

# ENLIGHTENMENT, ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY

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**“en-light-en 1** *archaic* ILLUMINATE **2 a:** to furnish knowledge to: INSTRUCT **b:** to give spiritual insight to  
**en-light-en-ment 1:** the act or means of enlightening: the state of being enlightened **2 cap:** a philosophic movement of the 18th century marked by questioning of traditional doctrines and values, a tendency toward individualism, and an emphasis on the idea of universal human progress, the empirical method in science, and the free use of reason—used with *the* **3 Buddhism:** a final blessed state marked by the absence of desire or suffering”

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1980)

The word enlightenment is used today in a wide variety of ways, both relative and absolute. These range from the trivial—you have reached enlightenment when you agree with me—to the most profound, where complete enlightenment refers to a permanent change of consciousness and being such that the completely enlightened person has evolved to the highest possibilities of knowledge, happiness and capability possible for a human mind.

Psychology is the study of the mind, including values and behavior. Enlightenment is a goal given a high value by hundreds of millions of people, including significant numbers of highly educated Westerners as well as Easterners. It is actively sought after by many of them, with practices designed to bring it about often being a major focus of life. Thus modern psychology, pursuing the study of phenomena that are frequent and/or important in human life, has devoted much study to and amassed much knowledge about enlightenment? Obviously not.

A few transpersonal psychologists and parapsychologists have given some attention to the idea of enlightenment (see, e.g., Goleman, 1977; Green and Green, 1971; Maslow, 1969; Metzner, 1980; Ring, 1974;

Shapiro, 1980; Shapiro and Walsh, 1984; White, 1984; Wilber, 1975; 1979), but by and large mainstream psychology has almost totally ignored it. No entries defining enlightenment appear in a recent, encyclopedic dictionary of psychology (Harré and Lamb, 1983), for example, or in the indices of a dozen mainstream introductory psychology textbooks I examined. This is probably due to general Western cultural unfamiliarity with enlightenment, as well as a prejudicial legacy of old battles between science and religion, but it is time for this ignorance to end.

This paper is an introduction to some aspects of enlightenment, primarily in relationship to our developing knowledge of altered states of consciousness and in relation to current parapsychological knowledge. It is not intended to be a representative survey of all that has been written and believed about enlightenment. I write from a particular perspective, namely my relatively unenlightened Western professional and personal knowledge of altered states, parapsychology and psychological growth, and also as a human being interested in human possibilities. My hope is that this introductory consideration will provoke research in this vital area of human knowledge.

### *What is Enlightenment?*

The typical dictionary definition, such as the one quoted above, barely begins to deal with enlightenment as a concept, much less as an experiential reality. As a more adequate (but far from complete) intellectual approach, we will let the term *relative enlightenment* refer to an experience and consequent changes in a person in which he gains cognitively and affectively significant insights into major and vital aspects of himself and/or aspects of his world, usually (but not always) in a sudden fashion. Consequently he usually finds his life significantly changed.

Defining "enlightenment" in this way immediately raises the issue of degrees of enlightenment. Learning a more convenient telephone number to reach a colleague, e.g., or increasing your psychokinesis scores on an electronic random event generator from 51 percent to 52 percent instead of a chance 50 percent, both represent increases in knowledge, but we would not use the term "enlightenment" for these. A sudden key insight in psychotherapy, on the other hand, showing a hidden feeling complex with dozens of major ramifications in your life and allowing major changes in lifestyle, might be usefully described as a minor relative enlightenment experience. Relative to your previous state of ignorance, you have become more enlightened. A near-death

experience, in which you deeply understood that your life had been sterile because you had not learned to love (a typical experience of this sort: see, e.g., Moody, 1975; Ring, 1980; 1984), which then led to a deep loving attitude toward all people, would be more typical of the kind of experience we would call a major relative enlightenment experience, even though you did not feel that all possibilities of enlightenment had been reached. *Complete enlightenment* would be the highest possible degree of enlightenment, such that the completely enlightened person has evolved to the highest possibilities of knowledge, happiness and capability possible for a human. It is important not to confuse *relative* enlightenment with *complete* enlightenment.

#### *A Note on Writing About Enlightenment*

A part of my mind is highly amused that I plan to write about the nature of enlightenment. What presumption! Isn't enlightenment something possessed only by superhuman beings and understood only by them? What in the world can a mere unenlightened Western psychologist have to say about it? Further, isn't enlightenment beyond expression in words? Inexpressibility in words, ineffability, is what would be expected from the major spiritual traditions. We have all heard the classical quote from the Tao Te Ching, "The Tao that can be spoken of is not the Tao."

In modern psychological terms, we could say that complete enlightenment and some aspects of relative enlightenment include vital knowledge that is *state-specific* (Tart, 1972), that is only fully accessible in various altered states of consciousness. Such state-specific knowledge is indeed often difficult, if not impossible, to express in ordinary words.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, words and thoughts in our ordinary state can be *useful* in thinking about enlightenment, especially relative enlightenment. This is the case if we are careful not to confuse the words with the realities they point to.

As for enlightened persons being tremendously different from us, this may be true for the most profound enlightenment, but not so for many intermediate degrees of relative enlightenment. I find it helpful to think about enlightenment as a continuum, rather than an all-or-none state—thus the term *relative* enlightenment. Just seeing enlightenment as a totally-incomprehensible-to-us end point, with no intermediate steps, does indeed make it difficult to talk about and difficult to think of personally attaining or understanding. Compared to the rest of us, for example, a pilot is enlightened about flying airplanes, but she did not get that way in a single, magical act. She studied for a

long time, moving along a continuum from being completely unenlightened about flying to knowing more and more about it. When we think about relative enlightenment on a continuum, we can see it as a *process*, not just a final state.

### *Assumptions About Human Nature in Enlightenment Traditions*

To begin to understand enlightenment, we must have a broader view of human beings than the current materialistic view that identifies mind as totally equivalent to body, brain and nervous system, that sees physical realities as the only realities and that sees life as a random, meaningless accident in an essentially dead and purposeless universe. To sketch this broader picture, I shall note some basic assumptions that are widespread in all spiritual traditions known to me that deal with enlightenment.

(1) Experience, mind, is seen as a *primary* reality, not an epiphenomenon of matter. This assumption receives widespread support from the data of parapsychology.

(2) The ordinary state of mind is seen as frequently being a state of "waking sleep" or "illusion" (Tart, 1986). Mind is immersed and lost in cravings, daydreams, attachments, delusions and projections. The widespread distribution of these deluded qualities of ordinary mind, is, unfortunately, "normal." Buddhists believe, for example, that we live in a mental state of "illusion" (*samsara*), and our widespread suffering stems from this.

(3) Techniques for strengthening and clarifying attention are thus primary in the search for truth about the nature of reality. Mind is real and vital, our primary tool, but its ordinary scattered, weak, deluded condition makes it a poor tool. It must be strengthened and sharpened.

