

## CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS: EASTERN MEDITATIVE AND WESTERN PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

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In 1952, a decade before Eastern psychological ideas began to enter the mainstream of Western psychology, a visiting professor from India, P. T. Raju, offered a series of courses at the University of Illinois, on Hindu philosophical systems. For some years I had been a "convert" to Hindu concepts, so I seized the opportunity to learn more about these ideas in a systematic manner. Since at that time I was the only student in the entire University that had any extensive interest in Eastern thought, I became friends with this professor.

During one of our conversations he expressed an interest in Freud's ideas. With some condescension toward Western psychology, I said, "Oh, but the Hindus know all about the ideas that Freud discovered." His reply was, "The Hindus do not know anything about Freud." This statement so startled me that I did not adequately follow up our discussion. It was inconceivable to me that a people, a substantial portion of whom had spent thousands of years involved with the inner world, could not have discovered centuries ago what Freud and other psychoanalytic theorists had only discovered during this last century.

Still haunted by my professor's comment, I continued to read extensively in the growing literature of Eastern thought and practice. I also meditated to some extent. Eventually, I took my degree in psychology and became a professional trained in Western psychological ideas. As my familiarity with both Eastern and Western ideas grew, I came to feel there might be

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ways in which both Eastern and Western concepts and methods could complement each other, and that each could make equally important contributions to human knowledge and to methods of helping people find a happier and fuller life.

This concept of equal contribution runs counter to the views of some who are familiar with both Eastern and Western thought. Rama (Rama, Ballentine & Ajayas, 1976), a yoga master from India, states, ". . . psychology has made its appearance on the stage of Western science only in the last century" (p. xix), while ". . . The systematized discipline of yoga has apparently been practiced ... over some thousands of years ... " during which". . . an unbroken chain of highly trained teachers and students have devoted themselves intensively to the rigorous practice of self-observation" (p, xxi). Again, Mircea Eliade says, "Long before psychoanalysis, yoga showed the importance of the role played by the unconscious" (1969, p. 45). Finally, Jacob Needleman, referring to several Eastern systems, states, "A large and growing number of psychotherapists are now convinced that Eastern religions offer an understanding of the mind far more complete than anything yet envisaged by Western science" (1979, p, 209).

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With such contemporary observers of Eastern systems implying that those systems might offer a fuller knowledge of the mind, I became interested in a more detailed assessment of several key concepts in Eastern and Western psychologies. Thus, the present paper is offered as an attempt to consider several Eastern and Western approaches to understanding the mind, including some major Eastern meditative systems and Western psychotherapy. I will also examine some current "maps" or topologies of consciousness that incorporate these various approaches. Finally, I will propose a topology that accommodates some significant characteristics of both Eastern and Western approaches to the conscious and unconscious aspects of mind.

This discussion is based on English language sources, primarily those in the psychological literature. I also include, however, English translations of some Asian traditional texts and teachings, as well as English language works by Asian-trained traditional teachers.

#### KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

The Western concept of the "unconscious" is highly articulated in an extensive literature. As a notion central to much Western therapeutic thought and practice, it is useful to consider how

Eastern psychological systems treat the idea of the unconscious. In this paper, Western psychodynamic concepts will be used as criteria for determining what understanding of the unconscious is found in the literature of Eastern psychological systems.

The first and most important of these concepts is that of the existence of the unconscious. Is there a recognition that there is an area of the mind not ordinarily available to conscious awareness that contains emotions, images, memories, and thoughts? Secondly, is there reference to concepts equivalent to the elements of psychodynamic theory such as internal emotional conflicts, the existence of defense or protective mechanisms, and the operating of emotions such as anxiety, anger and guilt outside of awareness? The third criteria is an awareness of the effect of childhood trauma and parental treatment of the adult personality. Finally, the fourth criteria is whether the systems have an explanation for phenomena related to the unconscious, such as conversion reactions, fugue states, multiple personalities and other neurotic or psychotic states. Such concepts are found in Western psychodynamic theory and increasingly in recent psychological writings (Hilgard, 1977).

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The search for these elements of psychodynamics should begin with the major writings of the Hindus and Buddhists. However, the original sources such as the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Aphorisms of Patanjali*; *Dhammapada*, *Abhidhamma*, *Prajna-paramita-hrdaya sutra*, *Diamond Sutra*, the *Tao Te Ching* and many others are so vast that it would be nearly impossible to examine them all for negative evidence. I am only able to say that in reading them (reading that is far from complete) I have not found passages that meet the criteria given above, with the exception of some vague references to the unconscious. A few concepts were encountered such as the three gunas (Zimmer 1974, pp.                    the six realms of being (Trungpa, 1973, pp. 131-33) or the types of temperament given in the *Visuddhimagga* (Goleman, 1977, p. 9). These concepts are quite limited compared to Western personality descriptions -they have no reference to unconscious dynamics, and they generally related to how a person should meditate.

