 54).

It is not the nature of normal waking consciousness to act in such a constricted, rigid fashion. It may be true that we have become "ego-bound" as a species to a self-sense that does not want to admit the existence of any portions of its own identity other than those with which it is familiar and comfortable and that it accepts. It may be true that as a result of separating itself from the more intuitive portions of its overall identity, the egoic portion of the whole personality has become isolated, afraid, and held in a kind of spiritual rigidity that limits its understanding of its own nature and of the outer and inner worlds in which it exists. It may also be true, however, that this is *not* the ego-self's intrinsic nature. As Jung and Assagioli discovered, the egoic portion of the overall personality is far more resilient, curious, creative, and eager to learn than generally supposed by most psychologists, transpersonal included. It is quite capable of allowing freedom to the transpersonal Self's intuitions and creative impulses so that some knowledge of its own greater dimensions can indeed be communicated to this most physically-oriented portion of the personality. The same may be inferred about the nature of normal waking consciousness. While one function of the normal waking state may be to act as a dam holding back awareness and perceptions, it is also possible that it is not in the nature of normal waking consciousness to act in such a fashion, but it does so because of social and cultural conditioning. The limitations are learned, and what is learned can be unlearned. Normal waking consciousness may be capable of much more attentional capacity and open awareness than it is given credit for.

Waking consciousness and the ego-self have great psychological validity and purpose. The ego-self's strength, vigor, health, balance, intelligence, and intuitional abilities provide a large part of the psychological climate in which the conscious personality can operate, especially when the ego-self's beliefs and abilities are not so rigid that it allows itself the spontaneity and inner freedom necessary to permit communication with the subconscious to take place. Waking consciousness is perfectly crafted and uniquely capable -- with its brilliant and exquisite focus in the here-and-now -- of perceiving reality clearly and helping the personality manipulate physical matter and operate well in the physical environment. It is a state of consciousness uniquely suited to deal most directly with the physical world of space and time and to help the human personality survive within it. All other states of consciousness, even the so-called "higher" ones, need the so-called waking state of consciousness, and operate in the objective world under its auspices. Just as all flowers have roots, so does normal waking consciousness. Each individual's particular kind of waking consciousness is natural and rises from the transpersonal psyche as easily as leaves grow from trees. Waking consciousness does not exist separate from all other states of consciousness. The continuum of being connects them all. All other states of consciousness are implied within the waking state, and vice versa. Every state of consciousness carries within itself indelibly the knowledge of the whole (like a hologram) with so-called "lower" states of consciousness possessing all the characteristics and potentials of higher states, and vice versa. All levels of the hierarchy of consciousness interpenetrate.

Waking consciousness is not an inferior state of consciousness. The individual's daily subjective life is interpreted through the specialized state of consciousness that is called the waking one. It is only when the individual recognizes as real nothing more than the experience that occurs within that state of consciousness that he or she runs into difficulties. In those terms, the individual ends up experiencing

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only one-half of waking consciousness: the physically-attuned portion. In certain terms, beliefs that the normal waking state is an inferior portion of the large continuum of alternate states of consciousness hampers the personality's ability to bring into being the fuller facets of awareness possible in that state. When people cut themselves off from their usual consciousness due to negative beliefs about the nature of their own waking state -- because they have been trained, conditioned, and socialized to think, believe, and expect that it is the nature of normal waking consciousness to be "a defensively contracted state" (Walsh & Vaughan 1980, p. 54) -- then a distrust, uncertainty, self-doubt, and fear can be generated of one's own experience and its inner dynamics. After putting blinders upon the waking state of consciousness -- hampering its perceptions and native flexibility -- some psychologists may observe its inflexibility and then conclude that this is its natural function and characteristic. The fact of the matter is that waking consciousness is capable of understanding and interpreting physical reality and relating to it, expanding to include within itself more of its own experience. It is not an *inferior* state of consciousness. The individual can indeed depend upon waking consciousness. When he or she does so, the individual can become more consciously aware, bringing into our conscious awareness larger and larger portions of his or her own experience.

An "Alertness Exercise" for the reader. The waking state can be referred to as a "consensus trance" is as much a trance state as any other state from which we must "wake up" if we are to overcome the limitations and obstacles to human potential (Ouspensky, 1949; Tart, 1986). If this is so, then the question becomes, "When are we *not* in trance?" One goal of transpersonal psychology is to help the egoic portions of the personality to "wake up," enrich its waking experience, better understand the framework in which it has its existence, and not to dull the senses or "escape" the connotations of its own physical, "earthy" reality by necessarily seeking "higher" states of consciousness. The problem is that most people do not recognize what it feels like to be in a fully alert state of awareness. The following "Be Here Now" exercise will help the reader know the difference between feeling fully alert and in-focus in the waking state of consciousness compared to feeling sleepy and out-of-focus in the waking state of consciousness (Cunningham, 1986).

Sit with your eyes open easily, letting your vision take in whatever is before you.... Listen to everything. Identify all the sounds if you can.... Sit comfortably but make no great attempt to relax. Instead, feel your body in an alert manner – not in a sleepy, distant fashion.... Consciously, then, feel your body's sensations. Is there any taste in your mouth? What odors do you perceive? Now: Bring all those sensations together. Try to be aware of all of them at once, so that one adds to the others. If you find yourself being more concerned with one particular perception, then make an attempt to bring the ignored ones to the same clear focus. Let all of them together form a brilliant awareness of the moment... and when you have the moment's perception as clearly as possible then, willfully let it go [and close your eyes]. Let the unity disappear as far as your conscious thought is concerned.... Drop the package, as it were, as a unified group of perceptions. The previous clarity of the moment will have changed into something else.... Keep[ing] your eyes closed, become aware of whatever perceptions reach you, but this time do not judge or evaluate. *Then* in a flash open your eyes, alert your body, and try to bring all of your perceptions together as brilliantly and clearly as possible. When you have the sense world before you this time, let it [unify into a bright, clear focus], then again close your eyes and let it fall away. Do not focus. In fact, unfocus... *Then* in a flash open your eyes, alert your body and try to bring all of your perceptions together again as brilliantly and clearly as possible. (Roberts, 1979a, pp. 419-420)

Feeling the actual. This "Be Here Now" alertness exercises operationalizes what normal waking consciousness feels like when it is at its own best focus. It is similar to the gestalt exercise, "Feeling the Actual" which requests that the individual "Try for a few minutes to make up sentences stating what you are at this moment aware of. Begin each sentence with the words 'now' or 'at this moment' or 'here and

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now” (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951, p. 31). As an extension of the Alertness Exercise, the reader is invited to try the following exercise:

Experience the moment as you know it as fully as you can as it exists physically within the room and then imagine the experience that is present in one moment of time over the entire globe. Now try to appreciate the subjective experience of your own that exists in the moment and this multiplied by each living individual. (Roberts, 1979b, p. 414)

Experiencing the subjective point of one's own knowing. As with the disciplined practice of most meditation practices that serve to train waking consciousness to become more openly aware, performance of this "Be Here Now" exercise can enrich normal waking experience (Ram Dass, 1971). The particular kind of directed awareness that is evoked by the exercise can be likened to Tellegen and Atkinson's (1974) capacity for "Absorption" and to the qualities of awareness present during peak experiences (Maslow, 1968). The person during a generalized peak experience

is most here-now, most free of the past and of the future in various senses, most 'all there' in the experience. For instance, she can now listen better than at other times. Since she is least habitual and least expectant, she can fully listen without contamination by dragging in expectations based on past situations (which can't be identically like the present one), or hopes or apprehensions based on planning for the future (which means taking the present only as means to the future rather than as end in itself). Nor does she have to compare what is here with what is not here in order to evaluate it. (Maslow, 1968, pp. 108-109)

Openness to what is present. One does not have to leave the waking state and go to so-called "higher" states of consciousness (e.g., mystical) in order to be intimately aware of the contrast of being in-focus and out-of-focus. Once you experience this point of subjective knowing within yourself that clearly indicates to you how your waking consciousness feels when it is at its finest point of focus in physical reality, you will find it much easier to concentrate and to attend to the full range of experience available to you in the waking state. Making the effort to experience sense data as fully as you can brings all of one's perceptions together so that awareness more fully opens. One can liken this *openness of awareness to what is present* to

the 'allocentric' perceptual mode which involves a total interest in and openness to objects with all one's senses suggested by Schachtel (1959). . . . This alteration in perceptual activity may redefine, for the experient, the quality of reality itself leading to a) a heightened sense of the reality of the attentional object; b) imperviousness to normally distracting events; and c) an altered sense of reality in general and of the sense in particular. (Nelson, 1989, p. 196).

The individual will also possess a point of reference for any experiences involving an alteration of consciousness. Once the person knows what a clear, focused, alerted waking state of consciousness is, then he or she can learn what an alternate state of consciousness is. As Nelson (1989) states: "The 'full commitment' of attentional resources ascribed to absorptive capacity may be the basis for the ability to enter into 'other-reality' experiences. . . . [and] an important ability to enter into a particular type of directed focus which may lead to an altered state experience" (p. 204).

Different degrees of awareness within the normal waking state. There are different degrees of being aware, then, even in the normal waking state. We can be in number of different states of awareness every day depending on the kinds of chores and leisure activities engaged in throughout the day -- whether it be listening to relaxing music, watching an entertaining TV show, driving on the highway to work, or exerting effort to complete a difficult task. Our state of awareness (e.g., what we notice and what escapes our notice) will differ because of variations in alertness, degree of involvement with the physical environment, level of relaxation or attention, physical sensations, emotions, and way one thinks as one

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engages in different kinds of activities. Individuals are not fully conscious, then, even in the so-called waking state. Different activities calls forth different levels of relaxation and alertness, causing us to use our awareness in a different fashion, focusing our attention in different directions. Normal waking consciousness is usually spoken of as the baseline against which all other states of consciousness are to be judged. Such an understanding of the normal waking state views it from one context only, for we know that waking consciousness is to some extent dependent upon and overlaps with other alternate focuses that consciousness can take. The waking state itself, in certain terms, could be considered simply another kind of alternate state of consciousness among others when viewed within the context of all other types of awareness.

Ultradian rhythms of everyday waking states of consciousness. Consciousness involves daily rhythms and cycles of awareness, and has its reality within many fields other than the psychological -- biological, chemical, physical, electrical, temporal, and so forth. The rhythms of waking awareness during the day, for example, are associated with what are known as "ultradian" cycles (Kleitman, 1969). Within the 24-hour circadian cycle (*circa* "about" + *dies* "day"), there are shorter 90-120 minute ultradian rhythms which govern a variety of autonomic and endocrine activities affecting brain function and normal waking consciousness throughout the 24-hour circadian cycle (Kleitman, 1969). These 90-120 minute ultradian cycles not only reflect our 90-minute sleep-dream rhythms while we are asleep, but also reflect natural periodic needs for rest during the day and a "basic-rest-activity-cycle" (called the *BRAC* hypothesis) in many different behavioral and physiological activities during the day (Rossi, 1986). Ultradian rhythms are known to affect a variety of activities, including the following:

- Respiration (cycle of changes in the size and shape of nasal chambers causing a corresponding change in the degree to which the breath flows in and out easily, yawning, sighing),
- Gastrointestinal activity,
- Oral activities (smoking),
- Pupillary responses (dilation or contraction; vacant, faraway look),
- Hemispheric laterality (shift to right-hemisphere dominance),
- Psychophysiological processes (shift to parasympathetic dominance),
- Heart rate (pulse slowing),
- Body activity (economy of movement; accident-prone),
- Fantasy,
- Memory,
- Drug sensitivity,
- "Take-a-break" periodicity (napping behavior, interest in and need of a "change of pace")

Continual stress-induced disruption of the body's natural ultradian rhythms -- not taking a rest break every 90-120 minutes in an extended performance situation, for example -- has been shown to contribute to the occurrence of a variety of psychosomatic disorders, including heart rate alterations, gastritis, ulcers, asthma, and skin problems (Orr, Hoffman, & Hegge, 1974).

Consciousness as an Altered or Alternate State or Condition

A continuum of states of consciousness. The psychodynamic, cognitive and phenomenological approaches to the study of experience and behavior have helped mainstream psychologists distinguish a variety of states of consciousness and recognize that consciousness is not a single state, level, or stream, but a "spectrum of consciousness" (Wilber, 1977). This has made it possible to differentiate the various conditions of conscious awareness -- the content (*noema*) or the "what" of consciousness and the process (*noesis*) or the "how" of consciousness -- into a continuum of states, levels, and streams ranging from active, alert and focused concentration to more passive, less alert states of awareness, to more diffused

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"altered" (Tart, 1972, 1975) or "alternate" (Zinberg, 1977) states of consciousness. In this sense, consciousness itself is not "altered" or changed at all, but simply used in a different fashion and involves merely a change in the direction in which consciousness is focused. Alternate states of consciousness are simply other ways of perceiving various dimensions of activity and action, actuality and reality.

What is an alternate state of consciousness and how are they produced? An alternate state of consciousness may be defined as "any mental state(s), induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological maneuvers or agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness" (Ludwig, 1972, p. 11). Alternate states of consciousness (ASC) can be produced in a variety of seemingly disparate methods, including (Ludwig, 1972, pp. 12-15):

- Reduction of external stimulation or motor activity (e.g., solitary confinement; prolonged social deprivation while at sea, in the arctic, on the desert; highway hypnosis; extreme boredom; sleep and related phenomena)
- Increase in external stimulation or motor activity (e.g., trances associated with emotional contagion in a group or mob; fire walker's trance; trance states experienced during sexual encounters; snake handling; acute psychotic states)
- Increased alertness or mental involvement (e.g., prolonged vigilance during sentry duty; fervent praying; intense mental absorption in a task; prolonged watching of a stroboscope)
- Decreased alertness or relaxation of critical reasoning faculties (e.g., transcendental meditation; daydreaming, drowsiness; self-hypnotic trances; free association states; reading-trance, TV-trance, music-trance; muscular relaxation such as floating on the water or sun-bathing)
- Alterations in body chemistry and neurophysiology (e.g., fasting; dehydration; sleep deprivation; hyperventilation; déjà vu phenomena; fever; administration of anesthetics, psychedelics, sedatives, stimulants; nitrous oxide).

Examples of ASC and their common features. A range of ASC have been studied -- drug-induced states, hypnosis and the common everyday trance, biofeedback, daydreaming, sleeping, night dreaming, sensory deprivation, mediation, dreamless sleep, and paranormal experiences -- with each state or condition of awareness consisting of many levels and functions. At each state of consciousness, individuals are capable of processing different types of information at different levels of control (Goleman & Davidson, 1979; Ornstein, 1973; Tart, 1983; Wolman & Ullman, 1986). Features that most ASC have in common include "alterations in thinking," "disturbed time sense," "loss of control," "change in emotional expression," "body image change," "perceptual distortions," "change in meaning or significance," "sense of the ineffable," "feelings of rejuvenation," and "hypersuggestibility" (Ludwig, 1972, pp. 15-19). These features will vary depending on *set* (cultural expectations, role-playing, personal motivation and expectations) and *setting* (situational context, demand characteristics, the specific procedure employed to induce the ASC).

Alternate states of consciousness distinguished from transpersonal experience. Transpersonal psychiatrist Roger Walsh and psychotherapist Frances Vaughan note that "many definitions define transpersonal psychology in terms of altered states of consciousness (see Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992). . . . [and while] most transpersonalists would agree that altered states of consciousness are important, they do not necessarily define the field" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993b, p. 202). Stanislav Grof (1975a) makes a similar observation when he talks about the relationship between nonordinary, alternate states of consciousness occurring in psychedelic sessions with LSD and so-called transpersonal experience.

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Although there is considerable overlap between these two categories of experiences, they do not appear to be identical. The term ‘altered states of consciousness’ encompasses transpersonal experiences; there are, however, certain types of experiences that can be labeled altered states of consciousness, but do not meet the criteria for being transpersonal.... [i.e., involving an expansion or extension of consciousness beyond the usual ego boundaries and the limitations of time and space]....For example, a vivid and complex reliving of a childhood memory occurs in an altered state of consciousness, but is not necessarily a transpersonal experience (p. 315).

Peak experiences as an alternate state of consciousness. Alternate states of consciousness, nevertheless, remain an important topic of study in transpersonal psychology. One reason for their importance is that Abraham Maslow (1968, chap. 7), co-founder of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology, recognized the occurrence of an altered state of consciousness in the generalized “peak experiences” of “self-actualizers,” and acknowledged their significance. **Figure 4-2** presents the characteristics of identity that Abraham Maslow (1968, Chapter 7) noted during generalized peak experiences.

Insert Figure 4-2 here

Maslow’s studies on metamotivation, peak-experiences, and self-actualization suggested the possibility of alternate modes of experience and higher potentials of human nature that could form the basis of a new psychology that was “trans-humanistic” (Maslow, 1969a). Here was an indication of

spontaneous, ecstatic, unitive states of consciousness akin to those mystical experiences that have been widely reported and highly valued across centuries and cultures. Here was an indication that psychological health and potential might include possibilities undreamed of by mainstream or even humanistic psychology. Transpersonal psychology arose to explore these possibilities. (Walsh, 1993, p. 124)

Based on his study of “peak experiences” Maslow came to propose a model of human personality “beyond self-actualization.” Peak experiences once stabilized are one path to higher personality development.