(4) Experience is given primacy over interpretation, belief and theory. There is widespread recognition in the enlightenment traditions that beliefs and emotional attachment to beliefs can distort our perception of ourselves and external reality and distort our reasoning processes. This means that mental examination of the bases of beliefs and experiences is absolutely necessary.

Scientific data are in no way excluded from this search if we clearly distinguish observation from interpretation of observation and do not become emotionally attached to interpretations/theories. This assumption is highly congruent with the best aspects of scientific method.

*Some Consequences of Enlightenment Experiences*

The typical outcome of both relative and complete enlightenment experiences is a view of the universe quite different from our culture's current materialistic beliefs. It is a view that is based on deep personal *experience*, rather than on intellectual conviction or cultural conditioning, and allows a kind of happiness that is not easily destroyed by changes in external circumstances. Briefly, it includes the experiential knowledge that (a) the universe is inherently meaningful and purposeful; (b) mind exists in some form beyond what we ordinarily think of as matter; (c) there are an objective morality and lawful, long-term consequences of living or not living in accordance with it; (d) many if not all the sufferings of ordinary human life can be transcended by a combination of morality and cultivation of the mind; (e) a state of complete knowledge of all that is important, with accompanying happiness of a deep kind, is possible and (f) an enlightened person is far more capable and naturally desirous than an unenlightened person of helping others who are still suffering.

Now we shall look at aspects of enlightenment that involve altered states of consciousness. I use the term altered state of consciousness in the precise sense of a discrete altered state of consciousness: details can be found elsewhere (Tart, 1975; 1983).

*Assumptions from an Altered States Perspective*

There are certain things I will take as givens for the purposes of this paper, even though each could be explored at length. These givens arose from my research with altered states of consciousness rather than the enlightenment tradition *per se*, but help in understanding both.

(5) *Awareness is*. Our basic ability to have experiences, to know that we are having them, to be aware, has never been satisfactorily explained in terms of anything else. Current Western science likes to assume that awareness will be explained as an aspect of brain functioning, reduced to "nothing but" some action of the brain, but this is an item of faith in promissory materialism, not good science. We may never be able to "explain" awareness. But we can be aware: that is an axiom.

(6) *Consciousness*, by which I mean that an enormously elaborated, habituated, conditioned system of basic awareness which we normally experience as our mind, *has, as one of its primary functions, the simulation of the environment and the self*, the creation of an internal representation of the outside world and of oneself, so that we have a good "map" of the world and our place in it.

Most of you have seen pictures of flight simulators. These are devices for training pilots. You could train a pilot by having her read some instructions and then putting her at the controls of a real airplane. It is a fine system, but costly. If she makes a mistake, the plane crashes. Instead you can have her enter a special room which looks just like a cockpit. When she operates the controls to start the simulator's "engines," she hears the sound, feels the vibration and sees the appropriate meters reading out RPM, temperature, oil pressure, etc. She sees a runway and airport ahead of her when she looks out the simulator's "cockpit window," the scenery moves when she "taxi" the plane, etc. It's just like piloting a real plane as far as sensory feedback is concerned, with one important difference: when a fatal mistake is made that could lead to a crash, you get "CRASH!" displayed on the "cockpit window" instead of a dead trainee and a destroyed airplane. The trainee can go on to practice again.

Modern science has created a useful model of reality in which we "live in" a simulator. "Consciousness" is seen as being inside the brain. Consciousness *per se* has no *direct* access to the world around us (ignoring psi processes), but only to processes inside the brain. These brain processes take the information that our senses provide us about the world and create a simulation of that world. This brain simulation is our major tool for coping with ordinary reality and so it is important that the simulation be accurate. *The degree to which the simulation is accurate is an aspect of relative enlightenment.* The degree to which the simulation is a poor representation of external reality and the degree to which we mistakenly identify the simulation (*experienced* reality) with *actual* reality, are important aspects of lack of relative enlightenment.

(7) *We have a basic nature.* To be "human" is to have characteristics, potentials, limits. It is important, however, not to confuse what our ultimate nature is or might be with what we currently think it is, or with what we have been told or conditioned to believe it is.

(8) *We have an acquired nature.* Whatever our basic nature is, it has been subjected to an enormous amount of shaping, bending, conditioning, indoctrination, development, repression, etc. during enculturation. In the course of being made into "normal" people, fitted into our particular culture's image of what normal is, our basic nature has been selectively modified. Our perceptions, thinking, emotional feelings, assumptions, intuitions and behaviors have all been strongly molded. This has given us many useful skills as well as many insane sources of useless suffering. It is a great mistake to confuse our acquired nature, the product of our cultural and personal histories, with our

basic nature. Most people do experience this confusion and thus cut themselves off from many basic human possibilities.

To keep the acquired, semi-arbitrary, conditioned nature of our ordinary consciousness before us in the rest of the discussion, I shall not use the phrase "ordinary" or "normal" consciousness anymore. I shall substitute a technical term I introduced some years ago (Tart, 1975; 1983), *consensus consciousness*, to remind us how much our everyday consciousness has been shaped by the consensus of belief in our particular culture.

### *Two Dimensions of Enlightenment*

We can now consider some major aspects of enlightenment by an analogy. A carpenter is a person who has to solve a variety of problems in the physical world by using tools to build things. A good carpenter, one who is competent at a variety of jobs, has many tools available and knows how to use them. He or she has hammers, saws, rulers, squares, files, drills, etc. He uses the saws to cut, not to hammer, the hammers to drive nails, not to chop through boards with, etc. A poor carpenter would be one who does not have the necessary tools to do the job, or who cannot improvise adequately from the tools he does have. A poor carpenter could also be one who has the necessary tools, but does not know how to use them properly, or, for whatever reason, *will not* use them properly.

These two dimensions of adequacy in carpentry, having the right tools and knowing how to use them properly, are analogous to two conceptual dimensions for looking at relative enlightenment. The tools are like the skills that you have. Some tools are available in many states of consciousness, others only in particular states. The ability to enter into the appropriate state of consciousness to make a needed skill optimally available is the degree of relative enlightenment you have with respect to available states of consciousness. The ability to use each skill intelligently and properly, according to its inherent characteristics, *given the state of consciousness you are in*, is the degree of relative enlightenment you show within a particular state of consciousness.

Thus there are two conceptual dimensions in which degree of relative enlightenment will vary for any given person. What states are available to him, with their particular characteristics, talents and costs? This is the *available states dimension* of relative enlightenment. Within any of these states, how intelligently does the person understand and skillfully use the characteristics of that state? That is the *within states dimension* of relative enlightenment.