This review next turned to writings of the major commentators-those who know the Eastern literature intimately and are also aware of Western personality dynamics. Generally the more traditional commentators on Eastern writings, such as Hiriyana (1949), Radhakrishnan and Moore (1957), Suzuki (1956), Kapleau (1965) and Zimmer (1974) do not even mention such words as unconscious or subconscious. Radha-

krishnan and Moore (1957), in their selection of Indian writings, list "super-consciousness" but not "subconsciousness" or "unconsciousness" in the index.

D. T. Suzuki (1956), one of the first Japanese scholars to introduce Zen concepts to the West and whose books are still a primary authority on Zen, uses the term "unconscious" (pp. 188-225), but in a manner entirely different from the Western term (Hisamatsu, 1968). He uses it to mean "no mind" which is a state of consciousness. Other than this, one does not find any of the criteria of awareness of unconscious processes in his description of mental states. In regard to the traditional commentators, one will look in vain for references to unconscious processes; they do not appear to be mentioned.

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An excellent example of the lack of awareness of the concept of the unconscious in Buddhist literature is *The Mind in Buddhist Psychology* which is the translation by Guenther and Kawamura (1975) of the Tibetan Buddhist text "The Necklace of Clear Understanding: An Elucidation of the Working Mind and Mental Events." In it the operation of the mind along with its elements and emotions is described in great detail. Nevertheless, there is almost no reference to what could be called the unconscious. From the Western perspective, despite its detailed and at times perceptive analysis of the emotions and the workings of the mind, it is still the conscious mind that is being discussed.

When we turn to recent commentators who have been more influenced by Western thought and especially those who are attempting to unite Eastern and Western ideas one begins to see the appearance of references to the unconscious. Eliade (1969) in discussing yoga from a Western perspective finds that the yoga masters did know about the unconscious. However, his comments (pp. 41-46) demonstrate some limitations in that understanding. He thought that the yoga term "*vasana*" referred to the subconscious (p. 42). This subconscious material formed an "immense obstacle" (p. 42) to meditation and must be "burned" for meditation to be successful. The *vasana* has its origin in memory and determines the lives of the majority of people. Beyond this there is no broader understanding of the unconscious expressed, nor are any of the other criteria met.

Rama, with his Western associates, in the book *Yoga and Psychotherapy* (Rama, Ballentine & Ajaya, 1976), purport to unite Yoga and Western psychotherapy ideas. But the attitude of the authors is generally that Western psychology is just beginning to discover what the Yogins have known for

thousands of years. The book is an exposition on yoga thought and practice, with a few references to those Western ideas which appear similar to yoga concepts. Unlike nearly every other book on Eastern thought, an entire chapter is devoted to the unconscious. As a critique of Western psychologies, especially that of Jung, it is fairly incisive, yet most of the chapter is devoted to describing *Western* ideas rather than concepts derived from Eastern sources.

In agreement with Eliade, the authors show that the yogins did know of the unconscious, but saw it as an obstacle. They relate it to memory, and held that it affects dreams (p. 135). Otherwise, none of the other criteria of an understanding of unconscious dynamics are presented. In fact, it is stated that Patanjali, the founder of the yoga system, presents a "less intricate" analysis of the personal unconscious than psychoanalysis (p. 137). My own reading of Patanjali's aphorisms, in translation (Patanjali, 1957), found not a less intricate analysis, but almost no analysis.

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In addition, a lack of understanding of the unconscious can be observed in the statement that, "In yoga psychology. . . although the unconsciousness may be relatively cleared, it can quickly accumulate a new load of conflictual material . . ." (p. 137). This indicates a misunderstanding of the way in which the unconscious operates, at least as Western psychodynamic theory describes it. Further, considering yoga as a concentrative method, other psychologists such as Goleman (1977, p. 32) and Alpert (1982) suggest that such "clearing" is in fact suppression by concentrative methods, and that, rather than reaccumulating, the repressed material simply reappears when the concentration state is over.

The Theravadan Buddhists, as indicated by Goleman's (1977) excellent study of the *Visuddhimagga* (part of the *Abhidhamma*), were almost equally as unaware of unconscious dynamics despite the effectiveness of their "mindfulness" technique. Again Goleman indicates they knew the unconscious existed primarily as an obstacle to meditation, but none of the other criteria items were discussed in Goleman's description of the system.

At the other end of the spectrum of Buddhist schools, the Vajrayana Tibetan systems, as described by both Trungpa (1969, 1973, 1976) and Tarthang Tulku (1977a, 1977b) do not demonstrate a substantial knowledge of unconscious dynamics. Trungpa uses a few Western terms such as "neurosis" or "materialism" in his otherwise thoroughly Tibetan system. Again, however, the Western concept of the unconscious is

recognized but not explored, and none of the other criteria are met.