Peak experiences can occur to individuals at almost any stage of development.... Nonetheless, the way in which those states or realms are experienced and interpreted depends to some degree on the stage of development of the person having the peak experience.... In order for higher development to occur, those temporary states must become permanent traits. Higher development involves, in part, the conversion of altered states of consciousness into permanent realization (say, for example, through the practice of meditation techniques). (Wilber, 2000b, pp. 14-15)

A wide range of alternate states of consciousness are recognized by transpersonal psychology.

Transpersonal psychology recognizes the existence of a wider range of alternate states of consciousness than are presented in general psychology textbooks. Beyond conventional mainstream psychology's list of waking, sleeping and dreaming, hypnotic, meditative, and drug-induced states of consciousness are the basic structures of consciousness beyond Piagetian formal operations -- subtle, causal, and ultimate states of consciousness -- identified by transpersonal scholar Ken Wilber (1981). These are regarded by transpersonal psychology as potentially useful frameworks for understanding states of exceptional psychological well-being and the further reaches of human consciousness "beyond health and normality" (Walsh & Shapiro, 1983). When Maslow and other transpersonal pioneers, including Alan Watts, Aldous Huxley, and Richard Alpert (Ram Dass) turned their attention to Asian philosophies, psychologies, and religions, they discovered ancient systems of thought that described not only a variety of altered states of consciousness that had been recognized and valued across many cultures but that highly disciplined and

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sophisticated techniques and methods to produce these transpersonal states of consciousness had been developed, tested and refined in their effectiveness across many centuries – alternate states of consciousness that had been ignored, denied, overlooked in Western culture or pathologized as signs of mental disturbance.

Ambivalence by mainstream Western psychology concerning the status of ASC. Mainstream psychology tends to have an ambivalent attitude toward alternate states of consciousness. Alternate states of consciousness are approved, on the one hand, when it comes to socialized drinking of alcohol or the use of anesthetics and pain relievers for certain medical conditions. Yet the majority of other alternate states are viewed as abnormal and pathological, a sign of social dysfunction and suboptimal functioning, and providing a distorted perception of reality. Many are spontaneous and “unconscious,” and because they are outside the control of the conscious ego-self appear undisciplined and chaotic, unreasoning and lacking all logic, and so are looked upon with suspicion. Alternate states of consciousness, however, serve positive functions, both for the individuals experiencing them and the cultures in which individuals live (Ward, 1989, 1994). Indeed, the seeking of sensations and perceptions particular to certain alternate states of consciousness throughout the history of the human species can be regarded as natural as the innate drives of hunger, thirst, and sex (Siegel, 1989). Alternate states of consciousness would also appear to serve the important function of allowing the conscious personality to see itself and its inner and outer worlds from a different, more objective perspective, from a stance *outside* the normal, waking one. By permitting the person to experience other focuses and methods of orientation that awareness can take, the individual becomes cognizant of other forms or appearances that reality can take that are equally valid and equally real. To become familiar with the “transpersonal” reality of oneself, the individual must to some extent grant that it exists, and be willing to step aside from one’s usual experience and state of consciousness to view oneself and the world in a more “objective” fashion from an alternate state of consciousness.

III. The Study of Transpersonal States of Consciousness

State-Specific Sciences

Four basic rules of “essential science” Transpersonal psychologist C. T. Tart (1971, 1976, 1992) proposes that most transpersonal experiences involve an alternate state of consciousness (ASC), that may include psychedelic, mystical, meditative, and dreaming states of consciousness. He identifies four useful rules of scientific method that can be applied to transpersonal research into these alternate states of consciousness (Tart, 1983, 2001).

1. Observation (or experiential apprehension). Observation of psychological processes is more difficult than observation of external objects because of its greater complexity and because our language is well given to describing the world of “outward things” perceived by the physical senses but lacks a proper vocabulary to describe the inner world of thoughts, emotions, and images perceived by the “inner senses.”
2. Public Nature of Observation. Observations are assumed to be replicable by any similarly specially trained observer. Consensual validation may be restricted by the fact that only observers in the same altered state of consciousness (ASC) are able to communicate adequately with each other. They may not be able to communicate adequately to someone in a different state of consciousness. Ultimately, “the validity of state-specific knowledge is anchored in the intersubjective agreement of adequately trained observers” (Ferrer, 2002, p. 47)
3. Theorizing. Theories about altered states of consciousness need to be internally consistent, comprehensive, logical and comprehensible. A person in one state of consciousness might come to a different conclusion about the nature of the same events

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observed in a different state of consciousness (Globus,1980). It is important therefore that scientists trained in the same state of consciousness check on the logical validity of each other's theorizing.

4. Observable Consequences. When a certain experience (observed condition) has occurred (if you do this), another (predicted) kind of experience will follow (you will know this).

A state of consciousness involves various cognitive subsystems. Tart (1971, 1976, 1983, 1992) proposes that any state of consciousness can be described in terms of the configuration and operation of ten psychological structures, all of which interact with one another to define a particular state of consciousness. All *states of consciousness* involve the cooperative participation of exteroceptors (receives sensory input), interoceptors (receives kinesthetic input), input processing (working memory), subconscious processes, one's sense of identity, evaluation and decision-making, emotions, space/time sense, long-term memory, motor output (behavior), plus so-called latent functions. These ten subsystems (plus potential latent functions) define any particular baseline state of consciousness and are shaped and limited by the operation of attention, body energies, characteristics of the structures themselves, and the particular social and cultural environments in which they operate. By applying the requisite disruptive force to the baseline state of consciousness -- either through some physiological action such as drugs, or attentional deployment such as meditation -- the current organization of the subsystems becomes destabilized. Destabilization continues until a new patterning force (such as mental set, setting, expectations, specific drug effects) is applied to shape the subsystems into a new overall system, producing an entirely new discrete state of consciousness with its own stabilization processes. Tart's (1976) "state-specific systems approach to consciousness," describes in detail the necessary connection between consciousness and experience. The patterning of relationships among our memory, emotions, space/time sense, sensations, cognition, subconscious, sense of identity, and behavior *shift and change* depending on the balance of stabilizing and destabilizing factors, including "set" (our beliefs and expectations),"setting" (the physical environment), and the state or condition of our awareness operative at the time.

State dependent learning. All states of consciousness are subject to state-dependent effects (e.g., information acquired in one state of consciousness is forgotten in another state, but recalled again when the initial state in which the information was originally acquired is reinstated). Tart proposes the establishment of *state-specific sciences* to handle the fact that some knowledge may only be available when you are back in the same state of consciousness it was originally created in. This is similar to the "encoding specificity" principle in cognitive psychology which states that the retrieval of information is best if you are in the same context as when you originally encoded the information. According to the "state-specific" paradigm, if knowledge gained in an altered state of consciousness is to be adequately assessed or evaluated by another individual, then that individual would have to enter the "same" state of consciousness in order to verify it.

How does one prove the existence of something one is not aware of? There is a fascinating dilemma involved here that involves the very nature of consciousness (Roberts, 1998b). How does an individual prove the existence of something to someone who is not aware of it because his or her attention is focused elsewhere? In the dream state, for instance, can the dreamer prove the physical reality of the bed upon which he or she sleeps when such an object does not exist for the dreamer? And in the waking state, how possible would it be for the person to prove the existence of the dream street upon which he or she recently walked, when such a street does not exist in physical reality? How does one prove the existence of that which does not exist when one's attention is momentarily directed toward and focused on a different sort of reality? This is similar to the situation of a person in a trance state who is aware of very little as far as physical objects are concerned and who is concentrating upon some object which others cannot see. How does one prove the existence of the material table in plain sight of the entranced person that under ordinary circumstances could be seen and touched, but of which the individual is unaware in

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any manner whatsoever and for whom the table does not exist because his or her attentions are focused elsewhere? If normal waking consciousness by its very nature possesses such trance-like qualities in which attention is severely limited and strongly directed toward and focused only on physical stimuli in the physical environment, then it would be highly difficult for the individual to prove the existence of any phenomenon to another person who is not focused within the same field of attention. Hence the need for a state-specific science that requires a change in the focus of conscious awareness in both actor and observer so that other realities can be perceived by both.

Challenges of the “state-specific” paradigm. According to Tart (1983), “in principle, consensual validation of internal phenomena by a trained observer is possible” (Tart, p. 213). This assumes, of course, that a person is able to enter into the “same” altered state of consciousness as another. Consciousness research suggests that this is a reasonable assumption given the observation that states of consciousness that are experientially, descriptively, and phenomenologically indistinguishable (e.g., some psychedelic and mystical experiences) can be produced by different causes (e.g., drugs, meditation, fasting, sensory deprivation) (Grof, 2000) -- a phenomenon referred to as “the principle of causal indifference” (Stace, 1988, p. 29). It may be difficult to demonstrate that one psychedelic, mystical, meditative, or dreaming state of consciousness is equivalent to another beyond this finding of common themes across verbal reports of such states, however. Tart recognizes that states of consciousness are not homogeneous, and within the “same” discrete state of consciousness there are many levels. My normal state of consciousness may be your altered state of consciousness, and vice versa, and unless some sort of psychophysical scaling methods are used such as those used to obtain measurements of trance depth in self-hypnosis, state equivalence may be difficult to determine. If shifts in an entire state of consciousness result from changes in the functioning or interaction of a single psychological subsystem (e.g., exteroceptors, interoceptors, input processing, subconscious processes, sense of identity, evaluation and decision-making processes, emotions, space/time sense, memory, motor output), then much experimental control over set and setting will be required to assure the relative stability of any discrete state of consciousness (if such a thing exists). It may be that no identical duplication of states of consciousness is possible, that variations may be slight but are always present, and that the state of consciousness achieved by one individual is never precisely the same state of consciousness reached by another individual (just as identical twins are hardly identical). One state may resemble another, but exact duplication is impossible. The very attempt to duplicate a state of consciousness (or even a single thought, for that matter) would create strains and pulls that change it to a greater or lesser degree, actually forcing the various psychological substructures to line up in a different configuration.

Transpersonal-Phenomenological Inquiry

Phenomenological reduction: A case study. The technique of protocol analysis – the use of the subject’s own verbal reports as data – has been extended to the phenomenological study of transpersonal experiences, without the assumptions and limitations of an information processing model (Ericsson & Simon, 1984; Brand & Anderson, 1998). Transpersonal psychologists Valle & Mohs (1998) report how the phenomenological approach can be applied to the analysis of verbal reports of experiences with transpersonal qualities: experiences of being silent, being with a dying person, being with suffering orphaned children, being carried along by unforeseen events, feeling grace, experiencing unconditional love, encountering a divine presence during a near-death experience (Valle, 1998). The following 11 themes or elements were identified as being interwoven throughout the descriptions of all seven experiences, characterizing them as “transpersonal” (Valle and Mohs, 1998, pp. 105-106):

1. An instrument, vehicle, or container for the experience
2. Intense emotional or passionate states, pleasant or painful
3. Being in the present moment, often with an acute awareness of one’s authentic nature
4. Transcending space and time

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5. Expansion of boundaries with a sense of connectiveness or oneness, often with the absence of fear
6. A stillness or peace, often accompanied by a sense of surrender
7. A sense of knowing, often as sudden insights and with a heightened sense of spiritual understanding
8. Unconditional love
9. Feeling grateful, blessed, or graced
10. Ineffability
11. Self-transformation

That which is constant, identical, or invariant across transpersonal experiences of the mystical-type.

One or more of these 11 characteristics can be found in accounts of other transpersonal-type experiences, including Richard Bucke's (1901/1969) description of cosmic consciousness, Abraham Maslow's (1968) discussion of peak experiences, Stanislav Grof's (1985) research of nonordinary states of consciousness, Daniel Goleman's (1988) study of the varieties of meditative experience, Evelyn Underhill's (1911/1961) classic study of mysticism, Bernadette Roberts's (1984) experience of no-self, Lex Hixon's (1989) descriptions of the experience of enlightenment in sacred traditions, and Swami Muktananda's (1978) account of his spiritual realization. It is important to recognize that all these are *spontaneous* states of consciousness, and that it would be premature to claim that they are identical states of consciousness. Major differences are likely to emerge if we are to map these transpersonal experiences on multiple experiential dimensions (e.g., self-sense, content of the experience, cognitive control) as occurs in the research method called "phenomenological mapping" (Braud & Anderson, 1998).

Phenomenological mapping: A case study. Using the research method called "phenomenological mapping," alternate states of consciousness and the psycho-technologies used to facilitate them (e.g., meditation, yoga, LSD, hypnosis) may be categorized and compared along specific experiential dimensions (e.g., cognitive control, concentration, arousal, emotion, sense of self) to identify differences between states of consciousness that, on the surface, appear similar or identical (Braud & Anderson, 1998).

Phenomenological mapping...allows us to map, compare and differentiate states of consciousness on not one, but multiple experiential dimensions with greater precision than has heretofore been achieved... [so that] we can better appreciate the richness and variety of transpersonal states as well as clearly differentiate them from pathological states such as schizophrenia, with which they have sometimes been confused. (Walsh, 1993, p. 126)

Content analysis of literary accounts of alternate states of consciousness described in shamanic literature and in Asian philosophies and religious traditions, and the analysis of experiential reports of participants undergoing these rites and rituals, revealed that the states of consciousness being described were not identical, but could be distinguished on a number of variables.

That which is inconstant, different, variant across transpersonal experiences of the subtle-type.

Phenomenological mapping disclosed significant differences between states of consciousness during shamanic, yogic, and vipassana meditation practices on variables such as cognitive control, arousal, affect, sense of identity, awareness of the environment, and content of experience (Walsh, 1993). **Figure 4-3** presents a summary of the results of such one such analysis (Walsh, 1993, p. 126).

Insert Figure 4-3 here

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Alternate states of consciousness facilitated by shamanic, yogic, and Buddhist practices were found not to be one homogeneous thing, but richly varied and heterogeneous states of awareness.

Deep Structural Analysis

Deep structural analysis: A case study. Ken Wilber (1977, 1980; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986) has pioneered the use of the transpersonal research method called “deep structural analysis.” In this method, common experiential qualities are identified that constitute “deep structural” elements responsible for the underlying similarities that unite or connect different experiences. The deep structural elements are then clustered and organized into a developmental sequence that provides an overarching stage theory of their function and relationships. Using this technique, Wilber (1977, 1980) has organized and systematized a vast number of different states of consciousness into a relatively few number of deep structures. Wilber has identified a small number of deep structures underlying different states of consciousness beyond Piagetian formal operations and has *ordered and stratified* them into a developmental sequence consisting of three transpersonal stages he calls “subtle” (in which archetypal figures arise into awareness), “causal” (in which no objects or images arise into awareness), and “absolute” (in which all phenomena are understood to be creations of consciousness). Each stage of consciousness has their own corresponding deep structures that are responsible for generating the common phenomena experienced while in that stage of consciousness. For example, the shaman seeing power animals, the Christian contemplative envisioning angels, and the Hindu practitioner merging with her *Isha deva* are all clearly having different experiences. “Yet at a deep structural level they are all seeing archetypal spiritual figures” (Walsh, 1993, p. 127). In this case, seeing “archetypal spiritual figures” is a deep structural element underlying the specific forms that mental phenomena in a particular state of consciousness may take. It is the deep structural element that defines what, in this instance, Wilber (1980) refers to as the “subtle stage of consciousness.” In this stage of consciousness, all mental phenomena may take the specific form of archetypal spiritual figures.

IV. The Transpersonal Nature of Human Consciousness

Four ASCs are examined in this section -- psychedelic, mystical, meditative, and dreaming -- that illustrate the transpersonal (beyond ego-self) nature of human consciousness. The transpersonal nature of human consciousness refers to the innate capability of human consciousness to expand beyond its usual boundaries and to richly form from itself a broad range of transformative capacities and extraordinary functioning. In some cases, this may involve an expansion of identity that transcends ordinary limitations of time and space. Teaching the ego-self to expand is most important, and the ways are not difficult. It is the flexible, dynamic and changeable nature of personality structure, with its ego-self and normal waking consciousness, that makes enlightenment and the expansion of identity possible in the first place. It is not beyond anyone's human abilities.

Psychedelic States of Consciousness

A cartography of the psyche. Psychiatrist Stanislav Grof is one of the co-founders of the transpersonal psychology movement (Yensen & Dryer, 1996; Grof, 2000). His observations of the effects of LSD on consciousness during psychotherapy and using nondrug experiential techniques, such as holotropic breathwork, pioneered state-of-consciousness theory and research and expanded our understanding of the unconscious dimensions of the human psyche (Grof, 1980a, 1985; Grof & Bennet, 1993). Grof's LSD and holotropic breathwork research has revealed a cartography of the psyche that includes not only the Freudian personal subconscious, Rankian birth memories, and the Jungian collective unconscious, but also deeper levels containing reincarnational and racial memories, and multidimensional encounters with nonphysical beings and entities (Grof, 1985). Four major types of experiences catalyzed and amplified by LSD and holotropic breathwork sessions were identified:

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1. *Abstract and aesthetic experiences* involving “impressive perceptual changes in the environment” (Grof, 1980a, p. 344).
2. *Psychodynamic experiences* involving “important memories, emotional problems, and unresolved conflicts from various life periods of the individual...regression into childhood and even infancy, reliving of traumatic memories, infantile sexuality, conflicts in various libidinal zones, Oedipus and Electra conflict, castration anxiety, penis envy” (Grof, 1980a, p. 345).
3. *Perinatal experiences* involving “problems related to physical pain and agony, dying and death, biological birth, aging, disease, and decrepitude, ...and experiences related to the circumstances of the biological birth” (Grof, 1980a, pp. 448-349).
4. *Transpersonal experiences* involving “spiritistic and mediumistic experiences, experiences of an encounter with superhuman spiritual entities, archetypal experiences, and experiences of an encounter with blissful and wrathful deities. Special types of rare and advanced spiritual experiences are the activation of different *charkas* and arousal of the Serpent Power (Kundalini), consciousness of the Universal Mind, and the Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void” (Grof, 1980a, p. 357).

