

Meditation: Some Kind of (Self-)Hypnosis? A Deeper Look

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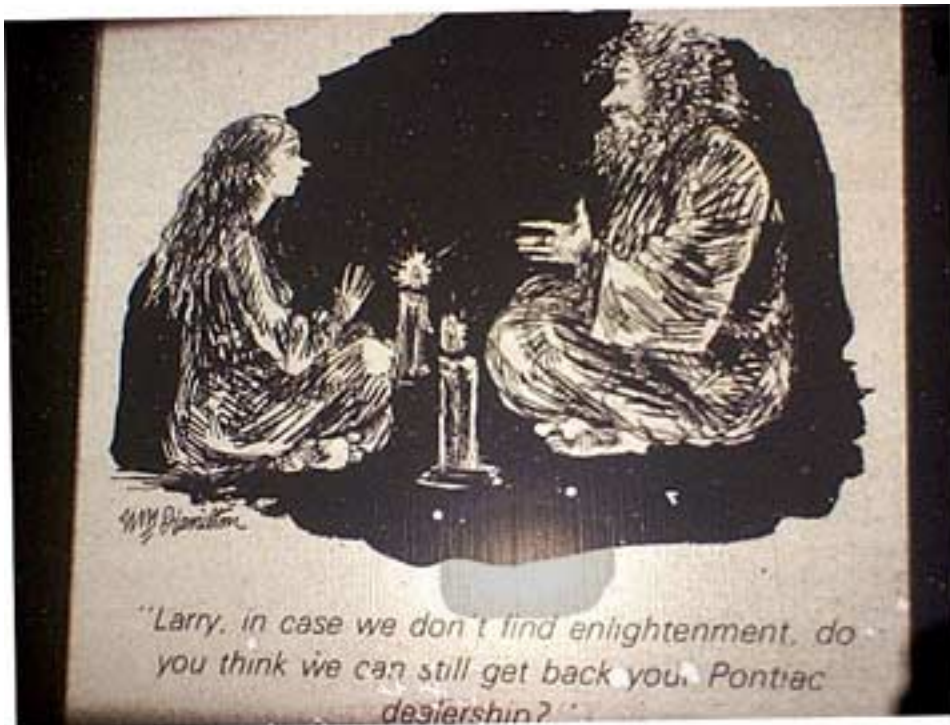
Presented at the 109th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association at San Francisco, California, on Sunday, August 26, 2001, 1:00 pm, Room 306, Moscone Center - South Building, in conjunction with Dr. Tart receiving a Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award from APA Division 30, Psychological Hypnosis

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I am really honored and delighted today to be receiving this Distinguished Scientific Contributions award from Division 30! I'm also somewhat embarrassed by this honor and attention, because I'm actually a shy person. I've come to realize that no one actually believes that I'm shy, but it's true. Nevertheless, here we are. But shy or not, I'm also a very practical type of person. As you can see from this first figure that I've been using to focus the projector, exotic things like meditation are all very nice, but, if we don't get enlightened, can we get our Pontiac dealership back,? Can we keep on accomplishing things in the real world? So, if the opportunity to talk to you provided by this award gives me a chance to help us understand meditation and hypnosis a little better, or lets me make some methodological points that will make for better research and application, it's fine with me.



Hypnosis was one of my first major research interests, and before broadening my interest to altered states of consciousness (ASCs) in general, I was quite active in hypnosis research for approximately a decade. I'm now semi-retired (actually pseudo-retired, since I'm just as busy as always, by choice) and not active in labo-

ratory research today, but, in one sense I am still very active through the wonderful work of two of my former graduate students, well known to this audience and both former Presidents of Division 30, Etzel Cardeña and Helen Joan Crawford. I think those two are without doubt my greatest contributions to hypnosis research!

I was also honored by Division 30 in 1998 by being asked to give an invited address on 30 years of research in my prime research area, ASCs (Tart, 1998a). That broad perspective was important, but I'm going to have a much tighter focus today on meditation and hypnosis, although "tighter" is a comparative, rather than an absolute word. Indeed, given the wide ground I have to cover I shall have to say many things in a sentence or two that really call for extended unpacking.

My own understandings about meditation and hypnosis are very much a work in progress, so I'm looking for feedback on this, and I'm hoping to inspire others to do a much better job that I've been able to do, and so take our understanding to new levels.

All through my career I've frequently been asked about the relationship between meditation and hypnosis, and I suspect practically all of you here today have also had to deal with that question. The standard answer, the old answer - it's been around at least 50 years and probably a lot longer - put forward by early authorities in hypnosis was that meditation was some form of hypnosis, specifically some form of *self*-hypnosis. I'm going to concentrate on comparing meditation with hypnosis per se, and not look at the "self" part of self-hypnosis, partly for lack of time, partly because our knowledge of self-hypnosis is much less than of hypnosis in general.

My next figure shows a picture of a Hindu yogi sitting on the ground meditating. This was surely the kind of idea of meditation that most of those who explained it as some form of hypnosis had. Looking more closely at the traditional explanations, especially their implicit aspects, meditation was thought to be something done by little brown men in loincloths, and there was probably something schizophrenic like about it. If you hear strong cultural ethnocentrism and prejudice in that, there was plenty of it about.



Attempting to explain meditation *away* as hypnosis was partly a genuine attempt to make scientific sense of it, given what was known, but we have to remember that the general cultural background when these explanations were put forward was that of the British conquest of India, of the West "civilizing" the East and trying to bring them up to our level. From what I've read historically, Westerners were first fascinated by the apparent mental science of the East, especially what they found in India. But people normally can't give too much status to those they are conquering, so we had a cultural need to subvert their knowledge as inferior to our knowledge. Thus we arrived at this equation that meditation equaled hypnosis, or, to get the full implications, meditation was *nothing but* a form of self-hypnosis. This equation was made with the implicit assumption that we thoroughly understood hypnosis and self-hypnosis, of course, an assumption which I think we can seriously question even today.

There was another putdown quality in that equation, namely the popular, if erroneous, equation of hypnotizability with gullibility, with having some kind of weak will. In the next figure, I show an illustration from the nineteenth century of a gentleman hypnotizing a lady. The gentleman, of course, is wearing the kind of fine clothes that superior beings wear when not out busily conquering inferior races - quite a contrast to the practically naked yogi sitting in the dirt. And, of course, the man is hypnotizing the woman, reflecting popular (and hopefully dying) cultural stereotypes of superiority and inferiority. It does indeed make us feel comfortable, if not superior, to dismiss something strange from another culture as something we already understand and that is probably psychopathological, but it's a very arrogant assumption.



So you can see this equation that meditation equaled some form of hypnosis is crude, misleading, and unsatisfactory. When I've looked into it in detail, it's usually been clear that people making this equation certainly didn't know much at all about meditation, and often didn't seem to know that much about hypnosis either. Now I'm not going to blame our predecessors for being more ignorant than us: I like to believe that we do know more than people did 50 or 100 years ago. But I do blame them for their arrogance. Not that we moderns, we people here in this room, are at all arrogant, of course....

What I'm going to try to do today is begin to give a better answer to the question of the relationship between meditation and hypnosis, because I don't think much has been done since the crude equation of the two. I want to clarify the nature of both hypnosis and meditation and make some general methodological points about studying and using ASCs.

Why can I add something? I started with just as little knowledge as our predecessors, but I did have an intensive research background in modern hypnosis, which was widened into some understanding of ASCs in general. In particular, as I studied the exotic forms of consciousness, the altered states, I developed a sensitivity to how much we take for granted about our ordinary consciousness, and how little we actually know about it. That's the states of consciousness side of my knowledge. On the meditation side, I have a strong theoretical and scientific interest in the nature of meditation, plus some practical experience, some personal experience, of the "inside" of meditation. My experience is especially strong in how to do meditation incorrectly, and the various difficulties of meditation, because I am not naturally talented for doing it! So while I have been meditating in

various ways for many years, I don't consider myself particularly adept at it, but, on the other hand, compared to people who have not studied and practiced meditation extensively, I have sufficient understanding of it that my latest book, *Mind Science: Meditation Training for Practical People*, is a useful book on how to meditate, especially for people of a rational and/or scientific temperament.