Neither in describing the foundation of the ego (Trungpa, 1973, pp. 121-37; 1976, pp. 19-23) or in describing the obstacles to meditation (Trungpa, 1973, pp. 77-89; 1976, pp. 63-68) does Trungpa deal with the unconscious. The obstacles which the yoga systems associate with the emergence of unconscious material are merely termed "emotions," Trungpa appears to acknowledge the Western concept of childhood effects (Trungpa, 1973, pp. 88-89) but dismisses it as irrelevant. Subconscious thoughts (Trungpa, 1973, p. 233) are seen as obstacles to meditation. Nowhere does he indicate that the traditional Vajrayana systems had any specific awareness of unconscious dynamics. Pain and pleasure are said to "just happen" (Trungpa 1978, p. 21).

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Tulku (1977a, 1977b) presents traditional Tibetan Buddhist ideas from the perspective of a different lineage, and without Western terms. He discusses thought and emotions that come into the mind during meditation without reference to unconsciousness. These thoughts and emotions are distractions to be allowed to pass and not to be explored (Tulku, 1977a, pp. 98-99). He feels that people play "games" (1977a, pp. 18-24), but does not connect these games to unconscious dynamics. He does state that a personality has "layers" (Tulku, 1977b, pp. 265-68) and energies, but neither explores them, nor describes the deeper layers in any detail. Here, as in Trungpa, we find a highly developed and elaborate analysis of conscious experience and states, but almost no regard for unconscious material or dynamics.

It is also interesting to note that, according to an interview (Komito, 1984) focusing on Tibetan Buddhist and Western approaches to psychotherapy, the Dalai Lama had little awareness of psychodynamic concepts and considered the emergence of unconscious emotions only as defilement of the mind.

Zen Buddhism, as exemplified by the American Phillip Kapleau (1965), demonstrates a similar pattern. The material that arises out of the unconscious is called "*makyo*" (pp. 38-41). Only the supreme Buddhas are said to have no *makyo*. The types of *makyo* are described and classified (p. 39), but "from the Zen point of view all are morbid states devoid of true religious significance and hence only *makyo*" (p. 40). Again unconscious material is seen as only an obstacle to meditation and it is not further explored. In the fairly extensive literature on Zen I have not yet found anything more instructive than

Kapleau's limited discussion concerning the nature of the unconscious.

Rajneesh (1973), despite his long contact with the West presented only a superficial idea of the unconscious. In one book (1973) he first says the unconscious is the same as the yoga etheric body (p, 60), then a few lines later (in relation to dreams and suppression) that it is not the etheric body but the physical body (p, 60), and finally he denies its existence (pp, 61-62). In any case, his book presents no understanding of dream dynamics or any other evidence of awareness of unconscious processes.

In spite of their long discussion of Western and Eastern concepts of consciousness, Pelletier and Garfield (1976) do not show that the Eastern psychologies had a concept of unconsciousness dynamics. When they discuss such dynamics, it is always in reference to Western psychological theory.

Recently, among some Western writers who have had direct contact with Eastern systems; statements are beginning to emerge to the effect that the concepts related to psychopathology and unconscious dynamics are absent in Eastern systems. In Engler's (1984) excellent discussion of concepts related to ego functioning in Buddhist and Western psychological theories, he states that the Buddhist psychology •• . . . does not contain much about psychopathology and poor ego functioning" (p, 39), and has no concepts of developmental psychology (p. 39, 52). This lack of psychodynamic concepts in Buddhism is also noted by K. omito(1984).

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Thus the examination of concepts from a number of major writers on Eastern psychology has led to a surprisingly consistent conclusion. None of the available literature of the Eastern psychologies, as considered here, recognizes in any significant manner unconscious dynamics as understood in the West. These Eastern systems do show an awareness of the intrusion of unconscious material during meditation, but treat it only as an obstacle to meditation. The content of such unconscious material was not explored, however. From this examination of recent literature it appears safe to conclude that the Eastern psychologies have yielded very little in the way of an understanding of the unconscious or its dynamics.

#### DIFFERENCES IN TWO EASTERN AND WESTERN METHODS

This finding raises a number of questions, among them whether differences in the methods of Eastern and Western exploration

of the mind could account for such strong differences in the amount of attention given to unconscious processes. To answer this question, I now turn to some fundamental differences between Eastern meditation and Western psychotherapy. These differences include 1) the aims; 2) experiential areas; 3) methods and techniques of these two approaches.

### *Aims of Meditation and Psychotherapy*

There is now a growing body of information indicating that meditation is not a psychotherapy in the Western sense of a method to alleviate psychopathology. This can be illustrated in the case of Buddhist practice. The basic doctrine of Buddhism is expressed in the Four Noble Truths which are that suffering exists in all aspects of life; that the cause of suffering is attachment or craving; that there is a cure through ending attachment; and that the method of cure is the Eightfold Path. This four-part formula follows the ancient Hindu medical formula for an illness. The four parts of the formula were the nature of the disease; the cause of the disease; the possibility of a cure; and the treatment (Zimmer, 1956, pp. 467-69). Thus Buddhism grew out of a culture with a therapeutic approach to suffering.