A person may be relatively enlightened in one of these dimensions and not in another. Like a carpenter with only one tool that he uses splendidly, a given person might be "stuck," for example, in consensus consciousness, with no access to altered states, and yet be mature, intelligent and enlightened in the way he uses the mental abilities he has. He is relatively enlightened within that one state, but deficient in overall relative enlightenment through lack of access to other states. From the point of view of complete enlightenment, *perfect* relative enlightenment within any single state is, nevertheless, a quite unenlightened condition. Another person might be like a sloppy carpenter, having access to many tools/states, but using them poorly. I have certainly known people who could enter many exotic altered states, but whose unintelligent and neurotic behavior certainly would not be described as even relatively enlightened.

Let us look more closely at the qualities we would associate with within-state relative enlightenment.

### *Qualities of Within-State Enlightenment*

Basic awareness is the ultimate essence of any state of consciousness, so within-state relative enlightenment would include the *ability to focus one's awareness as desired*, within the limits of the natural capacity of that state. Ideally any aspect of the state could be focused on, brought to awareness. Some altered states may be inherently "fuzzy" in this respect, others sharper than consensus consciousness. Such limits should be found by empirical trial, not by pre-established beliefs which might artificially limit the capacity. Since initial awareness is usually the prerequisite for using a capacity, this sets the stage for use.

An *ability to focus awareness as needed by the survival and growth needs of the person* is also a quality of within-state relative enlightenment. You might desire, for instance, to focus on a pleasing aspect of a situation you are in, say the taste of a good meal you are eating. But if there is a potentially dangerous aspect of the situation, you had better perceive it, even if it is unpleasant and you would rather be aware of pleasant things. Giving priority to more basic needs over less important desires is a quality of within-state relative enlightenment.

*Undistorted perception / simulation of the world*, within the inherent limits of the state, is another important quality of within-state relative enlightenment. In consensus consciousness or in a drug-induced state, for example, the nature of the human eye sets some ultimate limits on what can be visually perceived, but the constructed nature of visual perception after the initial stimulation of the eye can vary greatly in



its accuracy. Seeing people as threatening when they are friendly, for example, can lead to treating them in a hostile manner and evoking a consequent negative reaction, which is unenlightened and leads to useless suffering. Seeing them as gods or goddesses when they are actually hostile will similarly lead to suffering.<sup>2</sup>

I am not sure that there is any one state of consciousness that offers totally unlimited and undistorted perception of the world around us. Every state that I know of seems to offer perceptual, cognitive and affectual advantages in some respects and disadvantages in other respects. This quality of states may also be true for psychic functioning. In theory we can imagine some ultimate state which has all the desirable qualities of all other states. Tibetan Buddhism, for example, claims this is the case for complete enlightenment (see, e.g., Mullin, 1985). Western scientific knowledge of altered states at this time (and our knowledge is young) does not suggest that such a state, complete enlightenment, exists, but rather that consciousness generally organizes into discrete states with specific properties. There are *state-specific* kinds of knowledge and capacities, fully available only within a particular state.

Insofar as this limitation is valid, *recognition of the state of consciousness you are currently in and knowledge of its advantages and disadvantages, leading to optimal use of the current state*, is another important quality of within-state relative enlightenment. This leads to another quality of relative enlightenment which applies to the available-states dimension as well as the within-states dimension of relative enlightenment, namely *recognition that the state of consciousness you are currently in may not be very useful for handling the life-situation or problem you are currently facing*.

### *The Available-States Dimension of Enlightenment*

*The recognition that you are in a state that may not be useful, or at least not optimal, for dealing with a current situation is one quality of the available-states dimension of relative enlightenment.* You might be called upon, for example, to help settle an argument between lovers, but be in a state of rage from an earlier, unrelated encounter. A state of rage might be highly useful for saving your life in certain kinds of situations, such as when you are attacked by a wild animal, but its characteristics do not include the calm sensitivity about hurt feelings between lovers that are required to help them remember their basic love for each other! You do not have the right tool for the job.

If you recognized your current state and understood it enough to know it was not a good one for dealing with your current situation,

you could try to postpone action until you happened to be in a more appropriate state. This is a second quality of available-states relative enlightenment. A more active form of this quality would be *knowing what state is optimal for the situation you are currently in and knowing how to end your current, inappropriate state and induce the optimal one*. You pick a better tool for the job at hand.

A third quality of relative enlightenment in the available-states dimension is that you not only have a clear understanding of your basic nature as it manifests in the state you are currently in, but you have at least some recognition that this is only a partial view that needs to be supplemented by the knowledge available to you in other states. *Thus knowledge and action in any particular state would be tempered by previous knowledge gained in other states of consciousness*.

For example, I may be in a state of rage and as I get the advantage of my opponent it is perfectly "natural" and "reasonable," given my state, to want to destroy him utterly and to know I will enjoy destroying him! That is the inherent "logic" of a state of rage. There may be relatively unenlightened inhibition of my urge to destroy in this example. It may be checked by the emotional conditioning of my super-ego, or by my fear of the consequences of my action. More enlightened control may occur if, in my state of rage, I recall other states in which I have recognized my kinship with my opponent and have had compassion for him. Then I may terminate my state of rage and enter a more appropriate state, more appropriate in the light of at least partial recall of my *values across several states of consciousness*. If I cannot voluntarily end the state of rage at will, I can at least keep myself from acting wholeheartedly on the basis of my current rage.

To more fully illustrate this kind of available-state relative enlightenment, suppose you are in some state where you are compassionate, but you are dealing with someone who is enraged. The "tool" of the enraged state may be available to you. You could use the other's rage as an induction technique to enrage yourself if you thought that would be the optimal state to deal with the enraged individual. Or you can draw on your personal memory of what it is like to be enraged to more fully understand the enraged person you are dealing with, and then act compassionately in a more effective way because of your partial knowledge of what being enraged is like. I say partial knowledge because some aspects of the knowledge of rage are state-specific, but enough can be known in consensus consciousness to be useful. The capacity to choose to become enraged or not and/or to draw on knowledge from previous experience in a rage state, gives you an advantage

over someone who cannot voluntarily enter that state or draw on its knowledge.

This ability to recognize what state you are in and draw on relevant knowledge from other states, as well as having the ability to enter those other states if you desire, implies some aspect of consciousness, of our basic awareness, that transcends any particular state we are in at the time. The nature of that quality is of profound interest (see Tart, 1986), and is probably related to an inherent psi aspect of our minds, but discussion of it is beyond our scope here.

A fourth quality of the available-states dimension of relative enlightenment is that *access to multiple states of consciousness allows sharper discrimination between our basic and our acquired natures*. The bulk of the conditioning and shaping of our acquired nature, our enculturation, took place in consensus consciousness or in some emotional state that is ordinarily accessed from consensus consciousness. Sometimes simply being in some altered state gives an "outside" perspective on the conditioned, restrictive quality of consensus consciousness. This kind of insight may be sufficient in and of itself to dissolve the conditioning or may at least form a basis for focused work on it.