Comparing Hypnosis and Meditation: Three Problems

There are three major problems in trying to do the comparisons I want to do today, which I can only partially solve. The first of these is the ambiguity of both terms, "hypnosis" and "meditation." They have both been used to cover such a variety of mental procedures and altered states by various people that *anything that is described as "hypnosis" by one authority might well be described as "meditation" by another authority, and vice versa.*

As an example of loose usage of the terms, when I first became interested in meditation I looked it up in a psychological dictionary, and I found it was defined as "serious thinking." In one way I was pleased with this, since, having done a lot of thinking in my life, I must be a good "meditator!" On the other hand, it's ridiculously general to define meditation as simply serious thinking, although it's formally done that way in some systems. So, the moral of this first problem is that *anything I say about meditation and hypnosis can be contradicted from people's experience in the way these terms are used or the literature!* But, the general picture I give today should, I hope, be useful for scientific research and application.

The second problem is that of what I call *state specific knowledge*. I don't have time to go into that in any detail at all today, but I've made the point elsewhere (Tart, 1975) that *any* state of consciousness has useful points and drawbacks, strengths and weaknesses, and has specific kinds of knowledge that can *only* really be appreciated and worked with *within* that state. This is certainly true for meditation, although I'm not sure how true it is for hypnosis. Because of this, I long ago (Tart, 1972) proposed that we form *state-specific-sciences*, each unique to a particular ASC¹. What we need to remember for today's purposes is that some of the most important aspects of meditation cannot really be comprehended within our ordinary state of consciousness.

The third problem is the widespread, implicit assumption that the everyday state of consciousness we find ourselves in is "normal," is "just there naturally," and is "inherently superior to all ASCs." That is, we assume that the everyday knowl-

¹ There are also important questions, raised in the original publication, as to whether the traditional spiritual systems that practice meditation are state-specific-*sciences* or state-specific-*technologies*, but there's no time to go into that today.

edge base we work from, the state of ordinary consciousness that we are presumably in here today, is sound, is well understood, and is inherently superior to mental functioning in all other states. While there is some truth in this assumption, there's a lot of blindness in it, and it leads to a great deal of arrogance and culture boundedness. I can't do much more in this brief time than make that assumption conscious and explicit, but it will give us trouble all the way through.

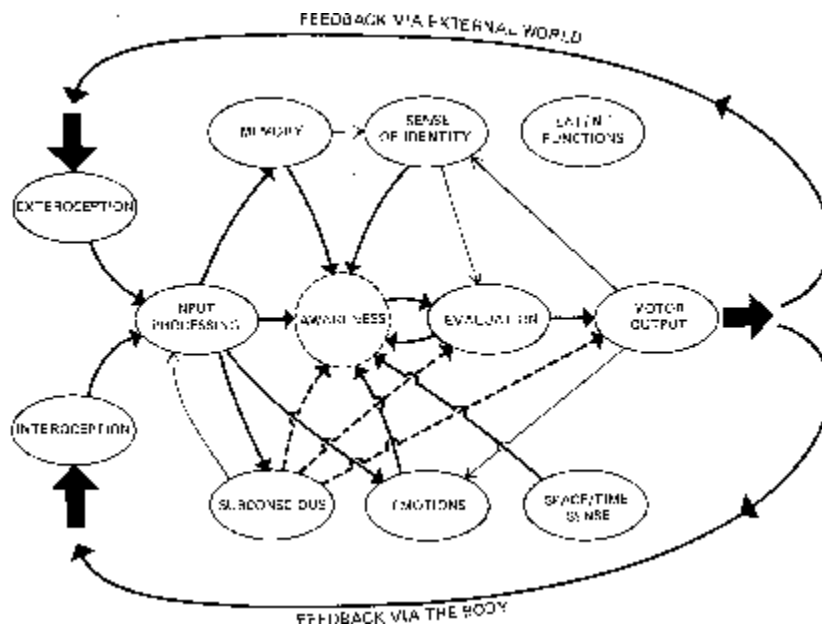
Background to Meditation and Hypnosis Comparison

As some background to start our comparison of meditation and hypnosis, I would first wrestle with an aspect of that third assumption, that ordinary consciousness is just there, is "natural." All my research has convinced me that *ordinary consciousness is an active construction*, it's not simply "there." It is an active, semi-arbitrary *construction* whose shape and style is very much determined by personal history and the culture one is raised in. Right now, even if you think you're in a relatively calm state, just listening to me, in point of fact your mind is working extremely hard to create and maintain the state we think of as ordinary consciousness. But we're so used to doing this work and it's so automatized that we almost never notice how much work we're doing. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of some meditative states that produce mental quiet is that for the first time you have acquired a baseline to see how incredibly active ordinary consciousness is.

Again I can only touch on this for lack of time, but my *States of Consciousness* (Tart, 1975) book goes into considerable detail on this. There's a link from my **The Archives of Scientists' Transcendent Experiences** (TASTE, www.issc-taste.org) website, which you may have gotten a handout about when you came in the door, to my personal archives site (www.paradigm-sys.com/cttart/), which has articles on my systems approach to states of consciousness that will elaborate these points. The bottom line for us today is that ordinary consciousness is not just there (and it is not necessarily inherently superior), but it's a semi-arbitrary *construction* and a very active system. Indeed, I long ago gave up using the phrase "normal consciousness" or "ordinary consciousness" and using the term *consensus consciousness* when I want to be technically and psychologically precise. Consensus consciousness was developed and induced over many years, and the "induction procedure" for it, if we can call development that, is far more powerful and thorough than anything we ever do with hypnosis! I'll use the term consensus consciousness from now on to refer to the state in which we spend most of our time.

The Systems Approach to Consciousness

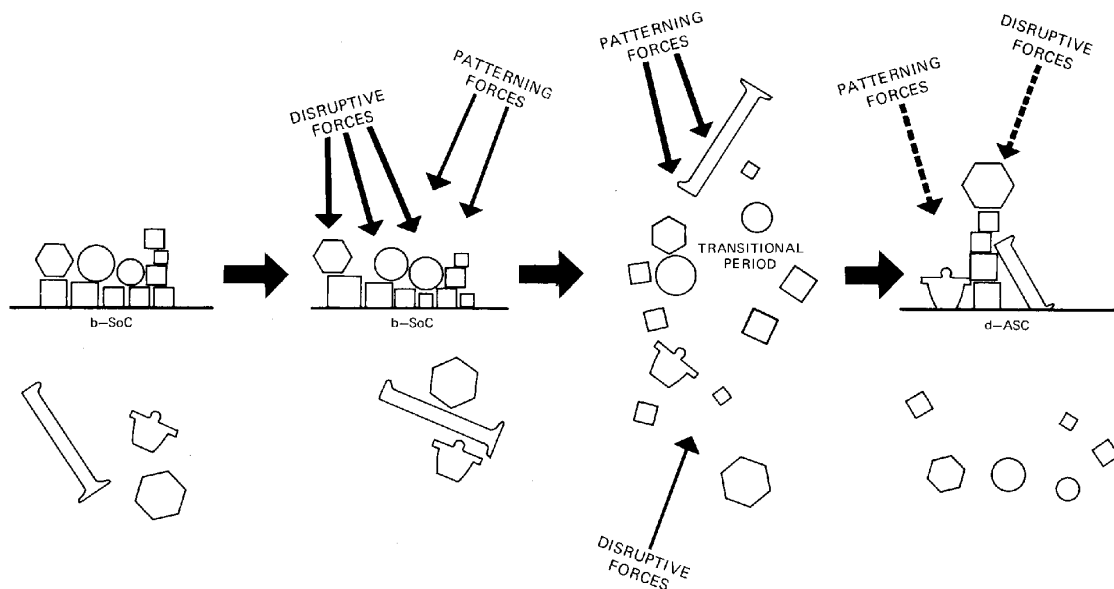
The next figure is an overview of my systems approach to consciousness, which has been guiding my research and understanding of consciousness and ASCs for 30 years now. The details are not important for our purposes today, so just glance at it. It's showing you an approach that is both reductionistic and analytic on the one hand, and that allows for emergent system properties from the activities of the subsystems on the other hand. The subsystems shown are nothing absolute but rather pragmatic representations of the major areas of psychological functioning that we need to understand to make sense of both altered states and consensus consciousness, given our current level of understanding. Some of those subsystems are things like Exteroception, our senses for taking in information about the external world, Interception, our sensing of our body and internal processes, Input Processing, to account for the enormous amount of largely automated processing that goes on before sensory perceptions reach consciousness, etc.