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In our era, the expectation of some Western writers was that meditation might be a new, more effective method of psychotherapy (Boss, 1979, p. 187; Eliade, 1969, p. 43; Goleman, 1971, pp. 6-7; Pelletier & Garfield, 1976, p. 245; Ram Dass, 1973, p. 195; Rama, et al. 1976; Walsh, 1977, p. 166; Washburn, 1978, p. 50; Welwood, 1984, pp. 63-64). Nevertheless, Sutich had raised the question of the effectiveness of meditation as a psychotherapy as early as 1973. In recent years the expectation that meditation would be an effective psychotherapy has largely been reversed (Aitken, 1982; Alpert, 1982, p. 173; Brown & Engler, 1980, p. 183; Burns & Ohayv, 1980; Jamnien & Ohayv, 1980; Trungpa, 1979, p. 192; Weide, 1973; Welwood, (1984).

Ram Dass has eloquently expressed this change. In 1973 he felt that with further and deeper meditation his personal problems would "fall away" (p. 195). By 1982, ten years of meditation older and considerably wiser, he says, "My theory (in the 1970's) was that if I did my *sadhanā* hard enough, if I meditated deeply enough, if I opened my heart in devotional practices wide enough, all that unacknowledged stuff would go away. But it didn't . . ." (p. 173).

My own observation of several people I have known who have gone deeply into meditation was that it helped them reach

higher states of consciousness, but that it did not resolve any major emotional problems (Chow, unpublished). Goleman (1972b) says that the Buddhist *Visuddhimagga* states that in the final stages of meditation the Arahant ". . . is absolutely free from suffering ... " (p. 26). However, the Arahant status is extremely difficult to attain (Goleman, 1977). This suggests that for the ordinary person meditation may promise little help for solving emotional problems.

There are indications that a person must generally be fairly well integrated psychologically to meditate effectively. This has been stated by teachers and students in various Eastern systems. These include Tibetan Buddhism (Casper, 1979, p, 203), Zen Buddhism (Aitken, 1982, p. 163; Owens, 1975, p, 192), Theravada Buddhism (Jamnien & Ohayv, 1980; Burns & Ohayv, 1980), and Hindu systems (Boss, 1979). Some Westerners are also aware of this (Boss, 1979; Welwood, 1984, p. 65). In fact, meditation can even exaggerate some mental pathology (Engler, 1984; Epstein & Lieff, 1981).

If personal problems are defined in terms of the goals of meditation systems, such as eliminating the ego or self (Aitken, 1982; Welwood, 1980), then meditation may be effective (Pelletier & Garfield, 1976, p, 245; Wilber, 1979a). However, for ordinary emotional conflicts it does not appear to be a cure, and in fact meditation may require a fairly emotionally stable person to be effective for its non-therapeutic aims.

What then is the aim of meditation? In the sense of alleviation of personal suffering, it is somewhat the same as Western psychotherapy, but in a more specific sense it is quite different from the Western aim of the manipulation and exploration of the unconscious. Rather its aim is the attainment of "higher" states of consciousness (Sutioh, 1973) which in their most developed form are considered to be universal or trans personal states. One of the best descriptions of this search still to be found is in Aldous Huxley's book, *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945). This highest state is called the Brahman by the Hindu religious schools (Zimmer, 1974, pp, 74-83; Hirianna, 1949), *Purusha* by the yoga schools (Rama et al., 1976, pp. 206-13), *Nirvana* by the Theravada Buddhists (Goleman, 1977, pp. 31-39), *Sunyata* or Void by the Mahayana Buddhists (Zimmer, 1974, pp. 521-526), and pure or universal consciousness by the Zen Buddhists (Owens, 1975). However, as Huxley (1945) and many others since (Goleman, 1977) have pointed out, the descriptions of this state are remarkably similar when religious and metaphysical concepts are removed. For all schools it contains the ultimate meaning of life. For those who have attained or are near this state, the alleviation of personal

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suffering has become incidental. The difference in aims between psychotherapy and meditation is expressed by Welwood (1980, p, 140) in his statement that the aim of psychotherapy is self-integration, while the aim of Eastern meditation is self-transcendence.

### *Experiential Differences*

The differing aims of these two psychological approaches to the inner world lead to a second difference between psychotherapy and meditation, which is their experiential difference. There is much agreement in recent years that psychotherapy and meditation are concerned with different aspects of consciousness. Frequently, three aspects of consciousness are indicated - normal waking consciousness, the unconscious, and higher states of consciousness (Chaudhuri, 1975; Owens, 1975; Rama et al., 1976, pp. 66-138; Washburn, 1978; Welwood, 1977; Wilber, 1979b).