Figure 4-4 identifies the remarkable kinds of transpersonal expansions of identity beyond usual ego-body boundaries that have been observed to occur in LSD psychotherapy sessions and during non-drug holotropic breathwork.

Insert Figure 4-4 here

Spiritual emergency. Individuals encountering these various dimensions of the psyche during psychotherapy often experience significant relief of addictions, physical health problems, and psychopathologies (Grof, 1988). In addition, Stanislav Grof and his wife Christina Grof have coined the term *spiritual emergency* to help professionals differentiate mystical states from mental illness and have organized a national network of therapists to assist individuals who may experience emotional or psychological crises of a spiritual or transpersonal nature (S. Grof & C. Grof, 1989, C. Grof & S. Grof, 1990).

LSD as a non-specific catalyst or amplifier of deep levels of the psyche. After analyzing the records of over 2,600 LSD sessions, Grof (1980b, 1985) could not identify one experiential pattern that represented a single standard, invariant response to the chemical action of the drug. Drug responses varied among individuals even though they were given the same dosage levels under identical sets and settings. Experiential patterns were strongly modified by psychological and contextual factors, including the personality and behavior of the therapist, the personality and belief system of the participant, the therapeutic relationship, the psychological set and contextual setting in which the drug is administered. These observations suggested to Grof an important idea: The experiences observed to occur during LSD were not simply toxic effects manufactured or produced by the chemical action of the drug. Rather, the drug acted as a *non-specific catalyst* or amplifier that activated deep levels of the psyche. Rather than consider patients' experiences in psychedelic sessions (high dose of 300-500 mcg to facilitate mystical experiences) as manifestations of toxic psychosis, Grof views LSD as an “unspecific amplifier or catalyst of mental processes that confronts the experiencer with his own unconscious” (Grof, 1980a, p. 342). The “mind manifesting” agent simply intensified and accelerated the emergence of material from inner realms of the human unconscious to reveal aspects of the human mind unrecognized and unacknowledged by classical psychoanalysis or any existing system of psychology other than transpersonal psychology. In his later development of a non-drug technique called “holotropic breathwork” for producing a non-ordinary state of consciousness, Grof (1988) discovered that similar transpersonal phenomena as occurred during LSD sessions were being produced, except now it was a non-drug catalyst that was activating the

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deep levels of the human unconscious. What this means is that these separate states of consciousness, these multiple levels of awareness, these seemingly unrelated personality aspects manifested by LSD and holotropic breathwork are not unnatural, artificial productions. LSD and holotropic breath are merely methods that allow the psychologist to study the personality directly. These seemingly separate states of consciousness, levels of awareness, and personality aspects -- that can also be demonstrated through hypnosis -- operate continually and quite normally beneath the stream of consciousness we call normal waking consciousness.

Spiritual experiences noted during psychedelic sessions. Stanislav Grof (1975a, 1975b, 1980a, 1985) has reported that many of the transpersonal experiences observed to occur during LSD sessions were phenomenologically (descriptively or experientially) indistinguishable from those spiritual experiences described in the literature of various ancient and indigenous African, Far East, Middle East, Asian, Western, and Native American religious and mystical systems of thought (i.e., temple mysteries, mystery religions, and so forth).

From the phenomenological point of view, it does not seem possible to distinguish the experiences in psychedelic sessions from similar experiences occurring under different circumstances, such as instances of so-called spontaneous mysticism, experiences induced by various spiritual practices, and phenomena induced by new laboratory techniques. (Grof, 1975a, p. 316)

Grof (2000) has noted that direct “spiritual” experiences that occur during psychedelic sessions tend to take two different forms: *the immanent divine* (“people, animals, and inanimate objects in the environment [are seen] as radiant manifestations of a unified field of cosmic creative energy”) and the *transcendent divine* (“manifestation of archetypal beings in the realms of reality that are ordinarily...unavailable to perception in the everyday state of consciousness [are perceived to have their origins] from another level or order of reality” (Grof, 2000, pp. 210-211).

Implications for psychology. What are the implications for psychology of Grof’s pioneering consciousness research into the psyche’s greater reality revealed by drug and non-drug alterations of consciousness? First, consciousness research has the potential of overcoming conventional psychology’s highly limited ideas about the nature of the self by introducing original concepts and theories into discussions regarding the nature of the human psyche, and by proposing research agendas that promise to give us a greater understanding of human potential and exceptional well-being beyond the norm (Addy, 2007; Rossi & Cheek, 1988, appendix). Where conventional ideas of selfhood fail to do justice to the creativity of personality action, transpersonal psychology dares to conceptualize previously unknown elements of the self and to propose new ways to explore its greater reality.

A second implication is that all such expansions of identity beyond usual ego-self boundaries should be considered valid and real experiences that hint at the multidimensional nature of the human psyche and tell us something important about the abilities that lie within each individual. There is no *a priori* reason for supposing otherwise. The data of modern consciousness research indicate that the quality of identity is far more mysterious than we can presently comprehend within the framework of beliefs currently operative in contemporary perspectives of psychology (Grof, 2000). Identity itself may not be dependent upon physical form (Roberts, 1972). Clinical observations from deep experiential self-exploration (e.g., sensory deprivation, sleep deprivation, biofeedback for voluntary control of internal states, hypnosis) and transpersonal psychotherapy (e.g., bioenergetics, primal therapy, rebirthing, guided imagery with music, holotropic breathwork, psychedelic sessions with LSD, episodes of psychospiritual crises) indicate no apparent boundaries to the types of identifications or personifications of which the human psyche is capable.

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Mystical States of Consciousness

Mystical experiences as alternate states of consciousness. Transpersonal psychologists tend to view experiences of “mystical union,” “enlightenment,” “nirvana”, and related experiences as natural and beneficial nonordinary, alternate states of consciousness that may be subject to state-dependent learning effects. The idea that experiences of the sacred may be interpreted as alternate states of consciousness arose from the two-fold observation that (a) psychedelic drugs have been used across centuries and cultures to induce religious experiences and (b) some drug experiences are phenomenologically indistinguishable from accounts of natural mystical experiences (Doblin, 1991; Grinspoon & Bakalar, 1997; Smith, 1964, 2000; Walsh, 2003).

Alternates states of consciousness, religious experiences and transpersonal experiences distinguished. Although there is considerable overlap between religious experiences and transpersonal experiences, they are not identical. All transpersonal experiences involve some degree of an alternate (i.e., dissociated) state of consciousness, but not all alternate states of consciousness are transpersonal (e.g., a vivid and complex reliving of a childhood memory as might occur in hypnosis). Some, but not all, transpersonal experiences are experiences of the sacred, but not all religious experiences are transpersonal, and it is usually assumed that “transpersonal experiences can be interpreted either religiously or nonreligiously according to individual preference” (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993a, p. 6).

Are drugs capable of inducing genuine religious experiences? Transpersonal psychiatrist Roger Walsh (2003) suggests: “Yes, psychedelics can induce genuine mystical experiences, but only sometimes, in some people, under some circumstances” (p. 2). Huston Smith (1964) in his article, “Do Drugs Have Religious Import?” states that “There are...innumerable drug experiences that have no religious features...This proves that not all drug experiences are religious; it does not prove that no drug experiences are religious” (pp. 520, 523). Given the right mental set and physical setting, individuals report drug experiences that are indistinguishable from those reported by mystics across centuries and cultures (Doblin, 1991; Huxley, 1963; Watts, 1962). It seems that “subjectively identical experiences can be produced by multiple causes” (Walsh, 2003, p. 2).

A religious experience does not necessarily produce a religious life. Can a transient and time-limited drug-induced experience of the sacred produce an enduring and permanent religious or spiritual life? Not necessarily. “A single experience, no matter how powerful, may be insufficient to permanently overcome mental and neural habits conditioned for decades to mundane modes of functioning” (Walsh, 2003, p. 4). Major enduring life changes may occasionally occur (see, for example, the case studies of “quantum change” reported by Miller & C’de Baca, 2001), but long-term personality changes usually will require the long-term practice of some spiritual discipline, such as vipassana (mindfulness) meditation. “The universal challenge is to transform peak experiences into plateau experiences, epiphanies into personality, states into stages, and altered states into altered traits, or, as I believe Huston Smith once eloquently put it, “to transform flashes of illumination into abiding light.” (Walsh, 2003, p. 4)

Qualities of religious experience. William James’s (1902/1936) *Varieties of Religious Experience* “continues to be the most widely used textbook in psychology of religion courses taught throughout the United States” (Taylor, 1996, p. 84). James’s review of anecdotes, textual studies, and field studies of mystical experiences led him to identify four qualities that characterized all mystical states of consciousness: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. In James’s words,

Its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others...They are states of insight into depths of truths unplumbed by the discursive intellect... Mystical states cannot be sustained for long... The mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed as if he were grasped and held by a superior power. (James, 1902/1936, pp. 371-372)

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All subjective religious experience, in William James's view, reflected humanity's dual conscious-subconscious nature and our connection to regions below the threshold of waking consciousness which are the source of deeply felt religious emotions. "Personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical states of consciousness" (James, 1902/1936, p. 370). James saw mystical states of consciousness essentially as bridge-experiences that connected consciously "known" and subconsciously "unknown" psychic realities with what James referred to as "the higher part of the universe" (James, 1902/1936, p. 507). Each religious experience revealed a separate spiritual reality. There are as many spiritual realities as there are individuals who experience them, an epistemological position that James referred to as "noetic pluralism" (Taylor, 1996, p. 134).

Phenomenological accounts of direct illumination. The writings of Christian contemplatives, mystics, and saints (e.g., St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa of Avila, Lady Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, St. Augustine, Catherine of Siena, Origen) and non-Christian contemplatives, mystics, and saints (e.g., Sri Ramakrishna who died in 1886, Ramana Maharshi who died in 1950, and Paramahansa Yogananda who died in 1952) provide excellent descriptive accounts of individual illumination, enlightenment, and direct apprehension of insights during mystical states of consciousness. Other accounts include the following:

- Evelyn Underhill's (1911/1961) *Mysticism: A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*
- William James's (1902/1936) *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*
- Rudolf Otto's (1923/1950) *Idea of the Holy*
- Paramahansa Yogananda's (1946/1974) *Autobiography of a Yogi*
- Lex Hixon's (1989) *Coming Home: The Experience of Enlightenment in Sacred Traditions*
- Piero Ferrucci's (1990) *Inevitable Grace: Breakthroughs in the Lives of Great Men and Women*
- Anonymous (1961) *The Cloud of Unknowing*
- Bernadette Roberts's (1985) *The Path to No-Self: Life at the Center*
- Ralph Waldo Trine's (1897) *In Tune With the Infinite*
- Richard Maurice Bucke's (1901/1969) *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*
- Richard D. Mann's (1984) *The Light of Consciousness*

Contemporary mysticism. Transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilber (1985) presents a description of mystical consciousness disclosed to him based on his 25 years of practicing Eastern forms of meditation:

In the mystical consciousness, Reality is apprehended directly and immediately, meaning without any mediation, any symbolic elaboration, any conceptualization, or any abstractions; subject and object become one in a timeless and spaceless act that is beyond any and all forms of mediation.... contacting reality in its 'suchness,' its 'isness,' its 'thatness,' without any intermediaries; beyond words, symbols, names, thoughts, images. (Wilber, 1985, p. 7)

Transpersonal psychotherapist Thomas Yeomans (1992), in a monograph titled, *Spiritual Psychology: An Introduction*, describes his direct apprehension of the "soul" as disclosed through the practice of the techniques and exercises of Psychosynthesis:

When touched directly, it [the soul] is experienced as a pure beingness that is connected as well to all other beings and to an experience of larger Life, Great Spirit, or God. ... Though there is no specific content to this experience, there is a profound aliveness and connectedness, a freedom from the fear of death, and acceptance of one's life *as it is being lived in its uniqueness now*, and an infusion of joy and gratitude for Life as a whole. Sometimes the soul is experienced as that which gives meaning to life, or a sense of destiny and purpose. At other times it is experienced as

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that which guides and sustains a life. At still others it is experienced as that which goes beyond life and death, a principle of eternity and infinity that pervades and infuses mortal life. In still other traditions it is described as being no-thing, or emptiness, or a void, that which has no specific content, but which is in, and of, itself most alive and connected to all Life. And always it is seen as central and valued in human existence, sought for, discovered, and cultivated and then lived as fully as possible within the confines of ordinary daily existence. (pp. 13-14)

Psychologists William Miller and Janet C' de Baca (2001) present other contemporary examples of epiphanies and sudden insights that result in "vivid, surprising, benevolent, and enduring personal changes" (p. 4), some of which possess the characteristics of conventional mystical experience (i.e., ineffability, noetic quality, transience, passivity, unity, transcendence, awe, positivity, distinctiveness). Spontaneous experiences of the numinous are apparently more common than usually supposed, but can be cultivated by deliberately working to retrain habits of thought and behavior along more spiritual lines by long-term contemplative practice (Ferrucci, 1990; Hixon, 1989).

Meditative States of Consciousness

The enlightened state of consciousness. Classical Buddhist psychology speaks of ultimate states of consciousness such as "Enlightenment" and the "Great Realization," What is enlightenment?

*Enlightenment is realization of the truth of Being. . . . In philosophic terms, enlightenment is comprehending the unity of all dualities, the harmonious composite of all opposites, the oneness of endless multiplicity and diversity. In psychological terms, it is transcendence of all sense of limitation and otherness. In humanistic terms, it is understanding that the journey is the teaching, that the path and the destination are ultimately one. In theological terms, it is comprehending the union of God and humanity. In ontological terms, it is the State of all states, the Condition of all conditions that transcends the entire cosmos yet is also everyday reality, since nothing is apart from it or ever can be. . . . St. Paul called it 'the peace of God that passeth understanding' and Richard Maurice Bucke named it 'cosmic consciousness.' In Zen, it is *satori*, in yoga it is *samadhi* or *moksha*, in Sufism it is *wu* or The Ultimate Tao. Gurdjieff labeled it 'objective consciousness.'* (White, 1984, pp. xv- xvi)

Healthy and unhealthy qualities of consciousness. The followers of Gautama Buddha identified a set of 14 "healthy" and 14 "unhealthy" states of mind or qualities of consciousness that can either promote or inhibit the state of consciousness known as "enlightenment" within the individual. These qualities of consciousness are described more fully in the classical Buddhist text called *Abhidhamma* (Hall & Lindsay, 1976). The 14 basically negative, unhealthy qualities of consciousness that impede and interfere with healthy personality functioning in an ideal or ultimate sense include: delusion and false view, shamelessness and remorseless, egoism and perplexity, agitation and worry, greed and avarice, envy and aversion, contraction and stupor. Each of the 14 unhealthy qualities of consciousness is opposed or compensated by a set of 14 healthy qualities of consciousness that exist in a kind of "reciprocal inhibition" relationship with the unhealthy factors: insight and mindfulness, modesty and discretion, rectitude and confidence, nonattachment and non-aversion, impartiality and composure, buoyancy and pliancy, efficiency and proficiency. To overcome the influence of any unhealthy factors, the personality needs to bring into mind the specific healthy mental state that is antagonistic to the specific unhealthy one that the personality wants to inhibit. Becoming aware of these states of mind within oneself is the first step in either enhancing or minimizing their effect in an individual's experience of personal reality, and achieving an enlightened state of consciousness. The mind is the starting point for understanding the structure, dynamics, and development of human consciousness in Buddhist psychology. As Buddha once said: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; all that we are is founded on our thoughts, and is made up of our thoughts." Know your thoughts and you know yourself. Control your thoughts and you control yourself.

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Health mental factors and meditation practice mutually reinforcing. Meditation is the primary technique to first become aware of unhealthy mental factors in one's awareness and then develop the attentional control or "mindfulness" necessary to increase the amount of healthy factors in one's mental state to counteract the generation of spontaneous generation of unhealthy factors that may arise in one's mind (Goleman & Epstein, 1983). A specific positive mental state is intentionally sought and its emergence systematically encouraged through the practice of meditation so that it proactively blocks the rising up of a specific negative factor (or group of factors) into awareness. The trademarks of "exceptional well-being" is the increased amount of healthy factors in our personality (and thus the frequency of positive affective and cognitive states such as described above), and decreased amount of unhealthy ones (Walsh & Shapiro, 1983). The ideal person is said to possess all 14 healthy qualities of consciousness as enduring traits. It is a long-term personality change that has occurred as the result of the long-term practice of a spiritual practice, such as vipassana (mindfulness) meditation. Alternate states have been transformed into altered traits, whereby one's state of consciousness has been lastingly altered.

Meditation is the technique of choice designed to help the individual achieve enlightenment.