Note this could be useful in enhancing psi functioning. Much of the indoctrination that is part of consensus consciousness inhibits psi functioning. A perspective that reduced the absoluteness of consensus consciousness could lower that inhibition. This may be a primary reason why so many psychics like to function in some altered state.

A fifth quality of the available-states dimension of relative enlightenment involves a *realistic assessment of your capacities, including the fact that some may only be potentials requiring development at present*. A quality experienced in a particular state may need considerable work to become robust and usable in that state, or for you to learn to transfer that quality into some other state, such as consensus consciousness. An experience of great compassion experienced in a meditative state, for example, may apparently carry over into consensus consciousness, making you feel like a very enlightened being, until someone insults you and the feeling of compassion is immediately replaced by anger! This kind of discrimination between developed reality and potential is particularly important when there is excessive attachment to an altered states experience, such that you want to believe that you have made apparent desirable capacities experienced in altered states a permanent part of you. Failure to make this discrimination is a major cause of problems.

Failure to make such discriminations is also a major obstacle to psi

functioning. Because we *seem* psychic in some altered state does not always mean that we are.

*Psi, Empathy and Compassion*

Earlier I mentioned that greatly increased compassion for others is considered both an inherent outcome of relative and complete enlightenment in many spiritual traditions and as a means of seeking enlightenment. Compassion operates from a base of empathy, an ability to "resonate with" or feel another's feelings. The basic human capacity for empathy is innate, part of the "hardware" of being human, as it were. Sensory perceptions of facial expression, posture, style of movement, speed, pitch and intensity of speech, etc., are the usual indicators of another's emotional state.

Enlightened compassion would also be effective compassion (Tart, 1985; 1986). Unfortunately we can be mistaken in our perception of just what another's emotional state is and so believe we are empathizing with him when we are not. This can happen if (a) his emotional state is sufficiently complex such that the cues he puts out are not clear or are misleading; (b) he deliberately and/or unconsciously dissimulates; or (c) our own internal processes distort or distract from our perception of the other. While (c) would theoretically not happen for a perfectly enlightened person, recall that we deal with degrees and aspects of relative enlightenment here.

An ability to telepathically scan another's thoughts, and especially his feelings, would obviously be of immense value in making empathy a more accurate function. This in turn would make compassion more effective, as subsequent compassionate action would be based on sounder knowledge. If the person you wish to help is, for example, looking angry, acting angry and talking angrily you may empathize with the wrongs done him and feel empathic indignation. If a telepathic scan shows a deep feeling of depression hidden behind the anger, you may realize that empathizing with indignation is actually hindering effective compassionate action, as it only reinforces the feeling of anger which serves as a screen to avoid dealing with the more fundamental depression.

This discussion assumes that such telepathic scanning is itself a relatively undistorted form of perception. If psychological processes in the user seriously distort such psychic scanning, however, it might lower rather than increase the overall accuracy of perception. Knowing how to use psi as effectively as possible in whatever state you were in would be an aspect of within-state relative enlightenment. Knowing how to

get into a state that allowed even more effective use of psi than the one you were in would be an aspect of the available states dimension of relative enlightenment.

### *Psi and the Causes of Suffering*

As the above discussion of using telepathic scanning to more accurately detect emotional states in others illustrates, a general use of psi abilities to discover the causes of suffering in others would be useful in increasing the effectiveness of compassionate action toward others.

My stress on causes here goes beyond just more accurate perception of the current state of another's thoughts and feelings, though. Consider the generally accepted psychological idea that maladaptive feelings and behaviors are usually caused by past experiences and the person's reactions to those past experiences. A past cause of present suffering might have been a single traumatic event in the past or a series of such events, in both cases leading to distortions of perception, feeling, ideation and behavioral functioning in the person that later produce suffering. Insofar as the initiating causes are no longer consciously accessible to a sufferer, he cannot deal with them effectively. Special techniques in psychotherapy for making these initiating events conscious are one way of ultimately dealing with them. A psychic scan of the person's relevant past experiences by a relatively enlightened person is another.

A technical objection should be considered here. Most psychotherapy is a long, involved and, too often, relatively ineffective process. Since traumatic instigating events often have active, unconscious and automated defenses operating to protect them from discovery, why would our relatively enlightened psychic scanner be expected to be any more successful than a conventional psychotherapist at finding relevant instigating events? Might it not take hours or hundreds of hours of psychic work to finally hit on them, just as it often takes hours or hundreds of hours of psychotherapeutic exploration to discover deep causes, even allowing for the skills of both the psychotherapist and our relatively enlightened scanner?

Perhaps, but the concept of the *goal directed nature of psi* derived from laboratory work suggests that the enlightened scanner may have an important advantage. Many parapsychological experiments have achieved positive results where the mechanics of the psi task were unknown and probably incomprehensible to the percipients or agents. In the standard electronic random event generator PK task, for example, the agent is asked to make one flashing lamp light up more often than

another. The typical agent has no sensory or intellectual knowledge of the particular electronic circuits that control the flashing lamps, yet may get positive results. This has led to the idea that psi is inherently goal directed and unconcerned with mechanism, so the complexity and mechanical nature of the psi task are irrelevant (see, e.g., Stanford, 1978). Insofar as this idea is true of psi functioning in general, our relatively enlightened scanner may have an important advantage over a psychotherapist in that he quickly gets the relevant information about the cause of the person's suffering without having to go through the numerous, inefficient serial steps the psychotherapist goes through.

We know from psychotherapy, of course, that simply knowing the cause of a person's suffering does not always cure it. Sometimes just revealing it to the sufferer is sufficient, but many times the sufferer has to work his way up to seeing it. If the psychotherapist or relatively enlightened helper has a clear idea of where the therapy process should go, though, the process can obviously be made more efficient.

#### *Psi and Access to Non-Physical Assistance*

Our contemporary materialistic view is that all life is completely identical with its physical substrate, a philosophical position formally called the *psychoneural identity hypothesis*. No one who was traditionally recognized as at least moderately enlightened ever held to this position, however. All have believed that while life and consciousness strongly interact with physical matter, mind itself is at least an independent entity, existing apart from matter, or, at its extreme, that physical matter is only a more persistent form of mind.

Communication among physically embodied beings, by mainstream scientific views, occurs only when physical energy or matter passes between them. Light rays are necessary to see, molecules must reach the nose for smell, etc. Similarly it is held that mind can only affect the physical world by physical actions of the body. The major contribution of parapsychology has been to demonstrate that this is a partial, not a complete truth. *Usually* there must be matter and energy transfer for you to perceive the world or another being, but sometimes perception occurs without any known form of matter and energy transfer. The three well established forms of such non-physical communication are what we call telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. The direct mental influence of desire on the world (and possibly on other life) is what we call psychokinesis (PK).