The figure shows the subsystems interacting in a particular way to represent a fact of importance to us today, namely that any state of consciousness is *stabilized*, and stabilized by multiple forces. Consensus consciousness, for example, is stabilized by feedback control. When various aspects of psychological functioning start to get too far from their normative range in which they help maintain the overall state, active correction measures are applied. Also, and especially important for today, consensus consciousness (or any state of consciousness) is stabilized by what I called *loading stabilization*: our basic awareness is used up, absorbed, as it were, so it can't go in directions which might destabilize the state of

consciousness you are currently in. The constant thinking which is a hallmark of ordinary consciousness, for example, thinking which runs along familiar lines, which leads to familiar emotions and actions, uses up most of our awareness capacity and so stabilizes consensus consciousness. Similarly consensus consciousness is loaded by receiving lots of familiar sensory inputs from our Exteroceptors, and lots of familiar bodily inputs from our Interceptors. Interfering with the stabilization processes is one of the primary ways we work to induce an altered state.

The next figure shows, in diagrammatic form, the induction of any altered state. The baseline state is represented as a pile of various shaped objects, representing subsystems and processes, a pile that is stable in the gravitational field, to represent the fact that a state of consciousness can persist in spite of changes in the environment. If I clapped my hands suddenly right now, or shouted "Boo!," for example, you might experience momentary startlement but you wouldn't go into an ASC - it would be very poor engineering to have any state be that unstable. To induce an altered state, we apply two kinds of forces. The first, *disruptive forces*, are designed to primarily interfere with the stabilization processes of the baseline state. The second, *patterning forces*, are designed to primarily shape the nature of the desired new state. (Sometimes the same procedure can be both a disruptive and patterning force.)



The figure shows an unstable, transition period in the middle, and then, in its third panel, a new "shape" of consciousness, the new system emerging from a rearrangement of the subsystems of consciousness -- *if* the induction procedure works. This is one of my major methodological points: it's silly to assume that just because the induction procedure has been presented to a person that it's been successful, that an altered state has resulted. We've got to actually assess whether the ASC is present. Saying that someone is in a meditative state, for example, because they sat down in a certain position and were given certain in-

structions is an excellent way to introduce major noise and error variance into meditation research.

I would note parenthetically that the whole state vs. non-state theoretical conflict about hypnosis is represented in this diagram. If you think you can put the pieces together in any and all arbitrary manners that you can think of for the outcome of an induction, that's the non-state argument. What you get is entirely a matter of suggestion, expectation and the like. If you think that only *some* new combinations are stable, that the mind can only work in a limited number of discrete patterns, that's the state argument. Most of you know that I think that in actual hypnosis, sometimes we need a concept of a discrete altered state to explain what's happening and sometimes a non-state explanation will do: there are important individual differences which we tend to overlook in our rush toward premature parsimony.

Looking at induction this way, it's important to realize that *a formal induction technique*, designed to induce an altered state, *never works in isolation*. For example, sometimes when I am lecturing to students about this, I stand in front of the back blackboard and start drawing a circle with chalk, going over and over the circle, around and around. When I tell the students I am showing them one of the world's most powerful induction techniques for producing an ASC, they look at me quite blankly. But, if you were a traditional Eskimo, this is a traditional induction method for producing a shamanistic state of consciousness and one that, when it works, is very powerful.

Even techniques we think of as primary physiological are strongly affected by their social, psychological and expectational context. In looking at the old literature on the use of marijuana in medicine around the beginning of the twentieth century, for instance, active extracts of it were used in a wide variety of doses for a wide variety of ailments, but the patients almost never spoke to their physicians of any ASC resulting from this marijuana use. They took the medicine the doctor gave them to get rid of their cough or ease their pain, and if their minds started feeling funny, they shrugged those effects off and got on with lives.

So the context of induction technique is always important. You approach an induction technique as a member of a particular historical culture, and you approach it with your *consensus* consciousness. That is, the assumptions and values of your culture are deeply embedded in the various automated functionings of your everyday consciousness. You have immediate expectations of what the induction technique will do to you, and you have expectations about the long-term consequences of having the technique applied. Indeed, I would say that *in many cases the largely implicit expectational context will have a lot more to do with what happens in an experiment or practical application of hypnosis or meditation than the specific induction procedure or experimental instructions given*. I stress this because historically, in our insecurity as the young science of psychology, in our wanting to be "real scientists," our wanting to be "objective," we often trivialized our research, looking at the easy external aspects of behavior but ig-

noring what was important, what was unique to developing a *psychology*, a science of the psyche, of the mind. I sometimes envy my colleagues in the "easy" sciences, like physics or chemistry, where their mood or their subject matter's "mood" (objects don't come into the lab in moods, people do) has no effect on experimental outcomes. But we are in *psychology* and it's a hard science, a difficult science, and that's just the way it is!

Okay, I have set the stage: where we going in the rest of this talk?

First I'm going to describe three states of consciousness, beginning with a kind of "pure" or "modal" case of the hypnotic state, and then two of the most common types of meditative states. Second, I'm going to look at the variability of the contexts in which hypnosis and meditation are used to give us a more specific understanding of how different ASCs or phenomena within states might result from the effects of these contexts. Third, I'm going to look at the qualities of these selected, modal cases of hypnosis and meditative states and try to be fairly specific about major differences.

By the time we finish doing this, we will probably have lost the forest for the trees with all that detail, so I will back out and take a look at what I think is a general and deep difference between hypnosis and meditation. Hopefully all this can guide research or applications and help us give a much more sophisticated and useful answer to the question of the similarities and differences between meditation and hypnosis than the old equation that meditation is some kind of hypnosis.

Deep Hypnosis: Fading of the CRO

The modal or pure hypnotic state I'm going to focus on here is one characterized by a general fading and harnessing of the important and pervasive activity of what I've called the **Consensus Reality Orientation**, or CRO. I was inspired to develop this concept by Ronald Shor's seminal work on the three dimensions of hypnotic depth (Shor, 1959; 1962). Shor theorized about the GRO, the **Generalized Reality Orientation**, all that knowledge about how things ordinarily should be that is instantly ready to inform and condition our perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. This largely automated evaluative activity pervades consensus consciousness. As the GRO/CRO becomes relatively inactive, a suggestion to a deeply hypnotized person is perceived in isolation, as it were, rather than automatically evaluated (and probably devalued) as it might be in consensus consciousness. I've renamed this concept the CRO, the *Consensus* Reality Orientation, as a reminder that what is "normal" or "ordinary" or "general" consciousness for particular culture can be very specific to that particular culture.

So the CRO is the constant background thinking and feeling -- and remember that a lot of what we call perception is really a kind of automated thinking that

can be influenced by the CRO -- that goes on all the time in consensus consciousness. Everything we perceive and think about is subjected to automatic questions like "What is it? How does it fit?" What are normal values for this situation? What's in it for me? What should I do next? Should I approach or avoid it?" etc. This constant background activity of the consensus reality orientation constitutes a major stabilizing activity, loading stabilization, as I spoke about in slightly different terms earlier.

When a subject is deeply hypnotized in the modal sense I'm defining here, they are waking and alert, and that alertness includes a particular sensitivity, a rapport, with the hypnotist. But the subject's mind is quiet and idling until specifically stimulated. A typical answer to a question of "What are you thinking about?" addressed to a deeply hypnotized (in this sense) subject is "Nothing." The subject is highly suggestible, in that the suggested effect is experienced as experientially real. Shor, of course, postulated other important dimensions of hypnotic depth (Role Playing Involvement and Archetypal Regression), but for our modal case here we will just have a person be deeply hypnotized in that the CRO, the consensus reality orientation, is not active and they are suggestible.

Quieting Meditation

The first basic type of meditation I want to talk about I'm going to call *quieting meditation*. It's also frequently referred to as *concentrative meditation*, and the technical Buddhist term for it is *shamatha* meditation. The basic practice is to mentally focus on a concentration point and rest the mind there. A traditional concentration point, for example, is the breath, either in terms of the movement of the belly or in terms of the warming and cooling sensations as air goes out and in the nostrils. One is instructed to put attention there, to continually sense this focus point, and, if you discover that your mind has wandered, to gently bring it back to the focus point.

Our prejudice in western psychology, going back to William James and perhaps earlier, is that it is impossible to do this kind of focus for more than a few seconds. That certainly seems to be the case in ordinary experience -- but remember we ordinary people have never been trained to concentrate in this way. Concentrating in this way for even a few seconds is quite different from the constant, wandering mental activity characteristic of consensus consciousness, an activity that, as we've seen, also helps stabilize consensus consciousness.