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For purposes of this discussion, this three-way division requires some elaboration. First, the unconscious is technically not a state of consciousness. Here the distinction between consciousness and content of consciousness become important (Needleman, 1979, p. 210). Content is comprised of memories, images, feelings and emotions that are "in" consciousness. We are aware of them. The unconscious is the content that is not only not presently in consciousness; it is also unavailable to consciousness. Material, or content, that is available but not currently in consciousness, constitutes the pre-conscious. When, through psychotherapy, unconscious material is made available to consciousness, it becomes part of the preconscious. While this is an elementary topology in psychoanalysis (Fenichel, 1945, p. 15), writers with different theoretical orientations may make the unconscious into a second form of consciousness. Even when the unconscious is active with its own dynamics, it is outside of consciousness until it is brought into consciousness as new content.

Secondly, consciousness consists of many levels or states of altered and higher consciousness, only one of which is the ordinary waking state (Tart, 1975, pp. 13-16; Ornstein, 1977, pp. 40-73). These are not different consciousnesses but alterations of the consciousness of one individual. There is considerable disagreement as to what constitutes the different states and levels - a disagreement which need not be examined in this paper - but there is somewhat more agreement that the states are organized into a hierarchy in which the highest, or the most inclusive, is a state of pure consciousness (Rama et al,

1976, pp. 64-99, Wilber, 1980). This highest state is described as an "integral undivided consciousness" in the Hindu Vedanta system (Radhakrishnan & Moore, 1957, p. 617), "pure consciousness" in the Yoga (Rama et al., 1976, p. 99; Chaudhuri, 1975, p. 245) and Zen systems (Owens, 1975, p. 169), "pure undifferentiated consciousness" for Tibetan Buddhism (Tulku, 1977a, p. 96), and "pure consciousness" by Ram Dass (1977, p. 214). Consequently, there is considerable agreement that this state is one of pure consciousness without content. Although there may even be levels within the pure consciousness (Goleman, 1977; Rama et al., 1976, pp. 91-99), none of them contain content.

As outlined here, the Eastern meditation systems focus on higher states of consciousness, while the Western psychotherapies generally deal with the unconscious. With the exception of those therapies which deny the unconscious, or when "covering" techniques are being used, the Western psychotherapy schools attempt to bring unconscious material into consciousness where it is explored, analyzed, interpreted or expressed. When such methods are successful, that content becomes part of the preconscious.

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#### *Differences in Method and Technique*

In order to attain their differing aims and deal with different aspects of the inner world, the techniques of the meditation and psychotherapy systems could also be expected to differ. For purposes of the present discussion, the major criterion is whether the techniques are designed to bring material out of the unconscious. At this point a distinction that is used in Western psychotherapy will be helpful, the distinction between covering and uncovering methods of psychotherapy (Blanck & Blanck, 1974). This distinction has been used recently by Engler (1984). In the covering psychotherapy methods, unconscious material that is producing problems by threatening to emerge is suppressed. These methods are often useful in dealing with crises, short-term therapy, and patients who are incapable of handling their unconscious emotions.

By contrast, uncovering techniques are designed to actively bring unconscious material into awareness where it can be explored, analyzed and expressed. The expression of unconscious emotions as well as examination of defense mechanisms (in Gestalt psychology, a person examines how he "interrupts himself" [Perls, 1973, pp. 63-64]), allow or even "pull" more and more unconscious material into awareness. As such, this unconscious material is actively engaged through free associa-

don, interpretation, analysis of transference, or the many "New Therapy" methods such as focusing (Gendlin, 1978), role playing, and other Gestalt therapy methods of facilitating the person's attempt to finish "unfinished psychological business" (Perls, 1973, p. 102). It should be noted that these techniques do not simply allow unconscious material to arise; the methods actively draw that unconscious material out and then hold on to it while it is explored and/or expressed.

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By contrast, none of the Eastern meditation systems described here appear to actively pursue unconscious material. They consider the emergence of this material to be an obstacle to meditation, and either shift the meditator's attention away from the material or allow it to stay, on the assumption that it may dissipate. Goleman (1972a, 1972b, 1977) has well described the two different major approaches to meditation used by the Eastern systems. He calls them the concentration and mindfulness methods. All meditation systems appear to use one or the other, or a combination of these methods. He also describes some of the secondary methods that are often less emphasized in the West, under the heading of "*sila*" ("moral purity"). These involve prescribed behavior and concentration types of meditation directed toward particular themes. These methods are designed to reduce the emotions or desires that interfere with meditation of either the concentration (Goleman, 1977, pp. 2-1) or the mindfulness type. While this is described as part of Theravada Buddhism, other systems utilize it. In Hindu systems it is called "*sadhana*" (Alpert, 1971, pp. 96-98). Of the paths in the Buddhist Eightfold Path only two are meditation methods (Zimmer, 1974, p. 469), while the rest should probably be considered aspects of *sila*. To cite an example, a lustful person could meditate on corpses or other loathsome aspects of the body (Goleman, 1977, p. 4; Jamnien & Ohayv, 1980; Komito, 1984). Such *sila* methods are covering methods, and they may be used with mindfulness techniques or concentration techniques (Goleman, 1977, pp. 2-7).

