

Second Childhood: Hypno-play Therapy With Age-regressed Adults

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EFFECTS OF AN AFFECT BRIDGE FOR AGE REGRESSION^{1, 2}

CIARA CHRISTENSEN, ARREED BARABASZ, AND MARIANNE BARABASZ³
Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, USA

Abstract: The authors tested tailored hypnotic inductions for age regression with an affect bridge to access meaning-laden events. They used emotional intensity, spontaneity, elaboration, and transitional-object measures to assess the genuineness of the topographic shift to primary process characteristic of hypnotic age regression. An affect bridge was used to access stressful events within the age range of 3 to 6 years. The Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale, Form C was administered to determine high hypnotizables-reals, ($n = 8$, scores 9-12) and low hypnotizables-simulators, ($n = 8$, scores 3 or less). The groups behaved differently on frequency of transitional objects, spontaneity, and intensity but not on elaboration. The hypnotizable-reals but not the simulators produced a plethora of primary-process childlike affective responses that could not be produced by the role-playing simulators.

For psychoanalytic theorists, psychological regression is a multipurpose construct. It is a primary-process aspect of adult psychopathology and an iatrogenic condition induced by psychoanalytic treatment itself (Balint, 1968; Emmerson, 2003; Frederick, 2005; Fromm & Reichman, 1950; Tuttleman, 1982; Watkins, 1971; Watkins & Barabasz, 2008). Some theorists have focused on a particular facet of psychological regression: the childlike presentation of some adult patients. Can some forms of adult pathology be fairly depicted as a return of childhood mentation? Some developmental psychologists who have examined the cognitive responses of both children and elderly people report evidence that adults suffering dementia can return to childlike mentation (Miller, 1976; Papalia & Beilby, 1974). That is, these theorists claim the process of dementia sometimes unfolds as a lawful undoing of development such that aging works backwards.

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³Address correspondence to Ciara Christensen, Washington State University, Cleveland Hall, P.O. Box 642136, Pullman, WA 99163, USA. E-mail: ciara_christensen@yahoo.com

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