Why do quieting meditation? The analogy to illustrate its value that is commonly used in the East is that our mind is like a small pond of muddy water. There is a great treasure lying on the bottom of the pond, but gusty winds, our perceptions, thoughts and feelings, are constantly agitating the water, keeping the mud stirred up and waves sloshing all over the surface, so we can see nothing but muddy water and wave reflected reflections of outside light when we look down through the surface. We can't see what's in the depths. Quieting meditation amounts to an

injunction to stop agitating the muddy water! If you can do this, the waves will quiet, the mud will eventually settle out, and you have the possibility of seeing the treasure hidden below the surface of the mind. Quieting meditation also produces a very peaceful state, highly valued in itself.

The next figure shows the degree to which quieting meditation can be refined. These are traditional Buddhist levels of concentrative meditation, what happens as one gets better at holding focus and reaches more and more subtle states. Again I don't want you to get all involved in the details here, I'm just trying to show you that the people who have practiced quieting meditation for centuries have developed a very sophisticated and detailed typology of what is possible with it.

8th Jhana	Neither perception nor nonperception; equanimity and one-pointedness
7th Jhana	Awareness of no-thingness; equanimity and one-pointedness
6th Jhana	Objectless infinite consciousness, equanimity and one-pointedness
5th Jhana	Consciousness of infinite space; equanimity and one-pointedness
4th Jhana	Equanimity and one-pointedness; bliss; all feelings of bodily pleasure cease
3rd Jhana	Feelings of bliss, one-pointedness and equanimity; rapture ceases
2nd Jhana	Feelings of rapture, bliss, one-pointedness; no thought of primary object of concentration
1st Jhana	Hindering thoughts, sensory perception, and awareness of painful bodily states all cease; initial and unbroken sustained attention to primary object of concentration; feelings of rapture, bliss and one-pointedness
Access State	Hindering thoughts overcome, other thoughts remain; awareness of sensory inputs and body states; primary object of concentration dominate thought; feelings of rapture, happiness, equanimity; initial and sustained thoughts of primary object; flashes of light or bodily lightness

Ascending states of consciousness on Buddhist path of Quieting Meditation

As I said, we tend to think such sustained focus is not possible in Western psychology and Western common sense. We don't have a tradition of training people's minds. But to illustrate what's possible, I recall a discussion I and several friends had with Alan Wallace, now a Professor of Comparative Religions at the University of California, who had spent many years studying and practicing quieting meditation with Tibetan Buddhist teachers. He recounted an incident once when he was on a six-month solitary retreat, and was not supposed to leave his isolated meditation hut at all during that time. But at one point he was so up-

set with his poor performance that he had to leave his hut and see his teacher for more instruction. He found he could not keep his mind focused solely on a single point for more than two hours before a wandering thought finally intruded!

Now the rest of us in this discussion had all practiced meditation, but for us a *minute* or two of complete focusing and quiet constituted a *very* good meditation session, so Alan could not understand why we all laughed so much when he complained that he couldn't do it for more than two hours at a time! He very seriously explained that the old monk in the next meditation hut could go for *six* hours at a time before having an interfering thought, and Alan was just trying to improve his practice.....

Insight Meditation

The second modal type of meditation I want to discuss here is called *insight meditation*. The traditional Buddhist term for this is *vipassana* meditation, and the term *opening up meditation* is sometimes used for it. The word insight is actually somewhat misleading for a psychological audience, as we may think it involves specific psychological insights into causes of behavior, but it is really insight in a very general sense of much clearer perception of the *whole range* of mental activity. Perceiving an itch or pain with much greater clarity than normally is insight in this sense.

Rather than instructing the meditator to keep her mind fixed on a single point, as in quieting meditation, a wider range of phenomena, such as whatever the strongest sensation in the body at any particular moment is, is taken as the focus area. The meditator is instructed to pay clear attention to *exactly* what that feels like, moment by moment, without trying to control it. That is, *vipassana*, insight meditation is training in both insight and *equanimity*. In consensus consciousness, we are constantly trying to control and edit our experience, to enhance things we like and get rid of things we don't like. In insight meditation, one learns to use clear, calm attention to follow whatever is happening with clarity and equanimity. While the range of focus might be restricted to say, body sensations during the learning stage, the range is eventually expanded to include *all* experience.

The next figure shows the levels of attainment possible through insight meditation in the Buddhist tradition. Again, don't pay attention to the details at all, I just want you to see that in this 2500-year-old tradition of Buddhism there's been considerable sophistication and elaboration of what's possible as a result of this kind of meditation.

Nirodh	Total cessation of consciousness		
Effortless Insight	Contemplation is quick, effortless, indefatigable; instantaneous knowledge of <i>anatta</i> , <i>anicca</i> , <i>dukkha</i> ; cessation of pain, pervasive equanimity		
Realization	Realization of the dreadful, unsatisfactory, and wearisome nature of physical and mental phenomena; physical pain; arising of desire to escape these phenomena; perception of vanishing of mind objects; perception fast and flawless; disappearance of lights, rapture, etc.		
Pseudonirvana	Clear perception of the arising and passing of each successive mind moment, accompanied by various phenomena such as brilliant light, rapturous feelings, tranquility, devotion, energy, happiness, strong mindfulness, equanimity toward objects of contemplation, quick and clear perception, and attachment to these newly arisen states		
Stage of Reflections	These processes seen as neither pleasant nor reliable; experience of <i>dukkha</i> , unsatisfactoriness; these processes are seen to arise and pass away at every moment of contemplation; experience of <i>anicca</i> , impermanence; these dual processes are seen as devoid of self; experience of <i>anatta</i> , not-self; awareness and its objects are perceived at every moment as distinct and separate processes		
Mindfulness	Mindfulness of body function, physical sensations, mental states or mind objects		
Access Concentration	Previous attainment of access concentration on Path of Concentration	Bare Insight	Achievement of ability to notice all phenomena of mind to point where interfering thoughts do not seriously disturb practice

Ascending states of consciousness on Buddhist path of Insight Meditation

Okay, I've outlined a modal form of hypnosis and two modal forms of meditation, so now let's start looking at these states in more detail. But again, I have to remind you, given the wide-ranging way people often use the terms hypnosis and meditation, you'll be able to find things that contradict everything I say!

Variability of Hypnosis and Meditation Context

As I mentioned earlier, there is a general cultural context within which the specific practices associated with hypnosis or meditation are carried out. Table 1 shows this general cultural context for consensus consciousness, the hypnotic state we are focusing on, and the two kinds of meditation, quieting meditation and insight meditation.

Comparison of Hypnosis and Meditation ©Charles T. Tart 2000 Set & Setting	Consensus Consciousness (CC)	Hypnosis	Quieting Meditation Shamatha (on the breath)	Insight Meditation Vipassana (on flow of body sensations)
General Cultural Context	Best state, only rational state	Unusual, specialized state, not for "normals," Inferior to CC	CC is inferior state of bondage, ASCs lead to liberation Refuge in Buddha, Dharma & Sangha	CC is inferior state of bondage, ASCs lead to liberation Refuge in Buddha, Dharma & Sangha
Expectations of Immediate State Qualities	Rational, controlled, adaptive, realistic	Passive , sleep-like state; Loss of free will; Suggestible ; "Subject" to will of hypnotist; Unusual, but <i>transitory</i> experiences	Spiritual progress Escape from immediate suffering	Spiritual progress Escape from immediate suffering
Expectations of Long Term State Consequences	Happiness , acceptance, being "sane" and "normal"	In experiments, no long term change . In therapy, getting better	Attainment of high spiritual states , <i>jhana</i> states	Attainment of highest states, enlightenment
Relationship Expectations	Relative equality within social norms	Special rapport w hypnotist, power to hypnotist	Independence, unconditional happiness while in state	Independence, permanent unconditional happiness; Compassion for all sentient beings

For us Westerners, our general context is that consensus consciousness is the best possible way for a mind to be organized, the best possible state for it to be in, indeed, the only rational state. The hypnotic state is regarded as an unusual state, and a specialized state, certainly not for normal, everyday use, and, given the still widespread negative connotations of gullibility and the like, a state that's inferior to consensus consciousness. In the eastern and Buddhist context in which meditation is generally practiced, by contrast, consensus consciousness is considered an inferior state, the state of bondage in which we experience all sorts of unnecessary suffering. Getting out of consensus consciousness, getting into the altered states associated with meditation, leads to liberation². I will not elaborate on what liberation means at this point, but it is the superior goal in this context.

Note the idea shown in Table 1 of "refuge." Rather than ordinary, consensus culture standards being the baseline of life, the reliable place we take refuge in, for Buddhists practicing meditation refuge is the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. That is, they try to take as their fundamental orientation and refuge not ordinary life, but (a) people who have attained enlightenment, such as the Buddha, (b) the Buddhist teachings on how to reach enlightenment or liberation, the Dharma, and (c) the Sangha, the community of other practitioners who will give them support and guidance on their way to becoming Buddhas themselves. Quite a different context!