My assessment of current evidence is that there is no clear way these four forms of psi can be explained in terms of known physical energies

or matters, even allowing for straightforward progress in more refined understanding of matter and energy. This view is not universal among parapsychologists, but it is widely held. Thus parapsychology, with a little extrapolation, has established an empirical basis for considering mind to be an independently existing entity.<sup>3</sup>

Insofar as mind can exist and manifest independently of matter, we have a scientifically-based world view similar to that of reputedly enlightened people. Thus the idea of more enlightened, more evolved conscious entities who exist only on some non-physical level of reality, an idea accepted by all enlightened people I have known of, may be reasonably considered. This idea is totally rejected by mainstream materialistic science, of course, and arouses much resistance among parapsychologists who want acceptance from mainstream science, but it is important to consider it in the context of enlightenment.

How would we perceive and interact with such non-physical beings? By one or more forms of psi. Thus we come to an important need for psi abilities as an aspect of both relative and complete enlightenment: it is the only way to communicate and interact with possible<sup>4</sup> entities who may be useful sources of information and assistance.

The nature, power and importance of non-physical entities is different in various spiritual traditions. Theistically oriented ones like Christianity and Islam place God in the position of Supreme Being. Enlightenment, in addition to and sometimes instead of the aspects of it discussed earlier in this paper, is conceived of as a matter of direct communication with and/or union with God. Non-theistic traditions like Buddhism, by contrast, usually recognize the existence of non-physical beings, but stress that our own inherent nature is the same as that of the entire universe, including the highest. Thus full enlightenment is a matter of realizing that identity, rather than looking for assistance from or union with a higher being outside yourself. There is nothing that is truly "outside" your Self in an ultimate sense. Indeed, non-physical beings are not inherently enlightened simply by virtue of being non-physical. Buddhism, for example, sees the human condition as actually the most advantageous in terms of capacity for seeking and realizing various aspects of full enlightenment.

In terms of exercising effective compassion, non-physical entities may, however, be of assistance by virtue of their psychic or other abilities. Thus developing the psychic abilities to contact them (and sufficient relative enlightenment not to be over-impressed or overwhelmed by them) could be an important aspect of relative enlightenment. Although we as yet have no adequate scientific base to properly evaluate the independent existence, virtues or drawbacks of what for us are

*postulated* higher level non-physical entities, various spiritual traditions believe that they may be sources of information about the person to be helped, may give psychological/spiritual energy to the person to be helped or to the helper and may intervene in ordinary physical affairs to bring "luck" or avert disaster.

Another important use for psychic abilities in contacting non-physical beings is to receive further teachings about enlightenment from them. The teachings might be for the benefit of the finder's own enlightenment and/or for others. There is much contemporary, if largely non-scientific, interest in this under the concept of channeling. Padmasambhava, the Buddha who brought Buddhism to Tibet, for example, is reputed to have left many teachings about paths to enlightenment hidden because people were not ready for them yet, or because they would be especially appropriate at some later time when world conditions had changed.

#### *Psi as a Tool for Investigating the Nature of the World*

Ostensible psychic functioning also plays a vital part in enlightenment traditions for discovering the true nature of the world. By clairvoyantly examining his own past incarnations, for example, the Buddha could investigate the nature of reincarnation and the mechanisms of karma. When asked about why some sacred teachings are the way they are, current teachers may say that the tradition's founder was, besides or as part of being enlightened, an expert clairvoyant and thus directly saw the way things are. The existence of psi abilities as a more direct way of knowing things relegates the consciousness as world simulator model to a useful, but non-absolute role.

Judging from the performance of contemporary psychics, I am inclined to give partial acceptance to this view in general, but to be open-minded yet skeptical of any particular teachings or beliefs supposedly obtained through psi. While these psychic stars can sometimes produce amazingly accurate descriptions of hidden targets, they usually produce inaccurate or distorted impressions of the same targets, too. We make this distinction in retrospect after comparing the psychic description with the target; it is not, unfortunately, usually made by the psychic *during* the impression period. I have proposed that immediate feedback training could make psychics much more accurate at this (Tart, 1975; 1976) and it seems to have worked well in remote viewing work (Targ and Harary, 1984), but even the best psychics still make many mistakes.

None of the psychics extensively studied by parapsychologists under laboratory conditions over the years has been reputed to be enlightened.



Some were rather neurotic, some quite mature, many were of ordinary levels of psychological maturity. Since some of the missing and distortion shown is probably due to unconscious dynamics causing distortion of the received psychic material, it is reasonable to suppose that the possession of various aspects of relative enlightenment, as discussed above, would reduce this distortion. Just which aspects reduce distortions to what degrees is a matter for empirical research. It is certainly reasonable to suppose that a person could be relatively enlightened in many ways and still show inaccuracies in psychic functioning, based on what we know empirically today. Thus the apparently psychically based ideas of relatively enlightened persons still need to be evaluated as to accuracy and usefulness, not just accepted because they were ostensibly discovered through the use of psychic abilities.

### *Psi and Reinforcement of Faith*

To put forth the energy and dedication needed to seek enlightenment requires a high degree of initial faith. You do not invest heavily in something you do not believe in.

This initial faith could be "blind faith" in the sense of a person being raised to believe in a world view that makes enlightenment desirable and practical, without any contradictory beliefs weakening his ability to focus on attaining enlightenment. The initial faith could also be a pathological "blind faith" in that there is active suppression or repression of real doubts and contradictions.

Of more interest, one could begin seeking relative enlightenment with what I have been calling *experimental belief* (Tart, 1986) or experimental faith. Here you consciously recognize that there may be reasons to doubt the truth or practicality of what you intend, but you also recognize that if you do not invest enough energy in your efforts you will probably fail for that reason alone. Lack of faith can guarantee failure regardless of the reality of the path you attempt to follow. Thus you must deliberately decide to put your doubts aside for the time being, to the best of your ability, and give the path you want to follow as much energy and belief as you can. At some future time you can draw back and evaluate what has resulted from working with your experimental faith. This sort of experimental belief is important for us Westerners to explore.

Initial faith is fine for getting started, but to keep going on a long term project like seeking relative enlightenment you need occasional results that appear to validate your initial faith. Here is where psi events and capacities provide reinforcement.

If occasional spontaneous psi events happen to the person seeking relative enlightenment, they will probably be interpreted (correctly or incorrectly) as validating the particular spiritual system he is following. Do they not transcend ordinary reality? Is not this a sign that something is happening from the enlightenment-seeking practices, even if it is not exactly what was expected? This is a general validation applicable to all religious systems, whether simple or complex. If psi events seem to happen as a fairly direct result of enlightenment-related practices, this will provide even stronger reinforcement.

### *In Sum*

In the West we have a large and rather disorganized body of knowledge about altered states of consciousness and parapsychology. The purposes you have determine the kinds of questions you ask about reality and the kinds of answers you get. Our Western questions about altered states and psi phenomena have been motivated by a variety of purposes, such as simple curiosity, disciplined scientific curiosity, the desire to alleviate suffering in others, the pursuit of personal power and the pursuit of enlightenment. Our knowledge is relatively deep in some areas, quite shallow in others.