Meditation is the technique or method of choice designed to help the individual achieve the state of enlightenment. This should not be surprising since the judgment of what constitutes "healthy" and "unhealthy" factors was determined in the first place by early Buddhist meditators who sought to identify the reasons or causes for states of mind that facilitated or interfered with their attempt to "seek the heart of wisdom" in meditation (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987). The 14 health and 14 unhealthy states of mind were identified empirically as a result of the meditation experience of Buddha's followers. Those qualities of mind that helped promote the practice of meditation by concentrating and quieting the mind were regarded as "healthy factors" and those mental states that interfered were termed "unhealthy." Through the practice of meditation, the personality can learn to make the occurrence of the healthy mental factors more frequent in one's life and eliminate the occurrence of unhealthy factors, or at least control their emergence. By systematically controlling environmental, behavioral, and attentional factors through the practice of meditation, the individuals may come to achieve a more or less consistent occurrence of healthy mental factors in one's experience and awareness, and thus achieve enlightenment.

Meditation defined. Meditation can be defined as "a family of practices that train attention in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and to cultivate specific mental qualities such as awareness, insight, concentration, equanimity, and love. It aims for the development of optimal states of consciousness and psychological well-being" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993a, pp. 52-53). Meditation is said to constitute "the art of transcendence":

Although practices and techniques vary widely there seem to be six common elements that constitute the heart of the art of transcendence: ethical training; development of concentration; emotional transformation; a redirection of motivation from egocentric, deficiency-based needs to higher motives, such as self-transcendence; refinement of awareness; and the cultivation of wisdom. (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993a, p. 48)

The practice of meditation. There are numerous books, articles, and training manuals, ranging from the theoretical to the practical, that the student of meditation can use to help him or her along the path of enlightenment and the meditation traditions of the East and West. In one's search for the "heart of wisdom" and exceptional well-being as outlined in the *Abhidhamma*, many practical tools exist to help a person on their own journey (see, for example, Ram Dass, 1990; Goleman, 1988; Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987; Hanh, 1987; 1990; Hewitt, 1978; Hixon, 1989; Humphreys, 1968; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Kornfield, 1993, 2000; ; LeShan, 1975; Osho, 1993; Salzberg & Goldstein, 2007; Sekida, 2005; Suzuki, 1988;

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Walsh, 1999a Young, 1994). "The art of transcendence. . . says that attention can and must be sustained if we are to mature beyond conventional developmental limits" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993a, p. 49).

Two popular kinds of meditation: Concentration and insight (mindfulness). Two different types of meditation practice designed to train the conscious attention of waking consciousness are popular: (a) concentration meditation (*Samatha*) in which attention is focused upon a single selected object for an extended period of time, and is designed to develop one-pointed awareness (or *samadhi*), and (b) insight meditation or mindfulness (*Vipassana*) in which attention is focused upon the many different objects as they spontaneously arise into awareness, and is designed to develop transcendental awareness. In both forms of meditation practice -- including others such as *koans*, contemplative prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, have mercy on us"), and creative visualization -- the goal is to quiet and still the noisy, active, rationally discursive mind to allow the "higher" psychic, subtle, causal, and ultimate or nondual dimensions of awareness to emerge.

That is the essence of genuine mediation. It is simply a way to continue evolution, to continue our growth and development. It is, in a nutshell, the highest form and highest stage of a scientific developmental psychology. That's meditation. (Wilber, 1994, p. 43)

Concentration meditation is static in that whenever attention drifts away from the selected object chosen for concentration -- the breath, a candle flame, the body, feelings, mental states -- it is gently drawn back to the original object of attention until it can be maintained for longer periods of time. It is often associated with various forms of yoga practices and aims primarily at eliciting the healthy mental factor of insight. There is a separation between daily activities and spiritual practice here in that concentration meditation usually requires a quiet, secluded environment that is relatively free of distractions in order to be performed.

Mindfulness meditation, on the other hand, is dynamic in that attention is focused upon anything that is happening in the moment as it happens here and now. Rather than being practiced in an isolated setting, mindfulness meditation is practiced while one goes about daily activities -- waking up, using the toilet, brushing teeth, bathing, getting dressed, walking, sitting down, cleaning the house, using the telephone, driving the car, drinking coffee, going to sleep. There is no separation between the spiritual and the mundane. Mindfulness meditation, as the name implies, aims primarily at eliciting the healthy factor of mindfulness. **Figure 4-5** presents several practical examples of mindfulness meditation that focus the individual's attention on the present moment and that show the situations for being mindful are always numerous and close at hand -- waking in the morning, laying down for a nap, walking, making tea or coffee, washing dishes.

Insert Figure 4-5 here

Transpersonal scholar Ken Wilber (1994) in an interview with *Quest* magazine, provides a good description of the difference between the two types of meditation.

Let us say you are looking at a wall that has hundreds of dots painted on it. In concentrative meditation, you just look at one dot, and you look at it so fiercely that you don't even see the other dots. This develops your powers of concentration. In [mindfulness], or insight meditation, on the other hand you try to be as aware of all the dots as you can. This increases your sensitivity, awareness, and wisdom, in that sense. . . . By gradually concentrating on a single object, you as subject gradually become 'identified' with that object. You start to undercut subject/object dualism, which is the basis of all suffering and illusion. Gradually. . . you transcend your ordinary

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self or ego, and find the higher and subtler dimensions of existence -- the spiritual and transcendental. However, . . . concentrative meditation. . . by itself doesn't uproot our initial tendencies to create dualism in the first place. . . It tries to bypass them. It focuses on one dot and ignores all the others. . . . For that, you have to look at all the dots. You have to investigate all of experience, with detachment, nonjudgmentalism, equanimity, and crystal clear awareness. (pp. 43)

Meditation as an adjunct to psychology. Meditation practice has long been a topic of study in transpersonal psychology, particularly as an adjunct to traditional psychotherapies (Aitken, 1982; Deatheridge, 1975; Epstein, 1984; Haimlerl & Valentine, 2001; Lesh, 1970; Page et al., 1997, 1999; Russell, 1986; Shapiro, 1992; Speeth, 1982; Walsh, 1999b). Meditation can be practiced by individuals of all ages, even children (Murdock, 1978). Many transpersonal psychologists themselves engage in meditation practice and provide first-hand report of their experiences (e.g., Goleman, 1971; Gross, 1984; Tart, 1971b, 2001; Walsh, 1977, 1978). More recently, meditation practice has been incorporated into mainstream psychology as a method of psychotherapy with far-reaching benefits for exploring, understanding, enhancing, and healing the human personality in all of its aspects -- physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual (Richards & Bergin, 1997; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). Although meditation methods have been largely inspired by Buddhism and Hinduism, transcendental meditation, and yoga, non-Christian forms of meditation have been found to have value for Christians (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1989; Meadow & Culligan, 1987; O'Hanlon, 1981; Samy, 1991; Toolan, 1987).

The physical and physiological effects of meditation. A great deal of scientific attention has been given to the physiology of meditation. Meditation is known to produce beneficial physiological effects on the cardiovascular system (e.g., heart rate, redistribution of blood flow, blood pressure and hypertension), central nervous system (e.g., EEG activity, specific cortical control), blood chemistry (adrenal and thyroid hormones, total protein, amino acids and phenylalanine, plasma prolactin and growth hormone, lactate, white blood cells, red blood cell metabolism, cholesterol), metabolic and respiratory systems, muscle tension, skin resistance and spontaneous galvanic skin response), and other physiological effects (e.g., brain metabolism, salivary, changes, cancer treatment, changes in body temperature, alleviation of pain) (Murphy & Donovan, 1997). In addition to its physiological effects,

there have been a large number of experimental studies of meditation's effects on personality, performance, and perception. Intriguing findings include evidence for enhanced creativity, perceptual sensitivity, empathy, lucid dreaming, self-actualization, a positive sense of self control, and marital satisfaction. Student of TM [Transcendental Meditation] suggest that it may foster maturation as measured by scales of ego, moral and cognitive development, intelligence, academic achievement, self-actualization and states of consciousness. (Walsh, 1993, p. 61)

Some studies demonstrating positive benefits from meditation has been criticized for lacking sufficient control conditions that could rule out alternative explanations of positive effects of meditation (Druckman & Bjork, 1991). Transcendental Mediation (TM), for instance, has been found to be physiologically and phenomenologically similar to a hypnotic trance in some respects (Barmark & Gaunitz, 1979). Meditation is not a homogeneous state of consciousness and encompasses a wide variety of practices and altered states (Goleman, 1978-1979, 1988).

Transcendental meditation and continuous consciousness. The experience of "enlightenment" has been characterized in the mystical traditions of the East as involving a form of heightened awareness during both waking and sleeping states of consciousness. Through advanced meditation practice, one can allegedly access so-called "pure consciousness" by developing a "witness" -- a silently observing portion of the self that witnesses other states of consciousness (e.g., waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep) without trying to change them (see, for example, Deikman, 1982). Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder

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of Transcendental Meditation (or TM) defined “cosmic consciousness” operationally as the ability to maintain pure consciousness throughout a 24-hour period of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (Roth, 1987). Is such a state of consciousness fact or fiction? An advanced practitioner of Transcendental Meditation™ demonstrated enhanced awareness of dreams (called “lucid dreaming”) and the ability to maintain heightened awareness in unbroken continuity throughout a twenty-four-hour cycle of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (as operationalized by increasing EEG coherence across left and right hemispheres of the brain during both waking and dreaming states (Gackenbach, Moorecroft, Alexander, & LaBerge, 1987).

Meditation serves to stabilize the experience of consciousness in sleep... Meditation does contribute to the continuity of consciousness in sleep and helps to stabilize it. Once an individual has reached this level, he or she may often or continually be an observer of him- or herself in the waking state. (Gackenbach & Bosveld, 1989, pp. 150-151)

This state of consciousness is called “the Great Realization.” The lucidity that the subject brings into sleep causing her to “awaken” to the fact that she is dreaming is also brought into the waking state to cause her to “awaken” to the fact that her everyday waking experience is actually a dream (LaBerge, 1993).

Complications and ideal outcomes of meditation practice. Most individuals will meet with a degree of success using meditation techniques. They are not difficult and are within the capabilities of all who are willing to try them (LeShan, 1975; Ram Dass, 1990; Tart, 2001). The practice of meditation opens doors of opportunity to experience of one's own vitality, energy, and subjective reality in a new way. As with any powerful technique or therapy that produces positive, healthy effects in the personality, meditation can also produce untoward side-effects in certain individuals (e.g., the elicited emergence of unhealthy mental factors) (Amodeo, 1981; Epstein, 1990; Epstein & Lieff, 1981; Kornfield, 1993; Mead, 1993; Wilber, 1984).

While meditators may experience psychological difficulties at any stage, problems are more frequent in beginners, those doing intense practice without adequate supervision, and in people with preexisting psychopathology. Some difficult experiences may ultimately prove to be cathartic and beneficial, a process TM calls 'unstressing.' The range of difficulties is wide. It may include emotional lability with episodes of anxiety, agitation, depression, and euphoria. Psychological conflicts may surface and somatic symptoms such as muscle or gastrointestinal spasms may appear. Meditators may ruminate obsessively or be confronted by painful existential questions. On rare occasions, defenses may be overwhelmed, resulting in a psychotic break, especially in those with a history of previous psychosis. Advanced practitioners may also experience difficulties, although they are more likely to be subtler and to involve existential or spiritual concerns. Development at any level involves challenges. (Walsh, 1993, pp. 65-66).

The radical transformation of consciousness that enlightenment represents has been an ideal goal and hope of practically all Asian systems of meditation. It is an ideal that has been passed down through the generations for over 2,500 years since the awakening of Buddha. Its actual achievement may be rare and will not occur overnight, yet it is an expected outcome of anyone who undertakes the rigors of long-term meditation practice and the gradual transformation of consciousness it is designed to facilitate. As an individual grows in proficiency in the practice of meditation, the meditator's personality should be increasingly characterized by healthy traits and a corresponding decrease of unhealthy traits in everyday states of mind.

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Dreaming States of Consciousness

Every person without exception goes to sleep on a daily basis and tunes into dreaming reality by the simple act of focusing his or her attention away from so-called waking reality. Dreaming experience takes center stage in the focus of awareness, while waking experience of which the person is only peripherally aware, moves to the fringe of awareness. Wakening in the morning, the reverse process happens, as one's dream experience moves to the periphery of attention and the person focuses on the physical environment and its stimuli once again. From the viewpoint of waking consciousness, our dreaming self is the dreamer and our dreaming experience are the dreams that it dreams; from the viewpoint of our dreaming consciousness, our waking self is the dreamer whose waking experience are dreams that it dreams. Why do we dream? What do dreams mean? What are their relationship to our waking life? What can our dreaming states of consciousness tell us about what we are and about the nature of reality? While mainstream psychology seeks to answer these questions from the perspective of the waking ego-self, transpersonal psychology seeks to answer them from the perspective of the waking *and* dreaming self. (i.e., the inner, transpersonal self or the "I" of one's dreams).

Why we dream: Perspectives of mainstream psychology. The answer to the question, “Why do we dream?” will vary depending on the perspective the question is asked.

- From a biological perspective, dreams are simply the result of random neural impulses activated by the brain stem during REM sleep that are synthesized by the forebrain brain into meaningful dreams images (called the “activation-synthesis” theory) with the REM portion of the process important in memory formation and in the development and preservation of neural pathways (Hobson, 2003; McGrath & Cohen, 1978).
- From a psychodynamic perspective, dreams are considered to be the expressions of individual unconscious wishes, desires, and unfulfilled needs (Freudian theory) and deeper emotionally-charged ideas and images that are rich in meaning and symbolism from the collective unconscious (Jungian theory) (Freud, 1900/1996; Jung, 1934/1960).
- From a cognitive perspective, dreams are connected to waking thought processes and everyday concerns, have no hidden meaning (or latent content), but are simply another method for solving problems that worry us, and reflect the individuals’ brain maturation and cognitive development (Cicogna & Bosinelli, 2001; Domhoff, 2003; Foulkes, 1999).
- Behaviorists tend to reject the study of consciousness and cognitive processes and focus on describing and measurable observable behavioral correlates of dreaming, such as verbal reports of dreams that occur following sleep, and the conditioning and learning processes that influence that behavior.
- From a social-cultural perspective, our culture and language affect dream content as do the socialization practices of dream sharing and interpretation that may be a part of the culture in which we live (Wax, 2004).
- From an evolutionary perspective, dreams have somehow helped the species adapt to its environment and survive by providing an opportunity for rehearsal of threatening events in order to better manage such situations in waking life (Revonsuo, 2003).

To obtain a representative picture of how dreaming consciousness is currently regarded by some psychologists within mainstream psychology, consider how the author of a popular introductory psychology textbook defined a *dream*: “A sequence of images, emotions, and thoughts passing through a sleeping person’s mind. Dreams are notable for their hallucinatory imagery, discontinuities, and incongruities, and for the dreamer’s delusional acceptance of the content and later difficulties remembering it” (Myers, 2008, p. 197).

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The biological rhythms of dreaming and waking consciousness. From a transpersonal perspective, both waking experience and dreaming experience together represent important dimensions of human consciousness. Dreaming is native to our being. Sleep cycles develop before birth, with REM sleep (that involve vivid, extended duration, detailed, story-like dreams in adults) accounting for nearly 50% of a newborn's sleep time. People deprived of REM sleep show signs of exhaustion, inability to regulate body temperature, slower learning ability and reaction time, and memory interference (Harrison & Horne, 2000). Dreaming is important to the proper functioning of normal waking consciousness, and people who are sleep deprived when permitted to sleep again show increased REM sleep (called "REM rebound"). The ultradian 90-to-120-minute periods of dream (REM) sleep observed in the laboratory are found to continue to regulate autonomic and endocrine activity during the day. Transpersonal psychologists remain open to the possibility that there are deep reaches of sleep experience not yet touched upon by scientists in the dream laboratories.

The separation of waking and dreaming consciousness is artificial. It is interesting to note that when one half of the planet is asleep the other half is awake, so that even as a species the rhythms of waking and dreaming consciousness are maintained. As a species we have made a great division between waking and dreaming consciousness to such an extent through the artificial sleeping habits structured by our use of time. The rigid division between waking and dreaming consciousness is not basically necessary but is the result of custom and convenience with a good deal of cross-cultural variation (Worthman & Melby, 2002). If waking and dreaming were more systematically integrated with one another (e.g., integrating sleep-waking cycle in a more spontaneous, natural fashion through more frequent, briefer sleep period) then the benefits and insights of our nightly dreams would be more available to waking life.

The interconnectedness and continuity of waking and dreaming experience. Waking experience and dreaming experience are much more interconnected and continuous than recognized by mainstream psychology, as the continuance of the 90-to-120-minute periodicity of dream (REM) sleep into waking life suggests. For instance, it is known that we maintain some awareness of changes in the external physical environment simultaneously while we dream; it is less known that we simultaneously maintain some awareness of changes in the internal dream environment *while we are awake*. According to F. W. H. Myers (1889/1976) dreaming consciousness exist simultaneously in our waking experience as a "subliminal" stream of consciousness. Transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts (1998a) asks:

Why has no one suspected that dream locations have not only a psychological reality, but a definite actuality?... Just because your attention is no longer focused upon such realities, this does not mean that they do not continue to exist.... Dreams, or the dream universe, exists even while you wake, and you only become aware of certain portions of it...while you sleep. (pp. 188, 254)

The hypothesis of "object constancy" in the dream state. Let us hypothesize the existence of a dimension of human consciousness that does not cease to exist simply because our focus of our attention has been turned in a different direction, and that the principle of "object constancy" operates. We know that this hypothesis is confirmed in the matter of normal waking consciousness and the physical world it perceives. Let us imaginatively extend that fact to the realm of dreams and dreaming. Let us hypothesize that just as our waking consciousness continues to exist as a subliminal "potential" stream of experience beneath our focus while dreaming, that our dreaming consciousness continues to exist as a simultaneous stream of experience beneath the focus of our attention when we are awake. Just as there is continuity in our waking experience, let us imagine for a moment that there is also continuity in our dreaming experience. Just as our storehouse of daily memories which are strongly connected with awareness within the physical body provide a sense of continuity for our waking self, let us suppose that so does the storehouse of memories of our nightly dreams provide a sense of continuity for our dreaming self. We know how difficult it is to describe the nature of our waking personality. Describing the psychological

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structure of the dreaming self is just as complicated, if not more so, because of our unfamiliarity with that inner psychic realm.