Not only *stia*, but to some extent, all the Eastern meditation techniques discussed here appear to be covering techniques. This would be consistent with the aim of eliminating obstacles to the attainment of higher states of consciousness and viewing the emergence of unconscious material ("*makyo*") into awareness as one of the greatest obstacles to attaining deeper states of meditation.

That concentration meditation is a covering method has already been pointed out by some observers (Engler, 1984, p. 27; Goleman, 1971, p. 10). In concentration meditation the attempt is to center the attention on one subject, image or

thought, while shutting out all distractions (Chaudhuri, 1975; Goleman, 1977, p. 10; Kapleau, 1965, pp. 9-13). This is done by not paying attention to the emerging distractions. When they arise and involve the meditator's attention, the meditator, as soon as he is aware of the distraction, simply returns his attention to the object of concentration. This is, of course, selective inattention—a basis for suppression or even repression.

That meditation is a covering technique is less clear for the mindfulness methods. In fact, Engler recently (1984, p. 39) described it as an uncovering method. To a certain extent this would follow, in that using mindfulness one observes whatever comes into awareness without attempting to eliminate it or it should be noted—hold on to it. The result is that unconscious material does arise (Aitken, 1982; Brown & Engler, 1980; Engler, 1984; Shapiro, 1983; Walsh, 1977, 1978, pp. 1-5; Welwood, 1979, p. 162). It should also be noted that to some degree it arises in concentration methods also (Eliade, 1969; Rama et al., 1976, pp. 129-30).

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There is, however, a great difference in how this material is dealt with by the mindfulness method and psychotherapy. In psychotherapy, as indicated previously, the essence of the method is to actively pull out and then explore and express this material, but in meditation, including mindfulness, the arising unconscious material is a distraction, a defilement (Goleman, 1977, p. 13; Komito, 1984), "makyo, morbid states devoid of significance" (Kapleau, 1965, p. 40). Because of this, the emerging unconscious material is allowed to dissipate and it is not analyzed.

In mindfulness, the meditator simply observes the emerging material, emotion or images without becoming caught up in it, and eventually it passes away (Goleman, 1977, p. 22). "Feelings and emotions which arise during meditation practice are not viewed as having any special importance, as they are in psychotherapy" (Welwood, 1979, p. 151).

This lack of specific attention appears to allow some release of strong unconscious material, but it may fail to bring out other material. Even the material that does arise can dissipate without being examined. Evidently, by not "giving this emerging material energy" the defensive mechanisms remain intact and the material is suppressed or even re-repressed in some cases. Some problems do emerge in meditation (Brown & Engler, 1980, Walsh, 1977, 1978), and meditation may help resolve some of them, but there is a question about the effectiveness of this process as a therapy. Of course, paying

attention to this emerging material may act as a detriment to progress in meditation (Engler, 1984; Brown & Engler, 1980). Thus even mindfulness methods of meditation appear to have some effects similar to those of the covering methods.

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The foregoing discussion strongly suggests that major Eastern meditation systems do not pay much attention to unconscious psychodynamics because their meditation techniques tend to have a covering effect, and the attitude accompanying these symptoms is that emerging unconscious material is a defilement that is only an obstacle to progress in meditation. These Eastern systems neither studied unconscious content per se, nor used techniques that would enable them to study it. This kind of selective attention, when focused on the unconscious in a kind of reverse over-emphasis, creates another kind of limitation, that which prevented the Western psychologies from learning much about altered or higher states of consciousness-until recently. Now, perhaps with more accurate understanding of their various strengths and limitations, Eastern and Western psychologies, and their methods, can be combined to study the inner world-s-the unconscious and the higher states, as well as ordinary everyday consciousness.

#### TOPOLOGIES

In light of these similarities and differences in Eastern meditation and Western psychotherapy, I would like to consider how some "maps" or topologies of mind have incorporated meditation and psychotherapy experiences. Proceeding out of this, I will propose a revised topology, which accommodates the general features and some specific characteristics of Eastern meditation and Western psychotherapy, and relates these two processes to a contemporary understanding of human consciousness and the unconscious.

Attempts to combine meditative and psychotherapeutic experience has led to the development of various "maps" or topologies of the mind. Most of these place the various meditation and psychotherapy experiences into some sort of order. Almost all such topologies so far have been linear in form, in that mental states are ordered on a single continuum, either ascending or descending from an origin to the most extreme state.