The next line in Table 1 deals with the expectations of immediate state qualities that are liable to be experienced in these four contexts. In consensus consciousness, we expect to be largely rational, controlled, adapt adequately to life, and generally be realistic (although what is "real" can be very much determined by cultural, consensus consciousness norms). When a Westerner agrees to be hypnotized, he generally expects to experience a passive, sleep-like state, with some loss of free will and to become highly suggestible. He expects to become "subject" to the will of the hypnotist. Unusual experiences are considered likely to happen, but they are expected to be *transitory* experiences, not leaving any permanent effects. In the two meditative contexts, by contrast, spiritual progress is expected. Both in quieting and insight meditation, a meditation practitioner expects to escape from immediate suffering, such as worrying or bodily tensions or pains, as well as to be creating a foundation for eventual total transcendence of suffering.

The third line in Table 1 deals with the expectations about long-term consequences that might result from these states. In Western culture, we expect to find happiness and acceptance as a result of being in consensus consciousness. After all, that's the "sane" and "normal" state to be in, and other people in consensus consciousness will reward us for being in a similar state of consciousness. We don't expect long-term consequences from hypnosis if we are subjects in an experiment, although we might certainly hope for long-term, positive changes along the lines of getting better if the hypnosis is used in conjunction with therapy.

² For simplicity I leave out the moral and ethical context in which meditation is practiced, but which is absolutely necessary.

In looking at the meditation context, we now have differences between quieting meditation and insight meditation. In traditional Buddhist practice, quieting meditation will allow the attainment of high spiritual states considered of great value, the *jhana* states, but that is not considered the ultimate goal. Insight meditation (which is predicated on having a certain facility in quieting meditation to begin with) allows the possibility of the highest attainment, full enlightenment. That is, the meditator becomes a Buddha herself, and no longer experiences unnecessary suffering.

The final line in table 1 deals with relationship expectations. In consensus consciousness we expect a relative equality of relationships with other people, within established hierarchies of social norms. Much of the fulfillment of life is expected to come from social relationships. When we're hypnotized, we expect to sometimes have special rapport with the hypnotist, and for the hypnotist to have considerable, if temporary, power over us. In the meditation context, however, relationships are expected to be quite different. In both cases, independence from *needing* social relationships is expected. It's not that one will not have or care for social relationships -- indeed one may have much higher quality ones -- but that the accomplished meditator is no longer desperately *needy* for the support that they offer.

In quieting meditation, for example, if one attains the *jhana* states, one experiences *unconditional* happiness. That is, the altered states are inherently happy, to various degrees, without depending on any outside conditions, including other people, being some particular way. However when one comes out of the *jhana* states induced by quieting meditation, one pretty much returns to being one's ordinary self again, subject to conditional happiness: that is, you're happy when you get what you want and avoid what you don't want, and unhappy when you can't do this. When the insights into one's true nature are deep enough in insight meditation, going even further, this can lead to permanent, unconditional happiness. That is, there is a permanent change in the meditator, not just something associated with being in a special meditative state, such that there is an end of suffering.

It's very important to note that this realization, liberation, enlightenment, also includes deep realization of an inherent compassion toward *all* sentient beings, so one's relationships naturally change in the direction of helping other sentient beings be happy³.

³ Since the ultimate happiness is becoming enlightened through insight meditation, in addition to specific acts to benefit others, teaching them how to master insight meditation becomes the greatest gift possible. Full Buddhist enlightenment is thus said to consist of the development of both wisdom and compassion.

Qualities of (Modal) Hypnotic and Meditative States

OK, starting with the principle that the context of the induction technique and the expectations surrounding it can lead to quite different effects, we've looked at some the big differences in contexts of consensus consciousness, our modal hypnotic state, and two modal meditation techniques, quieting meditation and insight meditation. Now let's look at a variety of the specific differences that can actually occur. I've organized these by the major subsystems of my systems approach to states of consciousness Tart, 1975), so we have some structure.

Comparison of Hypnosis and Meditation Charles T. Tart ©Charles T. Tart 2000 Qualities	Consensus Consciousness	Hypnosis	Quieting Meditation Shamatha (on the breath)	Insight Meditation Vipassana (on flow of body sensations)
Exteroception	Active , scanning Very variable	Narrowed & intensified by suggestion	Diminished or absent	Minimal , not attended to except for internal correlates
Interoception	Active , Very variable	Narrowed &/or intensified by suggestion, &/or absent	Fixed &/or enhanced	Especially active, clear
Input Processing	Very active , implicit	Narrowed & controlled by suggestion	Strong focus & conscious control	Less active ; may become explicit; more conscious control
Memory	Very active , implicit and explicit	Minimal unless suggested, then enhanced	Inactive , ignored. Present focus	Inactive , ignored. Present focus
Sense of Identity	Ordinary Me!	Largely dormant ; suggested identities strong	Fades , potentially to nothing, no "thing"	Fades , potentially to nothing, no "thing," plus flashes of insight into deeper identity
Evaluation & Decision Making	Active , implicit as well as explicit	Passive unless suggestions to activate; under hypnotist's control	Dormant except for task focus; conscious control	Dormant except for task focus & maintenance of equanimity; conscious control
Subconscious	Implicit ; inferred from behavior & self-report	Perhaps more accessible via suggestions	Inactive?	Sometimes insights into
Space/Time Creation	Very active but implicit ; we think we just perceive S & T	Malleable	Fades , timelessness	Fades , timelessness

Table continued next page

Comparison of Hypnosis and Meditation Charles T. Tart <small>©Charles T. Tart 2000</small> Qualities	Consensus Consciousness	Hypnosis	Quieting Meditation <i>Shamatha</i> (on the breath)	Insight Meditation <i>Vipassana</i> (on flow of body sensations)
Motor Output	Usually active	None except for suggested activity	None	None
Awareness	Me! and My! world	Simple awareness , readiness unless specific suggestions shape, then malleable	Task effort → absorption → <i>jhana</i> states	Task effort → clarity → insight into true nature → enlightenment

The first line Table 2 shows effects for **Exteroception**, the processes and sense organs that keep us in touch with the external environment. In consensus consciousness, there is generally quite active scanning of the environment, although the level of that can be very variable. When you're reading a book, your scanning a lot less than when you're taking a walk or participating in a conversation, e.g. In deep hypnosis, exteroception is both narrowed and intensified. Narrowed in the sense that there is very little, if any, active scanning of the environment unless specifically suggested, but, if there is specific suggestion calling for it, the experienced intensity of this exteroception will go up.

In quieting meditation, where, you recall, the meditator is focused on the breath, exteroception is greatly diminished and, when advanced meditative states (jhanas) develop, totally absent as far as experience is concerned. In insight meditation, we have some variability. Generally exteroception is minimal if one is attending to, say, the exact moment-by-moment quality of body sensations. But exteroception is not actively blocked. The meditator is not deaf, so, for example, she will hear sounds. My experience and that of other meditators is that external sounds will often have specific bodily effects, a tactile sensation triggered by the sound, e.g., so there may be some exteroception in this way.

The second row of the table deals with **Interoception**. Again this is very active in consensus consciousness. We keep track of our bodies and what we're doing with them. In hypnosis, interoception is typically quite narrowed in that the subject generally sits still and so most interoceptors adapt out. If movements are suggested, or suggestions given that the subject pay attention to internal, bodily processes, they can be intensified in perception. Contrarily, with appropriate suggestions for analgesia, interoception can be totally removed from the consciousness of the deep hypnotic state.

In quieting meditation, interoception is firmly fixed and usually enhanced. If the meditator is following the movement of the belly in the course of breathing, for instance, he will try to keep this the only interoceptive sensation, and so qualities of this sensation, perhaps varying from moment to moment, will be sensed that normally are not a part of consciousness. The meditators sense their bodies more than normal, although in a specialized way. In insight meditation, on whatever the strongest body sensations is at any particular moment, interoception is much more intense than it normally is. The meditator may not only sense qualities of internal sensations not normally there, but, as a result of developing equanimity, be able to do things like deal with pain much more effectively than usual: the pain is likely to be experienced as a varying *sensation*, rather than reacted to as *suffering!*

One of the most important subsystems of consciousness is what I have called **Input Processing**. It is probably actually a variety of specialized subsystems, lumped together here for convenience. These are the physiological and psychological mechanisms that ingest the vast amount of exteroceptive and interoceptive input, screen it for what is relevant to the organism, abstract it, work it over,

and add to this information to deliver the much less rich percepts that constitute perception. This process is very active in consensus consciousness, but it's implicit, it's generally not a conscious process at all. We don't know we are doing this enormous amount of abstracting, processing, and fabrication. We feel as if we are simply perceiving the world as it is.