As I understand the enlightenment traditions, the motivation behind the acquisition of knowledge about altered states has been more focused: how can we alleviate suffering, in ourselves and in others? I suspect that has led to a more coherent body of knowledge, but perhaps one that is narrower in some ways. I share the desire to alleviate suffering, yet I am also just curious. We live in a wonderful, mysterious, intriguing universe. Altered states and psi are some of those wonders. We have only been able to touch on a few aspects of enlightenment, altered states of consciousness and psi, but I hope that the ideas briefly expressed in this paper will stimulate psychological curiosity about enlightenment, and that the developing interchanges between East and West will enrich us all in both satisfying our curiosity and in relieving the suffering of all sentient beings.

### NOTES

1. Complete enlightenment, such as that described for a fully realized Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism (see, e.g., Mullin, 1985), might involve such a permanent change in our being that all knowledge and skill became available in a permanently enlightened state that replaced ordinary consciousness, such that state-specificity was no longer a reality.

2. I refer to ordinary perceptual distortions here, not the deliberate spiritual practice of trying to see the divine in others, no matter what they do, as a learning device.

3. This does not mean that we should not actively pursue research on neurological

aspects of mental functioning, of course, but it does mean that we should actively investigate mind on its own terms, rather than passively waiting for progress in physics or neurophysiology to somehow explain mind "away."

4. When I say "possible," I am reflecting Western mainstream scientific caution. I cannot think of anyone recognized as enlightened who did not explicitly believe in the reality of non-physical beings, usually as a result of direct personal experience in interacting with such beings.

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### DISCUSSION

WICKRAM: I was interested in your distinction between man's acquired nature and basic nature. I can see how we can get to know something about acquired nature and then I can see that at least one thing might be true about basic nature: the capacity for flexibility to change clothes and the different people that we can play. What else can we say about man's basic nature?

TART: I think flexibility is the key word that you mentioned there. The one thing that I think we have to be careful to avoid is a definition of what our basic nature is, because definitions tend to be confining. I mean we have to do it sooner or later, but I think it is a dangerous thing. It is the lack of flexibility, the lack of being able to consider options that I think creates a good many problems.

WICKRAM: Are there any other properties of man's basic nature?

TART: From my point of view man's basic nature includes the ability to function telepathically, to function clairvoyantly and so forth. It includes the capacity to enter altered states of consciousness. It includes the capacity for being very, very good and very, very bad. If you looked at all the characteristics in the entire world that people have shown across cultures, you would begin to get some kind of a guide to the total range available. I would not want to limit it to just what we can find from current surveys.

ARONS: I would say the distinction fades at the moment that you get a culture large enough so that you can find the human nature in the culture itself. Ultimately you have Frenchmen who are reading Victor Hugo who are ultimately talking about the same thing as Englishmen who are reading somebody else.

TART: Do you know a culture like that we could go to? That we could go and live there? I see your point though, that as a culture opens up and begins to take in things from other cultures, we start acquiring a wider view of human nature.

ARONS: That is not what I meant at all. Quite the contrary. I meant that there is no way for anybody else to be a Frenchman but a Frenchman as he describes his experiences through the culture, ultimately through literature, art and so on. While it is in that idiom, in that language and everything else, this is not totally alien to what you find

in the British culture coming through their traditions and so on. So there are some things that tend to be repeated throughout. We are finding this in neuropsychology now; while you have flexibility you also have certain predictable patterns at the same time.

NOLL: I would like to resurrect the specter of S-P-I-R-I-T-S if you do not mind.

TART: Sure, why not.

NOLL: I have more of a comment than a question. It rather intrigues me. It ties in with a lot of things that I have been interested in, mainly shamanism and some other research that I have been doing on the phenomenology of religious experience, particularly guardian spirits. In my work in shamanism I have discovered that the experience of going into an altered state and finding the guardian spirit, a teacher, is central to almost every shamanic tradition and, indeed, in many initiation processes cross-culturally. The master shaman basically does not count; he is there as a guide, a midwife in a sense, but the real teachers are the spirits. So after looking at the anthropological literature I was wondering whether this occurs in Western civilization as well. And, sure enough, it occurs in just about every culture that we have a record of. Socrates went into altered states and talked with his Daemon. In Islamic civilization Ibn 'Arabi (I don't know if you are familiar with him) went into altered states and talked with Kadir who was a guardian spirit, a teacher. In the Middle Ages, both in alchemy and in ritual magic, these occult practitioners through their "experiments," as they called them, would go into altered states and meet with spiritual teachers of various sorts for various reasons—to gain knowledge or to affect something in the physical world. There is a whole chapter in Jung's autobiography about how, when he was going through his confrontation with the unconscious, he met a spirit guide named Philemon who looked like a wise old man with a long beard and club foot and the wings of a kingfisher. Jung built a tower for himself at a lake in Switzerland where he would go and hide out for long periods of time, and over his bed he painted his guardian spirit. If you have ever seen pictures of Freud's desk where he worked for many years, it is covered with statuettes, little figures from ancient Greece and the Orient. He said he used them to help him write. Indeed, he would take one of them with him to the dinner table and keep it in front of him while he was working on a paper, and his family was not to disturb him for any reason at all. Then again with my work clinically I run into people all the time who are getting messages. The music celebrity, Madonna, is sending messages to one of my patients as well and I really think we should do something about Madonnal

TART: It depends on the quality of the message.

NOLL: There is one article in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* that came out in '83 that I would like to refer people to. It is by Bliss and his colleagues. They found patients in a psychiatric ward who reported auditory hallucinations and they hypnotized them and, lo and behold, they found out that in 60 percent of the patients, behind each of the voices there were sometimes little personalities that had their own names.

TART: Quite common.

NOLL: Actually, I would like to know if you have been exploring any of these matters.

TART: My working hypothesis is a rather Buddhist viewpoint which says that insofar as it is useful to think of spirits as something external and you learn something from that, then that approach is fine, but from some other level of knowledge and enlightenment, that may clearly be a delusion. The Buddhists are very clever at distinguishing between absolute truth and relative truth. Since here we are swimming around in relative truth, we have to make the best of it!