Imagination is the channel that connects waking and dreaming experience. During the day, “subliminal uprushes” (Myers’s phrase) from dreaming consciousness that flows beneath the surface of waking life emerge into waking consciousness in the form of insights, intuitions, hunches, or impulses to do this or that action. They may seem out of context with ongoing waking experience, and the comprehending ego may choose to either respond or ignore such inner data. The same sort of dream experience that occurs while we sleep continues beneath the focus of attention in waking life. We do not have to sleep to dream. Everyone has had conscious access to this subliminal stream of dreaming activity through the change of focus that mainstream psychologists call day-dreaming (Singer, 1975; Singer & Switzer, 1980). The imagination is one channel connecting normal waking consciousness with dreaming consciousness. The activity of “day dreaming” is correctly named because by that activity we re-connect with that subliminal stream of dreaming consciousness that continues throughout the day and into whose sleeping arms we rest at night as we turn our attention away from the day’s concerns and fall asleep and dream. The fact that we spend a great deal of our waking moments each day daydreaming should help us realize the extent to which our physical life is, in certain terms, a three-dimensional dream that faithfully reflects our daydream images and thoughts at any given time.

Learning to control the direction of activity within dreams is beneficial. Just as we bring our dreaming experience into waking life through an alteration in the focus of our awareness called day dreaming, we can also learn to bring our conscious mind with us into our dreaming life – a state of consciousness called “lucid dreaming” (Gackenbach & LaBerge, 1988; LaBerge & Gackenbach, 2000; LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990). Upon suggestion, dreams can be remembered and used with rather impressive practical results (Faraday, 1972; Garfield, 1974). We can request levitation (i.e., flying) dreams, for instance, and we will have them. One reason that such suggestions are effective is that as far as the subconscious areas of the mind are concerned, there is no real difference between what is imaginary and what is physical (Maltz, 1960; Murphy, 2000). A personally vivid and significant dream experience itself is as real to the whole self as any personally vivid and significant experience that occurs within the waking state. While the conscious egotistical self makes the distinction between actions that are of an exterior or physical nature, and actions that are of an interior or psychic nature, the whole self makes no distinctions in this respect. This is why suggestions, instructions, and directions may be given *to* subconscious portions of the self -- the inner, transpersonal self or the “I” of one’s dreams -- so that problems belonging to the conscious self *or* problems belonging to other layers of the self of an interior or psychic nature can be solved within the dream situation through dream construction. The dreaming self will follow the suggestions given *to* it by the waking personality in its own way and in its own fashion and according to its own understanding of the problem which is always more expansive and extensive than the ego-self’s. The waking ego may not be aware of how the problem is solved and in many cases this would not be necessary, and in some cases, not even desired. The solutions asked for may not appear to the conscious self in the fashion that it expects or it may not even recognize that it has been given a particular solution, which it may nevertheless act upon without even realizing it. The inner, transpersonal self would be aware of the solution, however, and would be in the position to communicate and transmit in an indirect fashion the solutions found in the dream to the various levels and aspects of the whole self..

Dreams reinforce daily life. Dreams are a part of personality action, and as such change the personality who has them (Roberts, 1998b). Just as the conscious personality reacts to and is shaped by his or her exterior circumstances and is changed by the experience, so also is the conscious personality molded and changed by the dreams that he or she creates and reacts to -- dreams which help to form one’s interior or psychic environment. Mainstream psychology recognizes that the health of the personality depends in some degree upon how well the individual is able to handle physical situations.. Transpersonal psychology calls attention to the fact that the stability, balance, and health of the personality also depends

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to a similar degree upon how effectively the individual is able to handle and manage dream situations, and thus reinforce the personality in daily life. If any understanding of human personality as whole is to be obtained, then studies of how the personality operates in both waking and dreaming states of consciousness at the very least will need to be conducted. The problem-solving aspect of dreams is often emphasized in mainstream psychology and is an important dimension of dream activity. We not only utilize dreams to solve problems set for us in the waking state, but from a transpersonal perspective, the reverse may be also true – we work out the issues, challenges, and problems in our daily life that we have set for ourselves in the dream state. Waking life and dreaming activity, in other words, reinforce each other.

The problem-solving aspect of dreams is important. Dreams can be most practical when they are used for healing and learning, for solving problems and discovering new knowledge (Barasch, 2000; Gackenbach & Bosveld, 1989; Garfield, 1991). Both psychological and physical illnesses could be largely avoided if dreams and dreaming were utilized for these purposes. Transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts (1998b) provides a simplified explanation of how this can occur.

In dreams the personality *first* attempts to solve many problems, and to give freedom to actions that cannot be adequately expressed within the confines of the physical universe. If the personality handles his dream activities capably, then the problem action finds release. . . . Consider a situation in which the personality needs to express dependency, but feels that such an expression is not possible within his waking experience. If he is able to *dream* in such a manner that he can construct dream dramas in which he plays a dependent part, then the action is satisfied. In many instances this is exactly what happens. The individual would not of course as a rule remember such a dream on a conscious level. Psychologically however the experience would be completely valid, and the dependency therefore expressed. . . . When the ego is too rigid, it will even attempt to censor dreams. When the personality in general is too rigid, freedom of action is not entirely permitted even in the dream state. When this solution fails the impeding action will then materialize as a physical illness, or as an undesirable psychological condition. (p. 166).

Dream therapy could be used to greater advantage. Dream therapy could be used to greater advantage than it is currently used in mainstream psychology to effectively work out in the dream state behavior problems that occur in the waking state for individuals whose personality-psychological structure is not overly rigid, inhibited, rejecting, and closed. Dream therapy provides the individual an opportunity to give a more deliberate and intentional direction to a process that occurs naturally and spontaneously in every individual, so that psychological and physical illnesses become largely avoided in daily life. In the hypothetical example just given, having been given suggestions to dream of himself or herself in dependent positions, the individual could give freer and safer expression in the dream state to overwhelming overly-dependent tendencies, so that he or she could ultimately behave in physical situations with greater confidence and assertiveness. Or, upon suggestion, aggressiveness could be given freedom in the dream state where they could be rather harmlessly acted out by not being directed against any particular individual or individuals but simply by venting the aggressiveness itself, aiding the individual in his own understanding of his or her habitual overly-aggressive tendencies through the experience of watching himself or herself in the dream state, so that the desired but feared emotion would not then gather up toward an explosion of violence or erratic antisocial behavior, or criminal behavior in waking life.

Understanding dreams: Discovering the coherent, purposeful, and creative nature of dreams. Just as waking life activities have meaning and purpose, so also does dreaming despite all appearances to the contrary. Dreams are coherent, highly discriminative symbolic messages from one portion of consciousness to another with many-layered meanings that can be deciphered, if we want to take the time

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and energy to use the methods that are available. As a form of symbolic short-hand communications from one portion of the personality to another, dreams are associative in nature, organized in terms of their emotional content, rather than reflecting any linear, rational, or cause-and-effect type of experience. The lack of coherence and the seemingly bizarre and chaotic characteristics that we perceive our dreams to have is the result of trying to translate non-physical dreaming experiences into physical terms upon awakening and translate our nightly dream adventures into the rigid and narrow framework and prejudiced perception that characterizes normal waking consciousness which views waking reality as real and dreaming reality as illusion.

The dreaming portion of our consciousness forms a kind of experience and an inner dream environment that is as varied and diverse, richly creative and evocative as is the physical environment of waking life – and as real. We are so used to interpreting dream symbols in terms of our understanding of ordinary waking life, that we often miss the point of our dreams. We may find dreams meaningless and chaotic, or disregard them as by-products of random brain activity, because we tend to view them from the framework of waking consciousness alone. We attempt to interpret our dreams in terms of the cause-and-effect, logical reasoning, space and time assumptions that characterize our waking experience in physical reality and because dreams do not conform to such "laws," we find dreams so undisciplined and unreasoning. Dream objects and dream locations, however, do not take up physical space and dream events are not confined to clock time. Dreams occur in a different kind of space, take up a different kind of time, and follow emotional associations that logic alone cannot follow. Intuition must go hand in hand with the intellect if any study of dreaming and dream reality is not to fall short.

Distinguishing what is literal and what is symbolic in dreams. On the one hand, we are so used to interpreting words, images, and ideas in a literally-minded way, that the symbolic nature of our dreams escapes us. We are afraid that dreams of an accident are precognitive and that the accident we dreamed of will literally occur as it did in the dream. Or we see a dead relative in a dream and compare it to our waking knowledge that the relative is dead and suppose the dream to be a mere hallucination because it does not match the facts of waking life. On the other hand, mainstream psychology finds it easy to look upon all such dream experiences as symbolic and not literal, and to develop highly complex psychological theories to account for dreams about things that we have not experienced, and dismiss them as the unreal nonsense of an overactive brain. What is imaginary is not true. We have all heard this as children. The difficulty comes when we try to distinguish what is literal and what is symbolic in a dream, while at the same time accepting the reality, validity, and actuality of both forms that dream events may take. For instance, it is difficult to admit that in flying dreams we *are* flying. What do dreams involving dead relatives mean? Are they meant to be taken symbolically or literally? Or is the distinction inappropriate in the first place? Transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts (1972) offers the evocative hypothesis that the psychological experience that occurs within the interior dream environment is every bit as real as the psychological experience that occurs within exterior the physical environment, and is the closest thing we can get to personally learning about what the after-death environment is like while we are alive.

In the dream state you operate under the same conditions, more or less, that are native to a consciousness not focused in physical reality. Many of your experiences, therefore, are precisely those you may meet after death. You may speak with dead friends or relatives, revisit the past, greet old classmates, walk down streets that existed fifty years earlier in physical time, travel through space without taking any physical time to do so, be met by guides, be instructed, teach others, perform meaningful work, solve problems, hallucinate.... In sleep and dream states you are involved in the same dimension of existence in which you will have your after-death experiences.... Therefore, the best way to become acquainted with after-death reality ahead of time, so to speak, is to explore and understand the nature of your own dreaming self. (pp. 159, 161)

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The symbolic nature of waking life. We take it for granted that objects and events perceived in the non-physical dream environment are symbols and have symbolic meaning, without considering the reverse possibility that objects and events perceived in the physical waking environment also are symbols and have symbolic meaning in our waking life. If you want to know what a particular dream symbol means, then, ask yourself to interpret the meaning of that same symbol as it appears in three-dimensional life. The following exercise may help you do this: "Sometimes when you are awake, and it is convenient, imagine that your present experience of the moment is a dream, and is highly symbolic. Then try to interpret it as such. Who are the people? What do they represent? If that experience were a dream, what would it mean? And into what kind of waking life would you rise in the morning? (Roberts, 1979b, pp. 51-52).

Out-of-body-experiences during dreams remain a rewarding topic of study. Reports of out-of-body experience (OBE) during dreams are relatively common in the parapsychological literature (Blackmore, 1983; Buhlman, 1996; Fox, 1962; Green, 1973; Irwin, 1985, 1989, chap. 12; Mitchell, 1987; Monroe, 1977; Morris, Harary, Janis, Hartwell, & Roll, 1978; Muldoon & Carrington, 1929/1970; Osis & McCormick, 1980; Roberts, 1986c; Rogo, 1983; Stack, 1988). "It is only because most people believe that you cannot leave your body that you do not consciously have out-of-body experiences with any frequency, generally speaking, in your lifetime" (Roberts, 1972, p. 150). On this view, we purposefully inhibit dream recall of such nightly adventures because we cannot imagine ourselves without our physical body, or outside it, or in any way disconnected from it, due to the strong connection involved between our waking identity and our physical body.

"It can fairly be said that parapsychologists' recent empirical and theoretical investigations of the OBE have substantially enhanced scientific understanding of the experience" (Irwin, 1989, p. 220). Many questions though remain: How does consciousness operate differently in the waking state and than in out-of-body experiences? Do out-of-body experiences occur during dreams and other states of consciousness? What occurs to the characteristics of consciousness during an out-of-body experience? What is its relationship to physical matter and to space and time during such episodes? Transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts states that "the basically independent nature of consciousness allows for such disentanglements. The body consciousness maintains its own equilibrium, and acts somewhat like a maintenance station [in out-of-body states]" (Roberts, 1979a, p. 343). It seems reasonable to assume that the way conscious awareness operates when it is separated from the body is different from the way that it operates through the body structures and oriented to three-dimensional space/time reality. Stepping not only out-of-body but also out-of-usual-context, consciousness would experience itself and matter in a different fashion than when locked into its usual bodily form. While not relating to physical reality in its usual manner but still allied with it, matter itself would likely appear differently than it does ordinarily. By altering the relationship of the individual to time and space, perhaps consciousness is able to take a more "objective" perspective toward itself and the physical world, where its own properties and the properties of matter can be better perceived and understood. In any case, "the OBE remains a rewarding topic of scientific study" for the student of human consciousness (Irwin, 1989, p. 220).

Why is it so difficult to remember and record one's dreams? Sleep research indicates that most people dream several times every night. When people are awakened from rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, they report a dream 80% of the time, with dreams being reported from all non-REM sleep (Stages 1, 2, 3, 4 of the sleep cycle) (Domhoff, 2003; Foulkes, 1996). Most people remember some of their dreams, but what is recalled in normal memory is often limited to infrequent glimpses of disorganized fragments and bits-and-pieces that it is extremely difficult to compose any conception of the total or obtain anything more than a surface understanding of dreams generally. Why is it so difficult to remember and record our dreams if they are so common and have such a beneficial effect in daily life? The inability to remember one's dreams in the morning is not a function of any inherent limitation in the ability of the conscious mind to handle more dream recall. It is a function of our *ideas and beliefs* which limit the

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amount of dream recall we allow or permit ourselves to have. Dreams are difficult to remember because of beliefs we may have about the nature of dreams, what they mean, and our ideas about the nature of reality. Nancy Ashley (1990) identifies the many different false beliefs and ideas that can create resistance to dream recall. It will be more difficult to recall and record our dreams if we believe that. . .

- Dreams are not real.
- Dreams are a distortion of normal waking life.
- Dreams are too weird for me to understand.
- When we are dreaming are not conscious.
- Any state of consciousness other than that of normal waking reality is undesirable.
- Daydreaming is a big waste of time.
- We shouldn't let our minds wander.
- While dreaming we are out of conscious control.
- If I get into my dreams too much, I might go insane.
- Everyone knows the unconscious is filled with dangerous impulses.
- Dreams about the future always happen.
- I just don't have the time to write down and work with my dreams.
- There's no way to make sense of dreams since there's no logic to them.
- I'm just not good at working with dreams.
- My dreams are never very interesting anyways.
- I've tried to remember my dreams and I just can't.
- Whether or not we remember our dreams, they do their work, so why try to remember them?

Another reason that dreams are difficult to remember and record because of their visual, nonverbal, nonlinear nature which makes them difficult to translate into language that can be written down. In the waking state, our thoughts tend to be structured through verbal patterns (i.e., we think in words). In the dream state, thoughts are not mediated through words but are experienced directly as we "live them out." We *become* the dream, in a way that we are not aware of doing so in waking life. In the dream, the dreamer is both the environment and the participant, the vehicle and the landscape, the author and the story, the creator and the creation. This is why it is often difficult to remember or write down one's dreams in a linear fashion or translate dream images into verbal language that can be put into a dream diary or journal. Something is always lost in the translation. Words by their nature precisely specify, and the more precisely a word specifies, the less meaning it can contain. Words, in this sense, mediate (get in-between) the direct experience of the dream and the meaning it seeks to convey.

Words in the form of suggestions, however, can be used as a device to aid dream recall. Instructions given to oneself before sleeping (e.g., "I will henceforth be able to remember dreams from the deeper levels of my personality") can help to increase the percentage of dreams recalled and from more deep levels. The reader is invited to try the following exercise:

Before you go to sleep, tell yourself that you will mentally take a dream snapshot of the most significant dream of the night, and that you will be aware of doing this while asleep. Imagine that you have a camera with you that you take into the dream state, and at the point of your clearest perception will snap your picture, take it back with you, and it will be the first mental picture that you see when you awaken in the morning. (Roberts, 1979a, p. 445).

When such a suggestion is given with deliberation and intent, yet in a relaxed and playful let's-wait-and-see manner, then much can be learned concerning the stuff of dreams. As communication between conscious and subconscious portions of the self improve, and experience in learning to change the focus of one's own focus develops, the individual will discover that subconscious portions of the self can

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indeed be called upon to work on behalf of the conscious personality in improving dream recall and in any sort of investigation of the nature of dreams and dreaming.