Input processing can be highly narrowed or broadened in overall bandwidth, and certainly focused by suggestion in the hypnotic state. It can be narrowed in the sense that only certain exteroceptive or interoceptive stimuli, as suggested, will be perceived at all, or the nature of the construction/fabrication process can be changed so that a stimulus is perceived in a different way than it normally would be. Giving a subject something unpleasant to smell after you've suggested that you will give them something pleasant, and the subject perceiving a pleasant smell, is an excellent example of controlling input processing through hypnotic suggestion.

In quieting meditation, there is strong *conscious* control over input processing in order to maintain a focus on the object of meditation, the breath in our example. This is far more conscious control being exerted over what happens than in consensus consciousness. In insight meditation, input processing may become less active in the sense that, say, exteroceptive input is not having deliberate attention paid to it, but, on the other hand, more control is being exerted over interoceptive input in that the meditator strives to maintain clarity and equanimity. In consensus consciousness, a pleasant or unpleasant stimulus usually activates all sorts of reactions, and our consciousness is largely involved in the reactions, losing touch with the actual stimuli. In insight meditation the goal is to keep consciousness as close to the actual, ongoing stimulation as possible. Meditators sometimes also report insights into the nature of the normally implicit Input Processing subsystem, i.e., they see how they habitually alter or distort various kinds of stimuli.

The ***Memory Subsystem***, shown in the fourth line of the table, is very active in consensus consciousness, both explicitly and implicitly. We frequently attempt to remember things, with various degrees of success, and various kinds of memory are the basis for much input processing: you can't screen out or accentuate stimuli on the basis of relevance unless there are remembered criteria of relevance, even though this is done implicitly and automatically. In the hypnotic state, unless a person is asked to remember things, or given a suggestion for false memory, the memory subsystem is not consciously active: subjects don't engage in much remembering, except at the implicit level that is necessary for so many other actions.

In both kinds of meditation, except for possible implicit operations, memory is largely inactive and, if it is activated, ignored. There's a very strong focus on the present time, either in terms of the highly specific object of meditation in quieting meditation or on the larger range of focus in insight meditation. The meditator is interested in sensing what a body sensations feels like *now*, and remember-

ing what it felt like earlier or thinking about how it might feel in the future is a failure of present time focus, so attention is brought back to the present

Our ***Sense of Identity Subsystem***, outlined in the fifth row, gives certain of our experiences a special **Me!** quality and consequent emotional cathexis. There is considerable implicit activity here, as well as explicit experiences of feeling more or less involved in one's personal identity, in consensus consciousness. The sense of identity function becomes largely dormant in the hypnotic state, unless a specific suggestion is given, such as taking on another identity. In the quieting meditation state, the ordinary sense of **Me!** fades, and can potentially fade to the point where the meditator would report, in retrospect, that she had no particular identity at all, that she was nothing or, more precisely, no "thing"⁴. In insight meditation, there's also this fading of one's ordinary identity, to the point of having no particular identity in consciousness, but there may also be insights into the nature of one's deeper identity. This phenomenon is almost impossible to talk about in ordinary language, because ordinary language is constructed around physical things and ordinary identity.

The ***Evaluation and Decision Making*** subsystem refers to the many ways in which we decide what a situation is about, its relevance to our needs, and what sort of actions we should take. We make numerous evaluations and decisions in consensus consciousness all the time, both implicitly as well as explicitly. In hypnosis, by contrast, this subsystem is quite passive. The subject has surrendered his normally very active evaluation and decision making capacity to the suggestions of the hypnotist, and, unless there are suggestions that require evaluation and decision making, this subsystem will remain largely passive.

In both kinds of meditation, the Evaluation and Decision Making subsystem is dormant except for maintaining task focus, keeping the processes of the mind under conscious control. In quieting meditation, this is a matter of making sure that one keeps attention focused on the object of meditation and doesn't drift off into *thinking about* the focus object instead of actually *sensing* it. In insight meditation, one similarly keeps attention focused on the range of objects of meditation and, in addition to monitoring that one doesn't drift off into thoughts about the objects of focus instead of actually sensing them, deliberately maintains an attitude of equanimity toward the range of focused objects.

The ***Subconscious or Unconscious Subsystem***, in the seventh line of the table, is one of the most mysterious processes. In consensus consciousness, the subconscious is a theoretical inference: we see intelligent, coordinated behavior along with a lack of relevant conscious experience and so postulate that some intelligent aspect of mind outside of consciousness is responsible for what we observe. Many investigators and therapists have argued that the subconscious is

⁴ This leads us toward the issue of the insight of "emptiness," a foundation of enlightenment in Buddhism, which is too complex to go into here, especially because of the unintended and unfortunate nihilistic connotations that have resulted from translating the Eastern language terms as emptiness.

more accessible in hypnosis. Suggestions may activate it, and/or make aspects of functioning that were normally unconscious now conscious. It is hard to know what, if anything, happens the subconscious functioning in the two types of meditation. It is tempting to say it's inactive in quieting meditation, as, if this is done very successfully, there's little experience except that of the object of meditation. This is similar for the range of objects of meditation in insight meditation, although the spontaneous insights that can bubble up in this latter kind of meditation sometimes will cover material from we would normally call the subconscious or unconscious.

The ***Space/Time Subsystem*** is responsible for the creation of our spatial and temporal framework for interacting with external and internal reality. This is a subsystem whose functioning is very active, but completely implicit in consensus consciousness. We think we simply *perceive* space and time. But in the ASC of, say, dreaming, events also happen in a space and time framework, but one that is entirely internally created and has no reference to external space and time. This nicely illustrates how the space/time subsystem creates space and time. In consensus consciousness, the space and time this subsystem creates must be highly coordinated with external space and time, leading to our feeling that we simply perceive real space and real time.

This subsystem is highly malleable to suggestion in hypnosis. Time can be made to seem to move faster or slower, space can become shallower or deeper, as in Aaronson's fascinating experiments years ago (Aaronson, 1969). In both meditative states, the meditator is highly present-centered, and feelings of timelessness are often reported about the meditative states, so the space/time subsystem seems to become largely dormant in this case.

Motor Output refers to our many ways of affecting the world, such as obvious muscular movements and actions on the world, to speech, and to some control over internal bodily processes. Motor output is highly active in consensus consciousness, but usually inactive in the hypnotic state unless some motor action is specifically suggested. Reducing or inactivating motor output is an important component in the induction of many altered states, for motor output per se is a familiar and massive activity that can act as a kind of loading stabilization, maintaining the baseline state of consciousness, and producing further exteroceptive input as a consequence of one's effects on the world that can also load and stabilize the baseline state of consciousness.

In the two kinds of meditation, the meditator generally sits absolutely still for long periods of time, so familiar motor output is largely absent. To avoid misunderstanding, I should add, though, that if insight meditation leads to liberation, it does not mean that the person has to stay still for the rest of their life in order to enjoy the changes and benefits that have resulted from enlightenment!

Finally, in the tenth line of the table, we have the most mysterious aspect of consciousness, what I'm not even sure should be called a subsystem as it's more fun-

damental than the others, namely **basic awareness** or **pure awareness**. In my systems approach I distinguish between *basic awareness* and *consciousness*, the former being the most basic kind of knowledge that *something* is happening, the latter, consciousness, being the highly developed, articulated, often quite verbal *construction* that fills up so much of our ordinary experience. Indeed, in consensus consciousness it may not even make sense to a person to try to distinguish basic awareness from consciousness, but in both kinds of meditation, the meditator fairly quickly learns to recognize an immediate distinction between basic awareness, which is the larger "container" within which particular articulated kinds of consciousness manifest and the particular sensations, thoughts and emotions which are the content within the container.

Basic awareness in consensus consciousness is usually tied up in, absorbed in perceptions, thoughts and feelings of have to do with **Me!** and **My! world** and what should be done that benefits **Me!**. In the hypnotic state, the deeply hypnotized subject, not having been given specific suggestions, is probably experiencing something like basic or pure awareness. He is aware of various things that happen in the laboratory, but doesn't have all the automatic elaborations/fabrications happen to him as happens in consensus consciousness, unless specific suggestions are given by the hypnotist to make this happen.