ISAACS: I want to stress that the Buddhist approach, with which I am sympathetic, gives us a way of handling this kind of area within parapsychology without getting too frightened. For the time being we can regard the options as being between survival and/or the existence of non-physical entities who have never been incarnated versus some form of unconscious personation, a function of our polymodal personalities. These are like sub-personalities. They are aspects of ourselves which we do not recognize as ourselves because they differ from our ego qualities. I am sympathetic to your point of view and I am glad you have produced this paper, because I think this kind of investigation of enlightenment and the issues of the transpersonal is long overdue. I see the question of the relationship between science and the transpersonal as an area really crucial for us all to work in. I think it is going to be extremely fruitful both in social change for practical purposes and for decreasing human ills, as well as for its intrinsic scientific interest. But there are certain problems here because we are breaking out of the existing framework and set of assumptions which are often implicit within science. We have to make our assumptions more explicit because of the implicit nature of the value system which lies behind current Western science. Does the transpersonal viewpoint embody a vision of an objective morality? If it does it means that if parapsychology accepts a transpersonal viewpoint we will then be in the position of being advocates of one specific identifiable moral position. I see this as being highly problematic and revolutionary in the sense that no

science explicitly advocates a moral position. I want to stress this because I think there is a large set of unacknowledged and inexplicit assumptions which our culture disguises from us because of our cultural myopia. Therefore I see this as a potential battle ground because Dr. Collins might get up and ask if parapsychology is becoming a prayer meeting at large. Is it becoming a cult? This is the kind of challenge that we can expect.

TART: You have touched on one of my favorite topics when you talked about implicit assumptions. As a psychologist, I have become frustratingly aware of the implicit assumptions we carry around all the time that limit our scope of functioning. You can almost say the function of culture is to give you a set of implicit assumptions that narrows your viewpoint to reinforce the particular ones of the culture. Well, I do not like implicit assumptions. When you have an implicit assumption you do not know you have it and it does not occur to you to question it. I like techniques which make people's assumptions explicit. Then they can begin to ask "Well, I am assuming this; Why am I assuming it? What reason do I have for it?" It is not an easy process.

I sometimes do weekend workshops on transpersonal psychology and one of the most interesting things I do is an experiential exercise I call the Western Creed. I tell people the standard scientific story of how the world came into being and what it means. Those molecules happened to be running around under blind physical forces and bumping into each other and eventually the right ones bump together and they grow up and they become us. But to show people how many of these assumptions have become a kind of mythology that is operating on an implicit level, I do this experiential exercise at one point. Some of you who were at the last Parapsychological Association Convention went through this. I have them get up and pledge allegiance out loud to these assumptions. People get up and put their hands on their hearts and say "I believe in the physical universe as the only and ultimate reality." That is a universe created by blind physical chance and physical law; a universe with no inherent meaning, etc. It is a wonderful exercise in creating a sense of wonder. People get angry because when I make common Western assumptions explicit they begin to discover they believe a number of things which are quite depressing. Furthermore, they didn't *choose* to believe that. Somewhere in the socialization process that was conditioned into them and has been indirectly reinforced. We have got all these assumptions running us. Now, one of the things I have tried to do in this paper was to hopefully shake a few assumptions so they might become a little more visible. Whichever way they come out, if it is a more conscious process of evaluating, that is progress.

ARONS: Well, I confided to Stan Krippner when we met at the airport in Atlanta the deep concern I have as an educator. As we start to develop transpersonal psychology we are literally going against a long standing explicit value system which comes out of the Age of Enlightenment; that open inquiry is good in that it leads toward nature studies rather than toward divine studies. In a strange way as we are coming toward transpersonal psychology and as we talk about these things in classrooms, we are literally doing what the religious people have claimed that they would like to have done in class for a long time, but do not have the opportunity to do it. There are two points here. One point is that we have had an implicit value which is open inquiry and questioning which comes out of a certain period like an enlightened period. The other assumption is that if we switch from that enlightenment to inner inquiry about the God within I think we have got a really big issue on our hands, since most of our Constitution was developed in the old Age of Enlightenment. We may have to have a new enlightenment Constitution rewritten.

TART: Now you have illustrated a point I brought up in my paper that I think is very important. There is one use of the word "enlightenment" which is quite common. You are "enlightened" when you agree with me and so when we talk about the Age of Enlightenment that means a certain set of values were developed and if you agree with them you are an "enlightened" person. It is also used that way within some of the spiritual traditions. When you believe the doctrines you are "enlightened." From the view point I am presenting those are trivial, even pathological uses of the term "enlightenment." Here is where I think the developing transpersonal psychology movement is quite different from traditional religions. It is not an attempt to say "Well, we have discovered that the universe is like this and you had better believe it." Rather, when you talk about values I would not make any claim at all that here are *the* eternal values that have been discovered. What I would say is that when people have certain kinds of experiences they report that certain kinds of values result from them. We are talking about empirical data, not about what *should* be. There is no argument then that because somebody who says they are enlightened now has this value that you better have it or else. But it is a fact that if you go that way you have certain kinds of values.

Now, if someone is perfectly happy with the values he has, then he is not going to be interested in this. If, as many people in our culture feel, our current set of values leaves a lot to be desired, that it has a lot of contradictions and a lot of schizophrenic aspects, then they become interested in how they can go inside, how they can experience



altered states from which these other things seem to happen naturally. I do not think this curiosity is at all incompatible with genuine scientific values. My experience has been that the traditional quarrels between science and religion, to use the traditional expression, is entirely between third-rate scientists and third-rate religionists. The essence of scientific method is that you are open to the facts, that you are open to observations. When you theorize about them, you try to be reasonable about it and you always subject these theories to further empirical tests. I think that procedure is perfectly in accord with the best of the enlightenment traditions. You get experiences from which you certainly draw some inferences. You should not be charmed with the inferences and enshrine them as Final Truth, but continually test them in everyday life.

As far as I have seen, the people who really understand science and really understand some spiritual tradition will get along fine. It is the people who are third-rate who are insecure about their worldview, who get very threatened by anything that threatens to question it. Now I am all for questioning. What I am saying here in no way cuts out any of our current scientific inquiry except when it becomes self-satisfied and turns into the religion of Scientism, when it becomes "Well, we know the truth and have to defend it," when it closes people's minds.

COLLINS: I am very glad that Julian Isaacs does not want to crucify me because you certainly are the experts at crucifixion. You can see how well you crucify yourselves all the time.

TART: Sad, but true.

COLLINS: And there is actually no particular need to do much self-crucifixion here. You can get to almost everywhere that Charley Tart wants to go without mentioning altered states of consciousness. You can get there by accepting a tradition, by thinking deeply about a tradition that is almost respectable within Western science. I am talking about the later philosophy of Wittgenstein and cultural and anthropological relativism. Let me give you an example of a class I teach to my first year sociology students. We have a close look at Festinger's book, *When Prophecy Fails*. Now I'll just introduce this briefly. *When Prophecy Fails* is about a millennial cult that believed that flying saucers were going to come and collect them. And what Festinger and his teammates did was to infiltrate this cult and watch to see what happened. They said "Flying saucers will come and pick us up at midnight on such and such a date." The details do not matter. And these people put a tremendous amount of investment into this. Imagine: they have given away all their money; they have cut all the zips out of their trousers; they have done everything else like that. They are standing on

the lawn waiting for the flying saucers to come and pick them up. The leader of the cult said "The flying saucers will pick us up. The world will be completely flooded and we will be the only ones saved because we are the believers." They waited for the flying saucers to come and the flying saucers did not come and the world was not drowned.