A number of Eastern linear maps, both Hindu and Buddhist, have been proposed in various writings, Most of these topologies are traditional and have been restated by recent writers. In general, the Eastern topologies order states of

consciousness from ordinary waking consciousness through higher states until a form of pure consciousness is attained. The meditator in these systems must pass through the lower states before the higher ones are reached. It should be noted that the unconscious is not included in these topologies, though several modern Eastern writers have attempted to identify some non-ordinary states with the unconscious.

As an example, a Hindu system that is particularly yogic but similar to other Hindu topologies is presented by Rama et al. (1976, pp. 64-99). In it the person is considered to be encased in a series of levels called "bodies or sheaths" beginning with the physical plane or body. The higher bodies are mental. Through meditation and other forms of training the person moves from one sheath to a higher one on his spiritual or psychological journey. The levels are 1) physical, 2) energy, 3) mental, 4) intuitive (Buddhi), 5) blissful, and finally 6) the pure self or purusha,

Buddhism has at least two topologies that are related to the concentration and mindfulness methods respectively (Goleman, 1977). The path of concentration (pp. 10-20) leads through seven levels *ofjhanas* to the eighth which is beyond all mental states. The path of mindfulness leads through a series of insights until *nirvana* is reached (Goleman, pp, 20-39). Even within *nirvana* there are several levels. When all of these levels are passed, the person becomes an "arahant" or saint. In this state all suffering and attachment have ceased and one is governed by pure love.

The Western topologies have been largely derived from psychotherapy and psychedelic experiences. The Western psychotherapy topologies are primarily developmental. These include Freud's states of psychosexual development (Fenichel, 1945, pp. 33-113) and E. Erickson's stages of life (1950). Many psychotherapy systems, while recognizing that developmental stages do exist, do not place much emphasis on them. For instance, although Gestalt therapy deals with "unfinished psychological business" which may originate at any time in the person's development, Perls (1973) does not deal with stages in his theory.

In Western psychodynamic psychotherapy the patient does not pass through stages, but rather attempts to reconstruct emotional experiences related to earlier conflicts which may recur at different stages of development. In a child's development, after a problem or trauma at a particular state, the child continues to progress to later stages, but with problems related to the stage in which the trauma occurred (Fenichel, 1945). This

*Hindu,  
yogic,  
Buddhist  
meditative,  
and  
Western  
psycho-  
therapeutic  
and  
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experience-  
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topologies*

is quite different from the Eastern topologies in which one must pass through the lower stages before passing on to the higher ones.

In the West, experience with psychedelics has also led to a topology of mind. While these have been described by several writers (Masters & Houston, 1967; Pahnke & Richards, 1966), perhaps the best known map was proposed by Stanislov Grof (1973). Here a series of psychedelic experiences in a psychotherapy setting leads through experiences of increasing depth. These lead both back toward birth experiences and forward toward a mystical state that Grof identifies with the highest Eastern meditation experience. However, in Grof's system the highest state described usually has content of a mythical or religious nature, while the Eastern experience is one of a pure consciousness without any *content-sunyata*, the void.

*Wilber's  
linear  
cyclical  
topology*

The most thoroughly developed topology in the West is evidently that proposed by Ken Wilber (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1984). This is a linear model, though in a recent version (1980) the ends of the linear topology come together at death, forming a cycle from birth to death. However, for an individual during one life, it is still linear. In his topology Western unconscious levels are added to the Eastern levels of consciousness to form one continuous linear system. Wilber's system is extremely complex, in that it attempts to integrate a large proportion of psychological phenomena from both the Eastern and Western world into one system. The essence of his system is given in a few articles (1977a, 1984). Basically, Wilber has placed the Western developmental stages before the Eastern stages of consciousness to form a single continuum from the physical level to the highest state of consciousness. In this system the states descend into deeper levels. For each person there is an "evolution" or development of consciousness such that one "... moves from subconsciousness ... to self-consciousness . . . to superconsciousness" (1980, p. 3). This is a linear relationship of stages such that one "passes through" (1984, p. 76) the earlier before entering the later "superconscious" states. ". . . Psychological development proceeds stratum by stratum level by level, stage by stage, with each successive level superimposed upon its predecessor in such a way that it includes but transcends it . . ." (1979a, p. 2).

There are a number of difficulties with such sequential, linear topologies. These include providing evidence that problems at lower levels actually disappear at higher levels, the effect of different cultural practices, and the tendency to bypass lower levels in order to reach higher levels.

In regard to this discussion, the concept of a linear topology, in which one must pass through unconscious levels to reach the higher states of consciousness, contradicts the evidence presented here. This evidence suggests a rudimentary topology, though not a linear one and, to some extent, indicates an opposition between meditative states and the emergence of unconscious material. This would be consistent with the teachings of Eastern meditative systems that regard unconscious material as an obstacle to the attainment of higher states. This was shown in one of the more elaborate research studies on meditation (Brown & Engler, 1980) which found that the meditators who became involved in emerging personal material appeared to make slower progress.