In quieting meditation, the practice of staying focused leads to the absorption of basic awareness into the various jhana states (which I have not attempted to describe, because not only are they complicated and I'm running out of time, but I don't have a good personal understanding of them). In insight meditation, the task effort of focusing leads to experiences of greater and greater clarity as to what one is perceiving, equanimity about it, and insight into one's true nature, which can ultimately lead to the state that we so inadequately call "enlightenment." As I mentioned earlier, we are into state-specific knowledge here which cannot really be conveyed in ordinary consciousness.

Okay, I've given you call a lot of ionformation, while the same time feeling that I really needed to go far more detail on each of the various points to make them really clear, cite supporting evidence, etc. But that was just impossible with all this ground to cover. I hope all the above will act as suggestions for directions that people might go in for further study and research. And, even more so, I hope this discussion has increased researchers' sensitivity to the context and expectations surrounding both hypnosis and meditation, so that future research will be truly insightful, rather than shallow but spuriously "objective."

Given these definitions, delimitations, and considerations, obviously I think the equation,

Meditation =(some kind of self-)Hypnosis

is quite inadequate. More specifically, hypnosis, defined here as a deep state in which the consensus reality orientation, the CRO, has faded and a person experiences suggestions as experientially real, is not the same thing as quieting meditation⁵. Further, hypnosis is certainly not the same as insight meditation. The more adequate equations are:

Meditation \neq Quieting Meditation

and

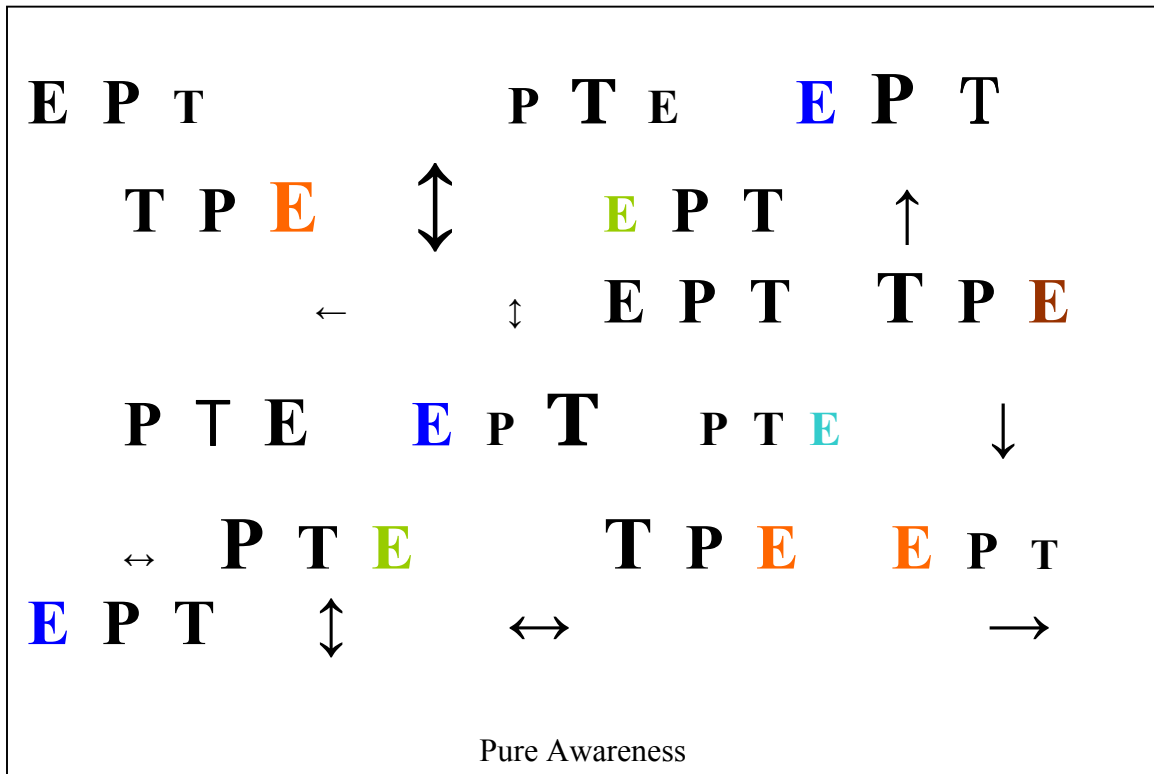
Meditation \neq Insight Meditation

Now to conclude, let's back up and take a look at the forest again after all these trees, this detail. I want to take a preliminary look at a powerful, general difference between hypnosis and the practice and outcomes of meditation.

Organizing Thought vs. Transcending Thought

The next figure is designed to illustrate consensus consciousness as a very busy state. As you can see I have a large, squared-off space filled with varying shades and intensities of **P**erceptions, **T**houghts, and **E**motions, with perceptions leading to thoughts, thoughts leading to emotions, emotions leading to perceptions, etc. etc. Although I've met a very few people who report that sometimes they have periods of blankness during their ordinary state of consensus consciousness, for most of us (especially, I think, academics!) consciousness is a never-ending, three-ring circus, and often a poorly controlled, poorly organized three-ring circus. Pure awareness, shown in light type, is theoretically there as the container behind all this content, but generally not experienced as something distinct.

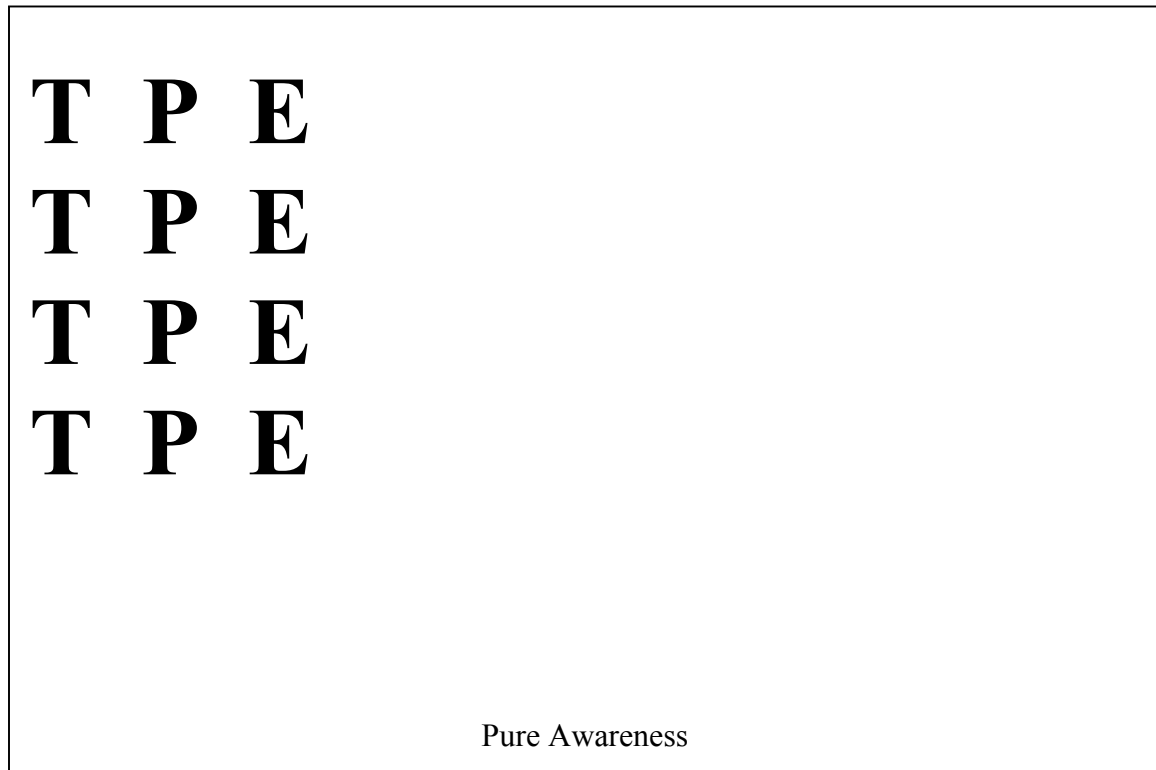
⁵ There may be some similarities in mental quiet *per se*, but we don't know, there has been no direct comparison that I know of.