TART: Lucky for us.

COLLINS: Lucky for us and Festinger. Festinger says: "This illustrates my thesis of cognitive dissonance, because what happened after the flying saucers did not come was that the believers in the cult then went around and told everybody 'Look, look, we have rationalized this. In fact the reason the flying saucers did not come is because we demonstrated our faith. So you should believe in us even more strongly because that is why they did not come.'" Festinger says that this is how they rationalize it. And then what I say to my class is "Okay, that is a good story. Now, hold on a minute, suppose there really were flying saucers and suppose that the reason the earth is actually here and we are not all drowned is because those people actually did have that faith and cut the zips out of their trousers and so forth, what would be different? Look around you and tell me what would be different." You see, nothing would be different. Everything would be exactly the same now in that version of the story, as in the Festinger rationalization version of the story. So I say to them "Put yourselves into that frame of mind that there really were the flying saucers and they really did save us. This version has a very, very interesting consequence for the cognitive dissonance theory. If it was actually the case, Festinger has proved precisely nothing about cognitive dissonance, because there was no cognitive dissonance at all. There was actually a fantastic amount of reinforcement. These people cut the zips out of their trousers and went and stood out on the lawn and they saved the world. Of course they went about proselytizing as you would do if you just saved the world." And the two accounts of the story are completely symmetrical. Incidentally, there is a third variation on this not invented by me, invented by somebody else, who tells it this way. He says actually it really does illustrate cognitive dissonance because what happened is Festinger got this big NFS grant and he went to infiltrate this group and he wanted to see some cognitive dissonance happen, but cognitive dissonance did not happen because the world was actually saved, so what did he do? He proselytized still further for his cognitive dissonance theory which had been proved false.

TART: A wonderful story.

COLLINS: I was talking to Ian Wickram over breakfast this morning about my own experience in doing research on the parapsychological

community. I said to him that if I want to believe in parapsychology and paranormal phenomena I know exactly what I would do. I would go and spend two or three weeks probably with Helmut Schmidt, maybe with Evan Harris Walker. I find the internal logic of their worldview totally convincing. It just happens that as I sit around in Bath I am not very much exposed to it and as of now I find it hard to recapture, but I know I could recapture it with the greatest of ease by doing this. Why call it an altered state of consciousness? It is a commonplace for anthropological relativists and the only matters that cause any damage to me in what you have said are two things. One is the stress on basic states of nature, which I do not understand in the way that Ian Wickram apparently did not understand it, and the other is the stress on consciousness, on ways of seeing the world as an individual phenomenon rather than something that is located within social groups. And I do not think we need that either.

TART: My answer requires a four or five-hour lecture on the phenomenon of altered states of consciousness. What you are doing in a sense is changing, you are raising the degree of sophistication in this discussion. I am speaking from a sort of ordinary perspective, but it is the case that one person's ordinary state of consciousness is another person's altered state of consciousness. There are large individual differences between people. There are certainly social factors. But working within our cultural perspective I have got to avoid the temptation to get into the definition of altered states. It is an important psychological factor. When you want to talk about really long term changes within our baseline ordinary state of consciousness, all that you get is a whole new level of complication coming in there. So it is a worthwhile factor to look at. But I will abstain from the five-hour lecture.

NEPPE: Can I ask you to give into temptation? Would you not like—not in five hours but in a very short while—to give us the essence of what your procedures are?

TART: Sure. How many people in here will bet me 50 dollars that right now you are actually lying in bed at home dreaming and you are going to wake up there in a couple of minutes? Anybody want to take up my bet?

UNKNOWN: Sure.

TART: Would you? Would you? No one has been foolish enough to. I used to simply say "How many people would say they may be at home dreaming now?" and a few people, on philosophical grounds, would want to get cute, but when I would ask people to put 50 dollars on it everybody knows you are not home dreaming now, you are awake and you are here. It could be a delusion, but it is a persistent one!

NEPPE: It puts you at the level of metacommunication. I know you are going to prove it, so I might as well get my 50 dollars.

TART: When I speak of altered states of consciousness it is those radical differences in the organization of consciousness functioning I am talking about. Such as in a dream state. Such as in a meditation induced state, such as you might get from hypnosis, such as you might get from very strong emotions. When I talk about rage, for instance, I am not just talking about your ordinary state where you are a little ticked off. I am talking about an extreme emotional state that involves massive changes in perception, thinking, action and so forth. Within the range of phenomena that we see, people sometimes make this transition to a vastly different organization of the way their consciousness functions with different capacities for knowledge, different delusional capacities and so forth. While the Enlightenment traditions in some sense seek to transform ordinary consciousness, in practice they almost universally use deliberate entry into altered states of consciousness in order to grasp certain kinds of things. We have to deal with this distinction. Judging from the fact that it is so universally done, it must be a technologically efficient way of getting at it. I am talking about big, massive changes in conscious functioning.

WICKRAM: Talking about the question that Collins raised, I agree with you that there are large individual differences in people's capacities to make major shifts in perception. The technology for sustaining those in a durable way, has more to do with commonplace things. Let me tell you what I mean. The first year of medical school I see young medical students who come in who are extremely altruistic in their motivations. I mean at least that is what they will report. After the third year or fourth year of medical school they are completely different animals.

TART: Unfortunately.

WICKRAM: I am afraid that there are incestuous relationships that occur between people who work on similar things. Who controls the input for those kinds of things comes to control belief systems in a much more durable way through sociological organizations than the kinds of profound shifts that we can get in some people.

TART: It could be interesting to talk about three years of medical school as a very thorough altered states induction technique.

WICKRAM: Yes, I think that it is the most powerful socialization that I have observed and it makes dramatic shifts and a nice paper.

TART: You will enjoy the chapters in my (1986) book *Waking Up* about the induction of hypnosis and the induction of ordinary consciousness, the latter being a far more serious matter than hypnosis.

WICKRAM: And I am impressed with the durability and the changes they produce in this process.

ISAACS: I think that there was somewhat of confusion on Harry's part. I certainly agree that you can get good mileage out of the kind of anthropological relativism which you are talking about, but I think that just because Charley had a short time he couched his altered states talk in terms of easily identifiable concrete aspects which he could communicate in a short space of time, such as belief systems. Belief systems are only one part of the characterizations of altered states. Modes of operation, for want of a better phrase, make up an equally important function, or component of states of consciousness. They can be distinguished to some extent. There are other issues such as that people's basic perceptual functions change, their body images change and their physiology changes. Although it is certainly true that there are culturally relative differences in altered states of consciousness, there is a distinction to be drawn between the belief states that you are talking about and actual altered states of consciousness.

TART: Right. Half an hour is a very short period of time.