Dreams are the “royal road to the transpersonal.” The problem-solving aspect of dreams could be utilized with more impressive results if more work were done to *control* the direction of activity within dreams. This will require of us an encounter with the beliefs and ideas that make us resistant to recognizing, acknowledging, and accepting the reality of dreams, the connection between dreaming and a balanced personality, and the many ways in which dreams can be used beneficially with conscious deliberation and intent. Dreams are like “messages in a bottle” sent to us from across a distant shore, communications from an inner self to an outer self, that if received, opened, read and understood could greatly benefit waking life. We have done a great job exploring the physical environment, and in attempting to interpret dreams. It is now time to discover the unexplored continent of our own psyches, and doing more to control dreams with the purpose of working out specific problems in the dream state. Dreams are one avenue to this unknown land and, like meditation, are a “royal road to the transpersonal” (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993a, p. 47). We will better remember our dreams when we come to the point where we want to bring into our span of conscious awareness instances of our own greater knowing.

Investigating dream reality through Active Imagination. Psychological events such as dreams have both an objective and symbolic side, a life of their own, and it is the job of transpersonal psychologists to investigate the nature of those lives. C. G. Jung developed a number of original techniques for communicating with the subconscious mind. One of the most useful as far as learning to integrate conscious and subconscious portions of the personality is concerned is the technique of *Active Imagination* (Johnson, 1986). **Figure 4-6** presents a description of several Jungian dream work techniques and Active Imagination instructions for exploring this dimension of human consciousness.

Insert Figure 4-6 here

Throughout all his personality theory, Jung acknowledged the importance of the integration of the outer and inner self for personality growth and development. For Jung, the goal of personality development is the recognition of the inner Self by all levels of the personality. The ego-self must allow into its awareness the actuality of the inner, Transpersonal self as a part of its self-image. This unity then puts the individual in a position to begin a truly fulfilling existence. This requires that the conscious ego-self know enough to speak *nearly* as an equal with one’s inner Self. In order to become this knowledgeable, the technique of Active Imagination is an important aid.

Transpersonal Aspects of Human Consciousness

Consciousness is not a self, the ego-self, identity, or some brain product. Consciousness is not a self, not the ego-self, not our identity, nor is it the neural product of some random concatenation of chemical elements spontaneously formed by a material brain. Psychologically speaking, consciousness is a state of focus that can be defined as “the direction in which the self looks at any given time” (Roberts, 1998a, p. 42). When the self looks outward toward physical reality, we say “This is my conscious self.” When the self turns the focus of awareness inward in sleep toward dream reality, we say “This is my dreaming self.” When the self turns the focus of awareness again inward toward transcendental reality, we say “This is my mystical self.” The state of consciousness (e.g., waking, dreaming, mystical) and realities of which it is aware (i.e., physical, imaginal, transcendental) are interconnected and define one another. Conscious awareness is not a thing but an action that changes and is changed by that which it attends to, is aware of, and perceives. Consciousness is a flickering flashlight that varies in its intensity and bandwidth that can turn in many directions to illumine other paths, disclose other doors, flow through other channels. It is a way of perceiving the various dimensions of reality.

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Multiple, subliminal streams of consciousness exist in thought and behavior. Other, alternate, more expansive states of consciousness can be initiated by the understanding of certain ideas and by the practicing of certain techniques. One's consciousness, in other words, can be trained to follow certain patterns and flow along certain channels or streams of psychological action. The so-called "stream of consciousness" (William James's phrase) is simply that -- one small stream of thought, images, perceptions that is a part of a much deeper river of consciousness that represents the personality's far greater existence and experience. Where perception fails, boundaries seem to appear. It seems that dreams cease when we are no longer aware of them, for instance. Another portion of the self however, is aware of them. These other streams or channels of awareness occasionally break into so-called waking egotistical consciousness as intrusive words and images appearing seemingly out-of-context with one's own thoughts. They are indications of those other streams of greater dimension that run parallel beneath a transparent normal waking consciousness *through* which the conscious personality can move through and beneath to others and transfer the knowledge to the conscious ego-self.

Realms of the human subconscious. What are some of these subliminal subconscious areas, layers, regions that lie, so to speak, beneath and behind and beyond (trans) normal waking consciousness? One good place to begin identifying these psychic realms of consciousness would be with the map of the inner psychic realms disclosed by the consciousness research of Grof (1975a, 1975b). First, immediately below normal waking consciousness at the upper reaches of the subconscious is a relatively small area of personal material that Freud called the "personal subconscious" and that contains egotistical worries and concerns, fears and anxieties that have been suppressed or repressed out of waking awareness. Directly beneath this personal subconscious material is a layer or area containing memories of one's birth in the present life. Beneath this is material dealing with reincarnational material. Underneath this is racial material dealing with the species as a whole, its evolution and background, and psychological differences of the various races. Underneath this is material dealing with the inner, transpersonal self and its knowledge pertaining to the inner universe as a whole, the creation of the physical universe, and various planes of existence. In order to reach these depths and levels, more than a simple surface change in the focus of attention from one specific area of ordinary life to another is involved, but a change of focus in depth to a different level entirely. This involves a switch or change in concentration of attention from one domain of experience to other domains, such as occurs for example in sleep and the nightly dream state, to the exclusion of other areas, where one environment (physical) becomes replaced by another (dream), one state (waking) becomes unconscious to another (dreaming), one reality (dream state reality) becomes concentrated within and reacted to rather than the other (waking state reality), and one awareness (ego-directed) becomes substituted with another (Self-directed).

Open communication between conscious and subconscious portions of the whole personality essential for psychological and physical health. The intuitive portions of the personality have to have the full cooperation of the intellectual and conscious self for open communication between conscious and subconscious portions of the whole personality to occur, however. The conscious ego-self has to appreciate in quite real terms both the nature of its peculiar directive abilities in relation to manipulation of the physical environment in service to the survival of the physical organism *as well as* the nature of its dependence upon the whole personality. It is the failure of the ego-self to listen to the inner voice of the subconscious transpersonal self that causes many of the psychological difficulties and physical illnesses experienced by the conscious personality in daily life. When there is good communication between all areas of the whole personality, between the conscious intellectual and subconscious intuitional portions of the personality, when the levels of consciousness are well integrated, then the purposes and intents of the whole personality will be fulfilled. When the ego-self recognizes its position as but one part of the whole personality and does not have the whole kettle of fish to itself, so to speak, and communication is not blocked or impeded between the very areas of the self which is so important here, then the conscious ego-self will not be left by the wayside, wondering while the intuitional abilities lead to fulfillment. It is not

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that intuitional data is closed to the intellect or to the ego-self. It is simply not recognized, acknowledged, accepted, or used for reasons that have to do with the ego-self's view of itself as a separate unit a part from everything else and which it considers "not-self." The conscious intellectual faculties under the direction of the "autonomous" and "independent" ego-self have to realize that those intuitional abilities operate in order that they themselves be fulfilled. The intuitions and the intellect are meant to challenge and develop each other. What we are after is the recognition of the ego-directed self of the larger inner self of which it is a part. This is always the direction of development, until finally the immediate, outer self and the inner self are one, at which point further stages of development await.

Transpersonal aspects of human consciousness. As discussed in chapter 2, we are aware of our own consciousness through the "mediumship" of our brain and physical organism. Consciousness differs from the brain and body in that it does not occupy a location in physical space and is independent of time, and thus can become temporarily dissociated from the body under certain conditions (e.g., out-of-body experiences). Physically speaking, consciousness could be regarded in certain terms as "awareized energy" that is the collective result of the *gestalt* of the aware energies inherent in the individual atoms and molecules, cells and organs that constitute the physical body. Because we rely upon the body to express the perceptions of our awareness, when we change chemically or mechanically the body, then we change the perceptions of which we can be aware, altering the range and capacity of reception of our consciousness, so to speak. From a transpersonal perspective, when our awareness is not operating primarily through the physical body (extrasomatic awareness), as it does in out-of-body experiences, dreaming, and some dissociated conditions, then we are aware of our consciousness being used in a different fashion and focused in another direction. In certain terms, consciousness can be said to be equipped with outer senses to perceive data that is physical, and also equipped with inner senses to perceive data that is not physical. We use our inner senses during psychedelic states of consciousness, in mystical states of consciousness, throughout meditative states of consciousness, and or the duration of dreaming and out-of-body experiences. While they are constantly operative even during normal waking consciousness, we generally shut out data provided by the inner senses as we focus awareness narrowly upon physical reality. conversely, we use our physical senses while we go about our daily chores and endeavors and ignore them when we are dreaming, utilizing the less restricted dinner senses during that time.

V. The Nature of Consciousness: Its Personal Expression

Exploring Your Own Consciousness

Experience is the best teacher. To learn what consciousness is we must study our own consciousness, change the channels of our awareness, and use our consciousness as an investigative tool. To learn what consciousness is we must explore the "unknown" reality of ourselves and venture inward within our own psyche. To know the nature of consciousness, we must become familiar with the nature of our own consciousness. We must each work from our own subjective experience. There is no other starting point. No one can do the task of self-discovery for another. "When you look into yourself, the very effort involved extends the limitations of your consciousness, expands it, and allows the egotistical self to use abilities that it often does not realize it possesses" (Roberts, 1970, p. 253). In order to be willing and able to do this, however, we must first give up any ideas we have about the unsavory nature of the unconscious and those spontaneous inner processes that make psychological and physical life possible. A fear of the self is the great paralyzer in this regard.

The supportive nature of subconscious portions of the psyche. Carl Jung (1934/1960), F.W.H. Myers (1903/1961, 1889/1976) and other transpersonal psychologists have correctly understood that we can indeed depend upon seemingly unconscious portions of ourselves. Jung came to believe that the subconscious portions of our personality contain more than chaotic, infantile impulses that are not to be

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trusted, as Sigmund Freud had claimed. For Jung, the order of nature, the creative drama of our dreams, the precision with which we unconsciously grow from a fetus to an adult without a whit of conscious thought, the existence of mythic themes and heroic quests and ideals that pervade the history of our species, all give evidence of a greater psychic reality within which we have our being. The seemingly “unconscious” portions of our own consciousness are not to be feared but are to be sought as an aid and helper and supporter in solving life’s problems. “The unconscious forms conscious focus; needs it, seeks it out, and operates in the objective world under its auspices. The unconscious is the constant creator of our individuality and not its great usurper” (Roberts, 1976, pp. 321-322).

The physical life of the spirit. The “unknown” unconscious portions of the self are as much a part of conscious personality now as any cell within the physical body. It is the unconscious portion of one's being that assures the smooth functioning of all of the spontaneous, automatic processes of the body. The central nervous system, circulatory system, digestive system respiratory system, endocrine system, immune system, and so forth, all operate without the aid of conscious thought, repairing themselves constantly with a precision and purpose and intelligence that surpasses our most sophisticated medical technologies. Those spontaneous processes that knew how to grow us from a fetus to an adult provide for our physical and psychological life. It is those inner spontaneous processes that propel our thoughts and that heal our bodies. Those very same spontaneous processes “represent the life of the spirit itself” (Roberts, 1997a, p. 251) and are responsible for the health of both the physical body and the nonphysical mind. The psychological unconscious simply contains great portions of our own experience that are consciously unknown and with which we are not familiar in any conscious way. It deals with a different kind of psychic reality than the comprehending ego that lives at the level of normal waking consciousness is used to dealing with, but with which that ego-self *is* natively equipped to deal, if it is flexible enough.

The goal is to enrich your experience of normal waking consciousness, not diminish it. While alternate states of consciousness, use of the “inner” senses, and focus upon inner reality are emphasized in the exercises that follow, this is in no way intended to deny the importance or validity of normal waking consciousness, or the physical senses, or the exterior environment. The goal is not to dull one's physical senses or escape from the reality of one's own waking life. The subjective results of each exercise should help enrich the individual's experience of normal waking consciousness, allow the perception of oneself and one's daily life from another perspective, and permit the conscious personality to understand the nature of physical reality better. It will enable the ego to expand its consciousness and its knowledge. The following exercises are adapted from those suggested by writer, and channel Seth/Jane Roberts (1972; 1977, 1979a, 1979b).

Activities for Exploring the Nature of Your Consciousness

Exercise #1 - Alpha-One. Access to many exceptional experiences and human transformative capacities require entry into an alternate state of consciousness. To become familiar with the “unknown” portions of one's own consciousness, the person must to some extent grant its existence, and be willing to step aside from her or his usual experience and behavior. In order to enter into a suitable alternate state of consciousness and use the inner senses consciously, the individual must momentarily turn attention away from the constant activity taking place in the external environment, turning off or turning down the physical senses and switching attention to those inner events and activity that have escaped notice earlier. The Psy-Time activity described by Roberts (1970, p. 256; 1972, p. 65) is a good preparatory exercise for the *Alpha-One* exercise described here. Each person will experience the *Alpha-One* exercise in a different way since all perception is highly individual. This exercise provides you experience with your own consciousness as you orient it in different directions, and is called “Alpha One” (Watkins, 1980, pp. 234-235).

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1. Now imagine anything that you choose, but have a line or a platform that represents what we shall call Alpha 1. Have it in your mind as a symbol of your present state of consciousness at the same level, perhaps, as your eyes. Do whatever you choose. Imagine a road and yourself as a small figure on the line, for example. Imagine a road and yourself upon it. Now I want you shortly to imagine other such lines of roads, so pick an image of yourself, that you can use. See yourself clearly on this line or road or path. You may use a floor if you prefer, but see yourself upon it, for this will represent A-1.
2. Now imagine another adjacent road or line parallel and still further away from your normal consciousness. Now pause to feel the difference in your consciousness as you move from one line or road to another. And this one represents A-2.
3. Now imagine again a third line or path, still parallel and adjacent. Examine the feel of your consciousness as you do so. Move now further on this time to another path or road that you will call A-4, and that is still further in distance from your normal consciousness. Now imagine still another line which we will call A-5.
4. Now here, pause for a moment. If you can, imaginatively looking behind you to see those other four roads or paths that run adjacently and parallel. Now turn, step back to the previous road or path to A-4. Step back again to A-3. Step again back to A-2. Now carefully step back to A-1 and pause. Feel your own consciousness at this point.
5. Now imagine a step *above* A-1. Not adjacent or parallel, but above, and feel yourself step up upon it. And now we will call it A-1a, though the name makes little difference. Pause there and imaginatively look down to A-1, but hold your position.
6. Now above you, you will see another step. Go up this step again and notice the changes in the feel of yourself and of your consciousness. Above this is still another. Now step up here and pause.
7. Imaginatively look down. Look at the other levels of consciousness from which you have come. Now very slowly, come back to the previous level, and keep coming down each step slowly until you reach again the original A-1 from which you began.
8. Now at A-1, realize that all these other levels of consciousness are also available with the feeling of A-1 as the threshold activity, as a doorway into other kinds of perception and consciousness.
9. Now, very gently step from A-1 back to your normal state of consciousness and open your eyes.

Performing in the way suggested will initiate an alternate state of consciousness that can be used for self-investigation. The very act of self-investigation will extend the present limitations of your normal waking consciousness and make it aware of previously overlooked, ignored, or denied hunches, impulses, inspirations, and helpful extrasensory information that reach you through the inner senses. As you react to the data you develop a capacity to include larger amounts of information in normal waking awareness. Turning your attention away from the worries and concerns of your work-a-day world for a few moments a day can give daily life additional meaning, vitality, and purpose than before. The experience involved in learning to change one's own focus of awareness, altering the direction of consciousness in a deliberate manner can be most beneficial.

A psychometric scale for levels of consciousness. Technically speaking, *Alpha-One* creates a kind of subjective psychometric scale in the tradition of Gustav Fechner that is an indirect method, based on just noticeable difference (j.n.d.) steps by which one can theoretically differentiate verbally reported subjectively experienced differences of alternate “levels” of consciousness (A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.) on a continuum of categories to compute N-1 inter-level thresholds (Woodworth & Schlosberg, 1938/1963, chap. 9). We are concerned here with the psychological scaling of levels of consciousness that are arranged on a psychic continuum (the term “psychic” referring to *psyche*) which represent a strictly psychological function with no physical continuum. It is also a *relative* scale on which the continuum of

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levels can be compared. Although given an implied numerical ranking (A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.), there is no assumption of equal variability of judgment that can be used to step off equal distances on this subjective scale. It is ultimately a measure of variability with A-1 representing the symbolic zero of the scale.

Exercise #2 – *Consciously construct a dream.* To provide some practice in dream interpretation, the reader is invited to perform the following exercise, which is similar to the dream interpretation technique developed by Carl Jung called “active imagination” (Johnson, 1986).

Consciously construct a dream. Tell yourself you are going to do so, and begin with the first thought or image that comes to mind. When you are finished with your daydream, then use free association to interpret it to yourself. (Roberts, 1979b, p. 49)

Exercise #3 – *Become Awake in Your Dreams.* Another exercise related to developing the ability to become “awake” in your dreams (called “lucid dreaming”) is the following:

Some night as you fall to sleep, try telling yourself that you will pretend you are awake while you sleep. Suggest that instead of falling asleep, you will come into another kind of wakefulness. Try to imagine that you are awake when you sleep. On other occasions when you go to bed, lie down and settle yourself, but as you fall asleep imagine that you are awakening the next morning (Roberts, 1979b, p. 51).

We are taught as children that “what happens in imagination is not true.” Yet in the life of the mind, an imaginary experience is no more or less true, whether or not it occurs in waking life. Dreams, like daydreams, simply are. We assume without questioning that the waking state in which we spend most of our lives is the “real” consciousness. Yet in a very important sense our waking consciousness is built upon and sustained by these other nightly dreaming and daydreaming states of consciousness.