"Normal," Consensus Consciousness

T = Thoughts; P = Perceptions; E = Emotions

In the next figure I've represented deep hypnosis as a strongly organized state of consciousness. Recall that, for the kind of hypnosis we are talking about, there is practically no thought, perception, or emotion unless suggested, and even that tends to be tightly organized and coherent, wholly absorbing basic awareness in its highly structured manifestation. I sketched this in the figure by putting the thoughts, perceptions and emotions all the regular column and drawn in a very heavy, unvarying type face to show the high degree of organization that hypnotic suggestion can bring about. This illustrates one end of the general dimension I'm talking about: the hypnotic state is very good for organizing and structuring thought processes, and consequent emotions and perceptions.



Deep, Quiet Hypnotic State

T = Thoughts; P = Perceptions; E = Emotions

It's getting harder to represent things diagrammatically, but in the next figure I've shown a deep state of quieting meditation, where there is practically no thought, perception, or motion, and yet this basic awareness, this pure awareness which is largely implicit in consensus consciousness and hypnosis is now experienced directly. This is sometimes described as "nothing." No "thing" is happening, but it is decidedly not a state of dullness! The meditator feels vividly awake and alive, even though there's no specific *content* of consciousness. Indeed, one investigator (Forman, reference to be supplied) has described this as the "pure consciousness" experience. Clearly he's using "consciousness" where I would use "awareness," but, just as the terms hypnosis and meditation have been used in a wide variety of contradictory ways, this is certainly true for consciousness and awareness also.

Pure Awareness

Quieting, Concentrative Meditation Shamatha

T = Thoughts; P = Perceptions; E = Emotions

I wish I could define the pure awareness experience more clearly, but description is very much a function of the verbal articulation and organization of consensus consciousness, and so while pure awareness can be experienced and understood in a state-specific way, and we can probably learn to describe it better than we can now, I have little hope that we can really learn to describe it in a completely adequate way within consensus consciousness.

If you haven't had some direct experience of pure awareness, you might be wondering at this point, "What good is it?" Certainly it is theoretically interesting as the source or container behind our more articulated consensus consciousness, but what else? Well, those who experience even a few seconds of it in quieting or insight meditation find it very rewarding to do so, and frequently report a subsequent aftereffect, a re-vitalization, a refreshing and deepening of ordinary experience. I will propose a computer analogy here to convey some of this.

We've all, unfortunately, had the experience of our computers locking up. Too much is going on, there's a conflict over sharing resources internally, and finally

the whole machine locks -- you Windows users will recognize and flinch at the mention of the "blue screen of death." Experiencing pure awareness is like hitting the reset button on a (bio)computer: the machine can reboot, all the clutter and conflict is gone, and we can now work effectively again. Since a great many problems in our lives are quite analogous to our (bio)computer locking up, there are obviously great psychological advantages to being able to "hit reset" and bring our native resources to bear freshly.

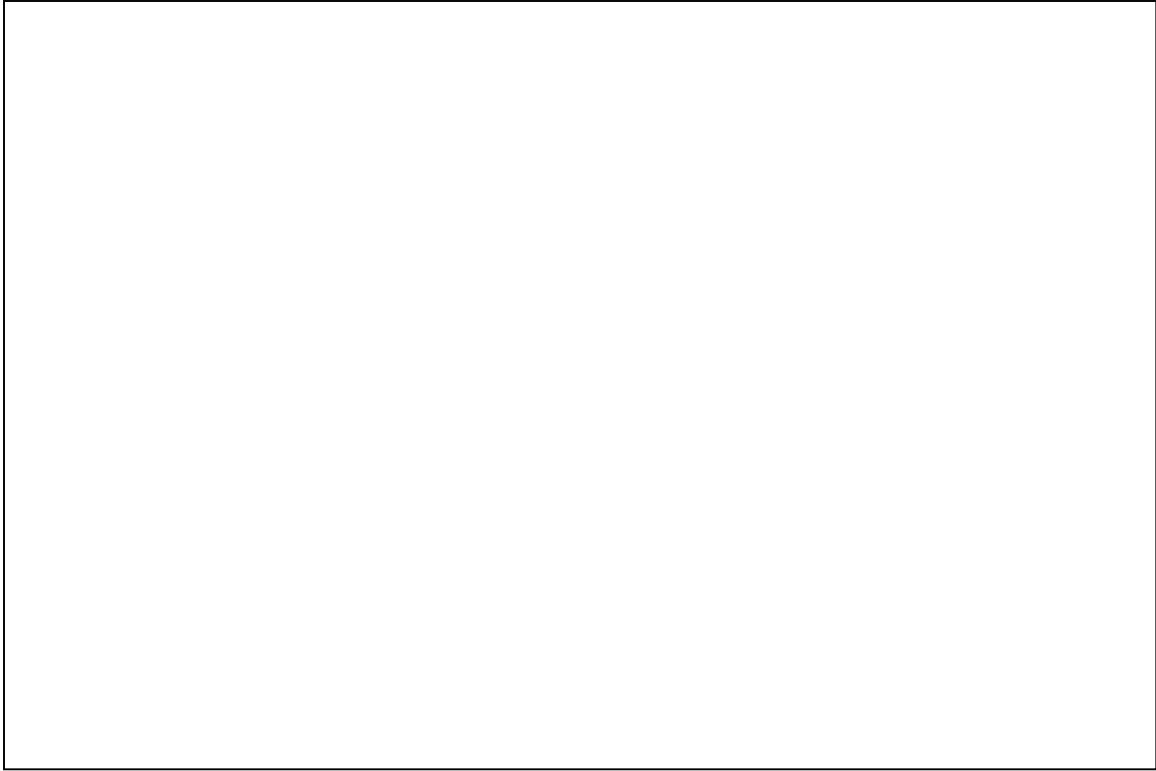
And, as I mentioned briefly earlier, some proficiency in quieting meditation is considered a basic foundation for the really successful practice of insight meditation.

Let's now look at the other end of this general dimension that I'm speaking of, transcending thought (and consequent feelings). Not suppressing, but transcending. Imagine a spectrum with intense thoughts at one extreme and transcendence of thought into "something else" at the other extreme. In consensus consciousness we are toward the thought end of that continuum, although thought is not always well-organized. The hypnotic state allows for tighter control of thought, the meditative states take us in the direction of transcending thought altogether.

What is that transcendence? My final diagram tries to illustrate the end point of insight meditation, enlightenment. This is the biggest challenge of all to represent diagrammatically, and you'll see I have either succeeded brilliantly in a Zen manner or bypassed the issue altogether by leaving the space entirely blank!

I would very briefly note, however, that while we tend to think of enlightenment as some mysterious state of consciousness, some exotic condition, in Buddhism enlightenment is thought of as an altered state of *being* rather than simply of *consciousness*, and enlightened Buddhas⁶ don't just lie around blissing out, they are usually very active and very effective in the world, carrying out their desire to help others.

⁶ There been many of the over the centuries -- Buddha is a generic term for someone who reaches enlightenment, not just one particular historical figure.



Enlightenment?

T = Thoughts; P = Perceptions; E = Emotions

Clearly we need a more accurate view of meditation than that held by the old authorities who equated meditation and hypnosis. My final figure moves in that direction and leaves us with a more inspiring impression than the prejudiced idea of little brown-skinned men sitting in the dirt, doing something that is probably schizoid..... Not that any (spiritual) tradition has all the answers, not that there aren't lots of erroneous ideas mixed in with these traditions -- as in contemporary psychology -- but we have a lot of interesting things to learn together.



Practical Applications:

OK, so when do you meditate, when do you (self-) hypnotize?

Should you try to organize your thoughts and feelings through hypnosis or self-hypnosis (as well as all our less exotic ways of regulating our minds), or should you try to transcend thought altogether? I think it's clear that it's not really an either-or question. There are certainly plenty of times when a better organization of our thoughts (and consequent feelings and perceptions) would be a great improvement in life, both in terms of personal happiness and effectiveness in leading a good life. But thought is not life, it's a reflection *about* life. Forty years of research and personal experience have made it very clear to me that we also need to learn to *transcend* thought, in order to touch something deeper in ourselves, and to work on realizing our full potential.

But exactly how should we focus on the one end and exactly how on the other? How far can we go in either direction on this general dimension of thought and transcendence? How can modern psychology make the old meditation techniques more effective? They are very difficult for many people to learn. How can the old meditation traditions help us have a deeper, more effective psychology? Can we, as I have argued elsewhere (Tart, 1998a; 1998b) use training in meditation to give us the trained observers we need so we really could have a science of

psychology, of the *mind*, instead of feeling like we are a derivative enterprise, waiting for the neurologists to explain our field (away)?

As I said the beginning, these reflections are a work in process, and I hope that they have been stimulating to you, and that you will help in furthering progress! Thank you!

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