Conclusion

If individuals have faith in themselves, are fairly competent and sympathetic and content with their life, open to new ideas, not overly dependent on specific religious or scientific dogmas or pseudoscientific explanations, and if their curiosity and creative abilities keep them flexible enough so that learning can take place, then they are in a good position to study the inner environments of ordinary and alternate states of consciousness. If they see good and evil in a life-and-death struggle all around them, if they are depressed, or if they hope to substitute inner experience for outer experience, then they are not ready to embark upon any serious investigation of these inner environments. They will not have the understanding necessary for conscious control of this other dimension of human consciousness and will bring their depressed state of mind with them, predisposing them to depressing experiences. We always form our experience there as we do here. This is an active investigation and exploration we are talking about, not a passive withdrawal or fearful retreat from waking life. The same resources that serve the individual so well in daily life are needed to study these inner states of consciousness (psychedelic/holotropic, mystical, meditative, and dreaming).

Normal waking experience attains its seemingly tight, highly specialized, logical, linear organization only because it limits so much of perceived reality. Alternate states of consciousness expand the focus of awareness to include more of what is already there. If the individual has an acceptable framework in which to understand or correlate her or his experience, then no artificial dangers will occur. Reality is above all practical. “To work with alterations of consciousness, you must have faith in *yourself*, and in the framework of your known reality. Otherwise you will be too afraid to abandon even briefly the habitual, organized view of the world that is your own... If these experiences are worked with reflectively, then they can help bring about extensive and profound transformative changes in awareness, worldview, and sense of meaning in the experienter” (Roberts, 1979a, p. 430).

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There is only one way to learn about the large "Spectrum of Consciousness" that exists (Wilber, 1977, p. 19). It is by studying and exploring one's own awareness, by shifting the focus of one's attention away from other realities and toward inner ones, and by *playfully* using one's own consciousness in as many ways as possible (e.g., waking, dreaming, meditating, trancing). When a person explores his or her own state of consciousness, he or she automatically translates his or her experience into a limiting set of beliefs. It is impossible not to structure the reality one experiences in some fashion if one is to understand what one is experiencing and if one's experiences are to have any meaning to the comprehending ego. Reality implies structuring. As Walsh and Vaughan (1980) state:

Since each state of consciousness reveals its own picture of reality, it follows that reality as we know it (and it is the only way we know it) is also only relatively real. . . . Thus the reality we perceive reflects our own state of consciousness and we can never explore reality without at the same time exploring ourselves, both because we are, and because we create, the reality we explore. (p. 55)

In other words, it is a journey of discovery that the individual embarks upon when they decide to answer the question "What is a person?" by exploring his or her own personality and his or her own consciousness. Others have gone before, and so it is not an entirely unknown domain into which one is journeying. As a pilgrim of the mind, an adventurer of consciousness, an explorer of personality in all of its dimensions, you are the pilgrim-adventurer-explorer, the environment into which you journey, and the vehicle by which the journey occurs. It is an exciting journey and more than worth the effort.

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Figure 4.1

Communicating with your Subconscious Mind

The Pendulum Method

(LeCron, 1964, pp. 31-34)

- “The pendulum may be any small light object such as a finger ring or an iron washer. A thread about eight to ten inches long is tied to this object.”
- In using the pendulum you should hold the thread or chain between the thumb and forefinger, with your elbow resting on the arm of your chair, or on a desk, or perhaps on your knee. The weight then dangles freely.”
- Four basic directions of movement of the pendulum are possible. These are a clockwise circle, counter-clockwise circle, back and forth across in front of you, or in and out away from you.”
- “The inner mind can be asked to make its own selection of movements. One is to signify *yes*, another *no*. A third should mean *I don’t know*, and the fourth *I do not want to answer the question*.. This last may indicate resistance and is therefore important. You may specify the meaning of each movement, but it is better to let the subconscious make its own selections. This seems to bring better cooperation on its part. It also shows you that the subconscious does think and reason.”
- “Holding the pendulum, you should voluntarily move it in each of the four directions, then hold it motionless and ask which is to mean *yes*. In doing this, no words are usually necessary. You merely think the request. The subconscious is asked to select any of the four motions which is then to represent an affirmative reply. You might word your request this way – ‘My subconscious is to select one of these four motions of this pendulum to mean *yes* in answer to questions.’
- “The pendulum will work better if you watch it. Usually it will start to move within a few seconds, but sometimes it may take a moment or so ‘to warm up the motor.’ If it does not start to swing very quickly, think the word *yes* to yourself several times. Be sure you do not move the pendulum voluntarily. Try to hold it still, but you will find it will move of its own accord. If you still find there is no movement, have someone else ask the questions to establish the four movements for reply.”
- “When your affirmative response has been set up, ask for selection of another motion to mean *no*, then for one of the two remaining ones to mean *I don’t know*. The fourth will then represent not wanting to answer.”
- “Many people exclaim surprise as the pendulum swings in answering....There is nothing magical in this. It merely shows...that the inner mind does think and reason, and also that it is able to control muscular movements. The subconscious continually controls such movements....It is controlling your breathing muscles. When you walk you do not think of all the movements involved and the necessary coordination.”
- “Almost everyone will find that the pendulum will move for them. If it does not for you, it is almost certainly a sign of resistance. Your subconscious may feel that you wish to learn something from it which it is not ready to let you know.”

Figure 4-1 (continued)

Communicating with Your Subconscious Mind

Finger Movements

(LeCron, 1964, pp. 34-35)

- “A similar means of questioning the inner mind is by means of replies made by movements of the fingers with involuntary control.”
- “This may be somewhat harder to accomplish and may take a little longer when you are awake. If it is done under hypnosis, a few will find their fingers do not respond. Sometimes replies may be made by finger movements when the pendulum will not respond, and vice versa.”
- “To establish finger movements place your hands in your lap or on the arms of a chair. The fingers should be outstretched and free to move. Then ask your subconscious to select any one of the ten fingers which is to lift to represent *yes*. When one has lifted then ask for another to lift to mean *no*, and so forth. Be sure not to move the fingers voluntarily.”
- If you prefer, you may designate which finger is to move. The right forefinger could mean *yes*, the left forefinger *no*; the right thumb for *I don't know* and the left thumb for not wanting to answer. You could designate other fingers as you wish, perhaps all on one hand.”
- “As you ask for a movement, observe your fingers closely. You will probably feel a slight tingle in the muscles of the one which is about to move, as the muscles start to lift. It should rise toward a pointing position. Invariably you will find that it trembles or wiggles a bit as it comes up. The movement usually is quite slow at first, though it may become more rapid with practice. It may lift only very slightly or may rise to a straight pointing position.”
- In using either the pendulum or finger movements be very sure you make no voluntary effort and when you are asking questions you should avoid consciously guessing when the answer will be.”

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Figure 4.1 (continued)

Communicating with Your Subconscious Mind *Guideline on How To Question Your Subconscious Mind* (LeCron, 1964, pp. 35-38)

- “The questions must be clear, not vague or ambiguous.....[Although its language is symbolic] the subconscious takes everything literally. Questions must be worded so you are saying what you mean.”
- When replies are made to some questions you may be surprised to find the pendulum swinging at a diagonal, or some other finger than those designated may move. Here your subconscious is trying to tell you something. It may mean *perhaps* or *maybe*. It may indicate that your question is not clear or can't be answered properly.”
- “It is best to write out the questions you wish to ask, being sure they are clear and properly worded. Then note the answers as you receive them.... If you must make a decision about some matter, the inner part of your mind has access to much more data than you have consciously. It may tell you which procedure would be best for you to follow.”
- “Sometimes if you believe your intuition is working and you have a ‘hunch’ about something, you can check it with your subconscious.”
- “If you lose something and cannot find it, questioning of your subconscious may locate it.”
- “Answers may be taken with a slight grain of salt until they can be verified, but as a rule they can be depended on.”
- “If you believe a wrong answer may have been given, it is well to reword your question in some other way. Perhaps it has not been clear.”
- “Another use of this type of questioning is in dream interpretation... Interpretation can be checked by questioning, for the subconscious produced the dream and knows its symbolism and inner meaning.”
- “The inner mind can certainly tell whether or not some illness is purely organic and physical or if it has some emotional or psychological causes. It may be possible that it would know what organ or part of the body may be affected in some illness.”
- “Exploration of the inner mind...will unlock the door to the reasons for character and behavior problems, for emotional disturbances and illnesses, for phobias, fears and anxiety, and for many other personal problems.”

Figure 4-1 (continued)

Communicating with Your Subconscious Mind

Other “Uncovering” Methods

(LeCron, 1964, pp. 37-40)

- “There is still another way to obtain answers from the subconscious.... This is to imagine, with eyes closed, that you are looking at a *blackboard*. Then ask your question and request the subconscious to write the answer on the imaginary blackboard in white chalk. If you have a good imagination and can readily visualize in this way, answers can often be had. When it ‘works,’ it is a rapid method.”
- Another type of uncovering device is sometimes helpful. When there is trouble locating some cause or reason for a condition, a suggestion may be given the subconscious which if carried out will bring the answer. On going to bed at night, with the eyes closed, suggest to yourself that sometime during the next day you will have a *revelatory thought* about your question – that you will suddenly find the answer in your mind and recognize it as the answer. The suggestion should be that at some time next day such a thought is suddenly to pop into your mind. You must be specific as to what it will be about. It may fail to come, of course, but frequently you will find the answer.”
- “If you are a ‘doodler,’ you are likely to be able to write automatically. If you can, it will give you another access to your subconscious and will be a great help... It is best to sit in a comfortable chair without arms. Take a...lapboard of some kind and lay it across your knees. Cut off a piece of paper...so it will cover the entire board...Use a very soft pencil or a ballpoint pen which writes heavily.... Instead of holding it in the normal writing position, take it between the thumb and forefinger. Hold straight up and down, with the point resting on the paper. Start at the top left of the sheet of paper. Now tell your subconscious mind that you would like to have it control your hand and write about anything it would like as a subject. Write your name, holding the pen or pencil as described. Make a few circles and then return your hand to the upper left-hand edge of the board. Make no further voluntary movement. ...Watch the hand closely and keep thinking that it is going to begin to move....If it writes, try not to anticipate the words as they come....The words probably will not be separated. Movements may be rather jerky.... You can try shutting your eyes, if you like, which helps to keep you from knowing what is being written as the hand moves. Keep trying for at least twenty minutes, if the hand does not move sooner.... When you have learned [self-hypnosis], you may use this technique to get good results.”

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Figure 4-2. Characteristics of *Identity* During Generalized Peak Experiences
(Maslow, 1968, Chapter 7)

- ❖ “Feels more integrated (unified, whole, all-of-a-piece), than at other times. He also looks (to the observer) more integrated in various ways (e.g., less split or dissociated, less fighting against himself, more at piece with himself, less split between an experiencing self-and an observing-self), more one-pointed, more harmoniously organized, more efficiently organized will all his or her parts functioning very nicely with each other, with less internal friction” (p. 104).
- ❖ “As he or she gets to be more purely and singly himself or herself is more able to fuse with the world, with what was formerly not-self (e.g., the lovers come closer to forming a unit rather than two people, the I-Thou monism becomes more possible, the creator becomes one with his work being created, the mother feels one with her child, the astronomer is “out there” with the stars (rather than a separateness peering across the abyss at another separateness through a telescope-keyhole). That is, the greatest attainment of identity, autonomy, or self-hood is itself simultaneously a transcending of itself, a going beyond and above selfhood. The person can then become relatively egoless” (p. 105).
- ❖ “Usually feels herself to be at the peak of her powers, using all her capacities at the best and fullest. In Rogers’ nice phrase, she feels ‘fully functioning.’ She feels more intelligent, more perceptive, wittier, stronger, or more graceful than at other times. She is no longer wasting effort fighting and restraining herself. Now there is no waste; the totality of the capacities can be used for action. She becomes like a river without dams” (pp. 105-106).
- ❖ “Is at one’s best. What takes effort, straining and struggling at other times is now done without any sense of striving, of working or laboring, but ‘comes of itself.’ Allied with this is the feeling of grace and the look of grace that comes with smooth, easy, effortless fully-functioning, when everything ‘clicks,’ or ‘is in the groove,’ or is ‘in over-drive.’ One sees then the appearance of calm sureness and rightness, as if they know exactly what they were doing, and were doing it wholeheartedly, without doubts, equivocations, hesitations or partial withdrawals” (p. 106).
- ❖ “Feels herself, more than at other times, to be the responsible, active, creating center of his activities and of his perceptions. She feels more like a prime mover, more self-determined (rather than caused, determined, helpless, dependent, passive, weak, bossed). She feels herself to be her own boss, fully responsible, fully volitional, with more ‘free will’ than at other times, mater of her fate, an agent. He also looks that way to the observer...becoming more decisive, looking more strong, more single-minded, more apt to score or overcome opposition. It is as if now he had no doubts about her worth or about her ability to do whatever she decided to do” (p. 107).
- ❖ “Is now most free of blocks, inhibitions, cautions, fears, doubts, controls, reservations, self-criticisms, brakes” (p. 107)
- ❖ “Is more spontaneous, more expressive, more innocently behaving (guileless, naïve, honest, candid, ingenuous, childlike, artless, unguarded, defenseless), more natural (simple, relaxed, unhesitant, plain, sincere, unaffected), more uncontrolled and freely flowing outward (automatic, impulsive, reflexlike, “instinctive,” unrestrained, unself-conscious, thoughtless” (p. 107)
- ❖ “Is more ‘creative’ in a particular sense. Her cognition and behavior, out of greater self-confidence and loss of doubts, can mold itself in a non-interfering, Taoistic way to the situation in *its* intrinsic, ‘out-there’ terms or demands (rather than in ego-centered or self-conscious terms). It is more improvised, extemporized, novel, fresh, not-stale, untutored, unhabitual. It is also less prepared, planned, designed, premeditated, rehearsed. It is therefore relatively unsought, nondesired, unneeded, purposeless, unstriven for, ‘unmotivated’ or undriven, since it is emergent and newly created and doesn’t come out of prior time” (p. 108).

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Figure 4-2 (cont). Characteristics of *Identity* During Generalized Peak Experiences
(Maslow, 1968, Chapter 7)

- ❖ “Experiences himself or herself as *more* purely different, idiosyncratic in the peak experiences, roles drop away and the individual becomes least interchangeable with another person. Whatever the word ‘unique self’ means, they are more that in the peak-experiences” (p. 108).
- ❖ “Is most here-now, most free of the past and of the future in various senses, most ‘all there’ in the experience. For instance, she can now listen better than at other times. Since she is least habitual and least expectant, she can fully listen without contamination by dragging in expectations based on past situations (which can’t be identically like the present one), or hopes or apprehensions based on planning for the future (which means taking the present only as means to the future rather than as end in itself). Nor does she have to compare what is here with what is not here in order to evaluate it” (pp. 108-109)
- ❖ “Becomes more determined by intrapsychic laws than by the laws of non-psychic reality insofar as they are different. There is simultaneously a letting-be of the self *and* of the other; respecting-loving oneself *and* respecting-loving the other each permit, support, and strengthen each other; grasping the non-self best by non-grasping (i.e., by letting it be itself, by letting it go, by permitting it to live by its own laws rather than by one’s own, just as you become most purely yourself when you emancipate yourself from the not-you, refusing to let it dominate you, refusing to live by *its* rules, and insisting on living only by the laws and rules intrinsic to oneself” (p. 109).
- ❖ “Becomes unmotivated (or undriven), especially from the point of deficiency needs, wants, self-preservation and dichotomies, polarities, and splits. In this same realm of discourse, it makes similar sense to describe highest, most authentic identity as non-striving, non-needing, non-wishing, (i.e., as having transcended needs and drives of the ordinary sort). She just is. Joy has been attained which means a temporary end to the *striving* for joy. Everything now comes of its own accord, pouring out, without will, effortlessly, purposelessly. She acts now totally and without deficiency, not homeostatically or need-reductively, not to avoid pain or displeasure or death, not for the sake of a goal further on in the future, not for any other end than itself. Her behavior and experience becomes *per se*, and self-validating, end-behavior and end-experience, rather than means-behavior or means-experience” (p. 110).
- ❖ “Tends to express or communicate herself in a poetic, mythical, and rhapsodic way, as if this were the natural kind of language to express such states of being” (p. 110).
- ❖ “May be fruitfully understood as completions-of-the-act, a closure, culmination, climax, consummation, emptying or finishing of the self.; is herself complete or final in some sense (not incomplete, deficient, striving, living among means rather than ends” (pp. 111-112)
- ❖ “Feels a playfulness of a certain kind (both within the person and perceived in the world); a cosmic or godlike, good-natured quality, transcending hostility of any kind, that could easily be called happy joy; a quality of spilling over as of richness or surplus; an amusement or delight with both the smallness (weakness) and largeness (strength) of the human being” (pp. 112-113).
- ❖ “Feels lucky, fortunate, graced, ‘surprised by joy.’ The reaction of surprise, of unexpectedness, of the sweet “shock of recognition” are very frequent. A common consequence is a feeling of gratitude, in religious persons to their God, in others to Fate, to Nature, to people, to the past, to parents, to the world, to everything and anything that helped to make this wonder possible. This can go over into worship, giving thanks, adoring, giving praise. Very often this feeling of gratitude is expressed as or leads to an all-embracing love for everybody and everything, to a perception of the world as beautiful, and good, and eagerness to repay” (pp. 113-114).
- ❖ “Tend to report either of two kinds of physical reaction to peak-experiences. One is excitement and high tension (“I feel wild, like jumping up and down, like yelling out loud”). The other is relaxation, peacefulness, quietness, the feeling of stillness. Either is possible” (p. 114)

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Figure 4-3

Differentiating States of Consciousness through the Transpersonal Research Method of
Phenomenological Mapping
(Walsh, 1993, p. 126)

Comparison of the Shamanic Journey State with Advanced Yogic and Buddhist Meditative States			
Dimension	Shamanism	Buddhist (Vipassana) Insight Meditation	Patanjali's Yoga
Control	Partial	Partial	Extreme control in some samadhis
Awareness of Environment	Decreased	Increased	Greatly reduced
Concentration	Increased; fluid	Increased; fluid	Increased; fixed
Arousal	Increased	Usually decreased	Greatly decreased
Affect	+ or -	+ or – (Positive tends to increase)	Ineffable bliss
Identity	Separate self-sense, may be a nonphysical "soul"	Self-sense is deconstructed into a changing flux: "no self"	Unchanging transcendent Self, or <i>purusha</i>
OBE (out of Body experience)	Yes, controlled ecstasy ("ecstasies")	No	No; loss of body awareness ("enstasis")
Experience	Organized, coherent imagery determined by shamanic cosmology and purpose of journey	Deconstruction of complex experiences into constituent stimuli and flux	Single object (" <i>Samadhi</i> with support") Or pure consciousness (" <i>Samadhi</i> without support")

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Figure 4-4. Varieties of Expansion of Identity Observed in Psychedelic Sessions
(Grof, 1975, pp. 311-345)

I. Temporal Extension (or Expansion) Within the Framework of “Objective Reality”

Content of the experience consists of elements of the phenomenal world as we know it in our normal waking consciousness that can be verified, are understandable, or can be accepted on the basis of consensual validation, empirical evidence, or scientific research.

A. Temporal Expansion of Consciousness

1. ***Perinatal Experiences*** – related to physiological and emotional re-experiencing of various aspects of biological birth.
 - a. **Cosmic Unity** – related to primal union with the mother, characterized by tension-free transcendence of the subject-object dichotomy, with strong positive affect (serenity, bliss, peace, tranquility, harmony, equilibrium), feelings of sacredness, unity with eternity and infinity, and experience of “oceanic ecstasy.”
 - b. **Cosmic Engulfment** – related to initial biochemical and physiological changes in the womb signaling the onset of delivery, characterized by feelings of imminent threat and vital danger, paranoid ideation, and bodily sensations of being swallowed, consumed or pulled into an abyss by some malevolent entity (such as a dragon, python, octopus, whale, spider, witch, alien, or whirlpool).
 - c. **“No Exit” or Hell** – related to initial uterine contractions, characterized by feelings of unbearable, inescapable, and eternal suffocation and claustrophobic entrapment, the prospect of endless and hopeless psychological and physical tortures, agonizing metaphysical loneliness, alienation, inferiority, guilt, and unbearable suffering where existence appears completely nonsensical, meaningless, absurd, and futile with no way out either in time or space.
 - d. **Death-Rebirth Struggle** – related to the gradual and difficult propulsion through the birth canal, characterized by feelings of condensation and explosive release of immense energy, excessive sexual excitement, and intense aggression.
 - e. **Death-Rebirth Experience** – related to the completed expulsion through the birth canal, characterized by the extreme intensification of tension and suffering, followed by sudden relief and relaxation, decompression and expansion of space, culminating in an experience of total annihilation referred to as an “ego death,” followed by an experience of “cosmic union” and feelings of forgiveness, belongingness, love, perfection, harmony, redemption, self-respect, and respect for others.
2. ***Embryonal and Fetal Experiences*** – concrete episodes that are identified as specific physical or chemical occurrences during intrauterine development including attempted abortions, maternal diseases, teratogens, and parental sexual intercourse experienced during advanced stages of pregnancy.
3. ***Ancestral Experiences*** – characterized by feelings that one is actually re-living episodes from the lives of one’s ancestors., ranging from the identification with specific ancestors to feeling the psychological atmosphere in families, clans, tribes to obtaining insights into cultural attitudes, beliefs, traditions, and customs.
4. ***Collective and Racial Experiences*** – characterized by the experience of episodes from various cultures in the history of humankind independent of the subject’s own racial background, cultural tradition, previous training, education and interests, that frequently contain unusual and specific data beyond that known by the person previously but verified by archeological sources.

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Figure 4-4. (continued)
Varieties of Expansion of Identity Observed in Psychedelic Sessions
(Grof, 1975, pp. 311-345)

A. **Temporal Expansion of Consciousness** (continued)

5. ***Phylogenetic (Evolutionary) Experiences*** – characterized by the identification with animal ancestors at various levels of development, frequently generating information about zoological and ethological facts that exceeded the levels of subjects' natural science education.
6. ***"Past Incarnation" Experiences*** – characterized by the experience of vivid, dramatic scenes that happened at another time and place in history, involving other people, accompanied by negative affect (e.g., physical pain, hatred, anguish, aggression, jealousy, greed, despair, etc.) and the conviction that one is re-living concrete episodes that actually happened in one's previous incarnation.
7. ***Precognition, Clairvoyance, and "Time Travels"*** – involves those ESP phenomena characterized by temporal extension of consciousness in the form of precognitive and clairvoyant visions.

B. **Spatial Extension of Consciousness**

1. ***Ego Transcendence in Interpersonal Relations*** - characterized by partial loss of ego boundaries and feelings of emerging into union and oneness with another person to the point of experiencing "dual unity" with the interpersonal partner (separate yet a part of another's identity), accompanied by feelings of love and sanctity of the relationship involved.
2. ***Identification with Other Persons*** – characterized by total loss of one's ego boundaries and complete identification with others (i.e., parents, relatives, friends, acquaintances, teachers, political figures, famous historical personages or religious figures).
3. ***Group Identification and Group Consciousness*** – characterized by complete identification with typical groups of people of the individual's own race, religion, or profession (e.g., experience the role of Jews persecuted through the centuries, of Christians tortured by the Romans, of victims of the Spanish Inquisition, of all soldiers who have died on the battlefields of the world, of all terminal patients or persons dying, of all prisoners in concentration camps, etc.), and feelings that one is exploring one's own developmental history.
4. ***Animal Identification*** – characterized by complete identification with various forms of animal life, experiencing the consciousness of animal life, with information frequently reported about the animal's psychology, ethology, sexual and breeding habits.
5. ***Plant Identification*** – characterized by complete identification with various plant forms, with feelings of witnessing and consciously experiencing the basic life processes of the plants (e.g., germination of seeds, vegetable growth, pollination, and photosynthesis).
6. ***Oneness with Life and All Creation*** – characterized by complete identification with the totality of life on the planet Earth, experiencing problems related to survival and extinction of species, the viability of life as a cosmic phenomenon, or the complexity of phylogenetic development of life forms.
7. ***Consciousness of Inorganic Matter*** – characterized by experiencing consciousness in inorganic material (e.g., atoms, elements, materials such as diamond, granite, gold), resulting in a conviction that consciousness is a basic phenomenon existing throughout the universe and of which human consciousness is only a part.
8. ***Planetary Consciousness*** – characterized by complete identification with the Earth and all its phenomena, both organic and inorganic.

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Figure 4-4. (continued)
Varieties of Expansion of Identity Observed in Psychedelic Session
(Grof, 1975, pp. 311-345)

B. **Spatial Extension of Consciousness** (continued)

9. ***Extra-Planetary Consciousness*** – characterized by experiencing phenomena related to other planets, moons, stars, and interstellar space, with feelings of tranquility, infinity, eternity, and the unity of all opposites.
10. ***Out-of-Body Experiences, Traveling Clairvoyance, “Space Travels” and Telepathy*** – characterized by the experience of leaving one’s own body, traveling to far off places, occasionally demonstrating genuine ESP communication with a distant person.

C. **Spatial Construction of Consciousness**

1. ***Organ, Tissue, and Cellular Consciousness*** -- characterized by the feeling of tuning into the consciousness of certain portions of one’s own body (e.g., heart, liver, kidney, bone, white and red blood cells, germinal cells, etc.), associated with knowledge of biochemical and physiological processes beyond the person’s level of medical education.

II. **Experiential Extension (or Expansion) Beyond the Framework of “Objective Reality”**

Content consists of phenomena which are not based on generally accepted “objective reality.”

1. ***Spiritistic and Mediumistic Experiences*** – characterized by signs of mediumistic trance and experiences of encounters spiritual entities of deceased persons.
2. ***Experiences of Encounters with supra-Human Spiritual Entities*** – experience of being in the presence of spiritual entities existing on higher levels of consciousness and higher energy levels, appearing in the role of guides, teachers, and protectors (e.g., Jesus, Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, etc.).
3. ***Experiences of Other Universes and of Encounters with their Inhabitants*** – persons encounter the inhabitants of strange worlds and alien universes not a part of our cosmos, and experiencing dramatic adventures of various sorts.
4. ***Archtypal Experiences*** – characterized by experiences of typical Jungian archetypes and of generalized, universal social roles (e.g., the Martyr, Fugitive, Outcast, Ruler, Tyrant, the Great Mother,, etc.)
5. ***Experiences of Encounter with Blissful and Wrathful Deities*** – encounters and/or identification with concrete deities related to specific cultures (e.g., Isis, Apollo, Baal, Astarte, etc.), accompanied by feelings ranging from metaphysical horror to ecstatic rapture.
6. ***Activation of the Chakras and Arousal of the Serpent Power (Kundalini)*** - experiences related to descriptions in Indian philosophy and religion of the activation and opening up of the individual “charka” energy points (i.e., centers of primal energy radiation located at spinal levels).
7. ***Consciousness of the Universal Mind*** – characterized by ineffable experiences of the ultimate force in the Universe, infinite existence, infinite wisdom and infinite bliss, occasionally associated with insight into the process of the creation of the three-dimensional world and into the Buddhist concept of the Wheel of Death and Rebirth.
8. ***The Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void*** – characterized by ineffable experiences of the ultimate source of all existence, of primordial Emptiness and Nothingness, being beyond time and space, beyond change and polarities, such as good and evil, light and darkness, stability and motion, agony and ecstasy.

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Figure 4.5
Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Exercises in Mindfulness
(Hanh, 1987, pp. 79- 85)

Select the exercises you like best and find the most suitable for your own self. The value of each method will vary according to each person's unique needs. Although these exercises are relatively easy, they form the foundations on which everything else is built (p. 79).

Half-smile when you first wake up in the morning, during your free moments, and when you are irritated

“Hang...the word “smile” on the ceiling or wall so that you see it right away when you open your eyes. This sign will serve as your reminder. Use these seconds before you get out of bed to take hold of your breath. Inhale and exhale three breaths gentle while maintaining the half smile. Follow your breaths.... Anywhere you find yourself sitting or standing, half-smile. Look at a child, a leaf, a painting on the wall, anything that is relatively still, and smile. Inhale and exhale quietly three times... When you realize you're irritated, half-smile at once. Inhale and exhale quietly, maintaining the half smile for three breaths” (pp. 79-80).

Letting go in a lying-down position

“Lie on your back on a flat surface without the support of mattress or pillow. Keep your two arms loosely by your sides and your two legs slightly apart, stretched out before you. Maintain a half smile. Breathe in and out gently, keeping your attention focused on your breath. Let go of every muscle in your body. Relax each muscle as though it were sinking down through the floor or as though it were as soft and yielding as a piece of silk hanging in the breeze to dry. Let go entirely, keeping your attention only on your breath and half smile. Think of yourself as a cat, completely relaxed before a warm fire, whose muscles yield without resistance to anyone's touch. Continue for 15 breaths” (pp. 80-81).

Counting your breath as your walk

“Take a walk. As you inhale, be mindful that “I am inhaling, one.” When you exhale, be mindful that “I am exhaling, one.” Remember to breathe from the stomach. When beginning the second inhalation, be mindful that “I am inhaling, two.” And slowly exhaling, be mindful that “I am exhaling, two.” Continue on up through 10. After you have reached 10, return to one. Whenever you lose count, return to one” (p. 82).

Mindfulness while making tea or coffee and washing dishes

“Prepare a pot of tea (or coffee) to serve a guest or to drink by yourself. Do each movement slowly, in mindfulness. Do not let one detail of your movements go by without being mindful of it. Know that your hand lifts the pot by its handle. Know that you are pouring the fragrant warm tea (or coffee) into the cup. Follow each step in mindfulness. Breathe gently and more deeply than usual. Take hold of your breath if your mind strays.... Wash the dishes relaxingly, as though each bowl is an object of contemplation. Consider each bowl as sacred. Follow your breath to prevent your mind from straying. Do not try to hurry to get the job over with. Consider washing the dishes the most important thing in life. Washing the dishes is meditation. If you cannot wash the dishes in mindfulness, neither can you meditate while sitting in silence” (p. 85)

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Figure 4-6

Jungian Dream Work Techniques
(Hall & Lindsey, 1978, pp.144-145)

The Method of Amplification

“This method was devised by Jung to explicate certain elements in dreams that are thought to be of rich symbolic significance. It contrasts with the method of free association. In free associating, the person ordinarily gives a linear series of verbal responses to a dream element. The dream element is merely the starting point for the subsequent associations, and the associations may and usually do move away from the element. In the method of amplification, the dreamer is required to stand by the element and to give multiple associations to it. The responses he or she makes form a constellation around a particular dream element, and constitute the many-faceted meanings of it for the dreamer. Jung assumes that a true symbol is one that has many faces, and that it is never completely knowable. Analysts can also assist in amplifying the element by contributing what they know about it. They may consult ancient writings, mythology, fairy tales, religious texts, ethnology, and etymological dictionaries to extend the meanings of the symbolic element” (p. 144).

The Dream Series Method

“Freud...analyzed dreams one at a time by having the patient free-associate to each successive component of the dream. Then, by using the dream material and the free associations, Freud arrived at an interpretation of the meaning of the dream. Jung, while not disavowing this approach, developed another method for interpreting dreams. In place of a single dream, Jung utilizes a series of dreams obtained from a person” (p. 144).

“...they [the dreams] form a coherent series in the course of which the meaning gradually unfolds more or less of its own accord. The series is the context which the dreamer himself supplies. It is as if not one text but many lay before us, throwing light from all sides on the unknown terms, so that a reading of all the texts is sufficient to elucidate the difficult passages in each individual one.... Of course, the interpretation of each individual passage is bound to be largely conjecture, but the series as a whole gives us all the clues we need to correct any possible errors in the preceding passages” (Jung, 1944, quoted in Hall & Lindsey, 1978, p. 144).

The Method of Active Imagination

“In this method, the subject is required to concentrate his or her attention on an impressive but unintelligible dream image, or on a spontaneous visual image, and observe what happens to the image. The critical faculties must be suspended and the happenings observed and noted with absolute objectivity. When the conditions are faithfully observed, the image will usually undergo a series of changes that bring to light a mass of unconscious material.... Jung points out that drawing, painting, and modeling can be used for representing the flow of images.... The fantasies produced by active imagination usually have better form than do nocturnal dreams because they are received by a waking consciousness rather than a sleeping one” (p. 145).

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Figure 4-6 (continued)

Using Jungian Active Imagination for Personal Growth

(Johnson, 1986, pp. 137-151)

“Essentially, Active Imagination is a dialogue that you enter into with the different parts of yourself that live in the unconscious. In some ways it is similar to dreaming, except that you are fully awake and conscious during the experience. This, in fact, is what gives the technique its distinctive quality. Instead of going into a dream, you go into your imagination while you are awake” (p. 138).

“You allow the images to rise up out of the unconscious, and they come to you on the level of the imagination just as they would come to you in dream if you are asleep. In your imagination you begin to talk to your images and interact with them. They answer back. You are startled to find out that they express radically different viewpoints from those of your conscious mind. They tell you things you never consciously knew and express thoughts that you never consciously thought.... [You can] go into [your] fantasy or vision, participate consciously in it, and make it into an active exchange between the conscious and unconscious energy systems” (p. 138).

“The images that appear in imagination are in fact *symbols*, representing deep interior parts of ourselves. Like dream images, they symbolize the contents of our unconscious. Because these interior beings have ‘minds of their own,’ they say and do things that are new to us – startling, often enlightening, sometimes offensive to our egos” (p. 139).

“Jung...considered Active Imagination to be an even more effective path to the unconscious [than dreams]. The difference is this: When you dream, you receive signals from the unconscious, but the conscious mind does not participate. When you wake up, the conscious mind can remember the dream and think about its meaning, but during the dream itself, the conscious mind cannot actively participate [unless trained in lucid dreaming]. In Active Imagination, by contrast, the conscious mind is awake. It participates in the events” (p. 139).

“In dreams, the events happen completely at the unconscious level. In Active Imagination, the events take place on the *imaginative* level, which is neither conscious nor unconscious but a meeting place, a common ground where both meet on equal terms and together create a life experience that combines the elements of both. The two levels of consciousness flow into each other in the field of imagination.... The dialogue of conscious mind with unconscious gives rise to the transcendent function, the self, that stands as the synthesis of the two” (pp. 139-140).

“The essence of Active Imagination is your *conscious participation* in the imaginative experience. This kind of imagination is *active* because the ego actually goes into the inner world, walks and talks, confronts and argues, makes friends with or fights with the person it finds there. You consciously take part in the drama in your imagination. You engage the other actors in conversation, exchange viewpoints, go through adventures together, and eventually learn something from each other” (p. 140).