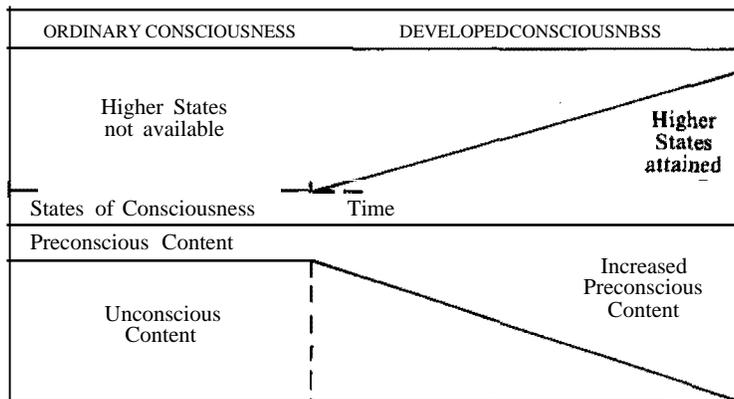
Yet contrary to the concept of a direct opposition is the situation in which unconscious material does emerge into consciousness during deep meditation. Meditation itself (especially mindfulness) does not necessarily block unconscious material. Also, meditation does require some minimal level of emotional integration to be effective (Aitken, 1982; Casper, 1979; Owens, 1975; Welwood, 1984). Thus there does not appear to be a complete opposition between meditation and psychotherapy; rather, they appear to be dealing with two separate and distinct-but related-aspects of the human psyche,

*two  
separate  
and  
distinct  
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aspects*

In view of the above considerations, a form of topology other than a linear one appears to be a better fit to the information now available. Such a "map" should show that the higher states are related to the unconscious, but neither by opposition nor as stages in a continuum. A topology meeting these requirements is proposed below, and represented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

PROPOSED TOPOLOGY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONSCIOUS STATES TO THE UNCONSCIOUS CONTENT AS RELATED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL GROWTH.



In this diagram, the central unbroken horizontal line represents ordinary waking consciousness. The vertical dimension represents the range of consciousness and the content of consciousness. The horizontal dimension represents development of the individual over time. Development is conceived in an ordinal scale which indicates progress or change in a direction but without specifying intervals. The line above the central line represents the limits of ordinary consciousness. Above that are the higher states of consciousness which are unavailable to the individual without intensive meditation. Below the central line is the preconscious. The line below the central line marks the beginning of the unconscious. It represents content that is unavailable to the person.

*the  
dynamics  
of  
movement  
in the  
proposed  
topology*

When individual spiritual and/or psychological development occurs, the person's development moves to the right but not necessarily upward. The movement to the right represents enlarging the area of consciousness, which may be done in either of two ways. Either the size of the preconscious becomes enlarged as unconscious material comes into consciousness, and then the preconscious, *or* the higher states of consciousness, increase as the person becomes able to enter these states. In the first situation, the unconscious shrinks as the preconscious grows. Diagrammatically, this is represented by the preconscious boundary moving downward as one develops and moves to the right.

The development due to meditation produces a gradual widening of the consciousness available to the person. More and more the person is able to enter the higher states of consciousness. This is represented in the diagram by the gradual rising of the higher consciousness line, which indicates the increasing availability of the higher states to the person.

In this topology, it is conceived that personal development may occur either through bringing more unconscious material into consciousness to reside in the preconscious or in experiencing increasingly higher states of consciousness. The diagram indicates that these do not need to be done simultaneously. Rather, the person may develop through increased availability of unconscious material without any increase of states of consciousness. This would be represented on the diagram by a lowering of the preconscious line, but no rising of the higher consciousness line. The opposite could also happen, in which case the higher consciousness line would move upward and the preconscious line would remain at the same level. It is also possible for the person to increase both the preconscious material and the higher states available. In that case both limiting lines would diverge from the center line. This diagram

is meant to represent the possibilities for growth and not the stages of growth that must be taken.

The relationship between the higher states and the unconscious content are thus conceived to be largely unrelated-not opposite or linear. There is, of course, some relationship. Unconscious material may be brought into consciousness by meditation, and in fact deep meditation appears to increase the openness that one has to the emergence of such material. If nothing else, meditation may sensitize the person to his or her inner world. Also there does appear to be some opposition between the requirements for effective meditation and opening oneself to the unconscious material-at least in the short run. Perhaps, however, in the long run it will be possible for both approaches to development to occur in the same person-perhaps even synergistically. That is, it may be that the person who has solved more of his personal problems (has more awareness of his unconscious content) will be able to meditate more effectively and more deeply in the long run. Meditation may also help increase the person's sensitivity to deep unconscious material. Thus, while meditation and psychotherapy as described here are apparently not related in a linear sense, it may be possible that they can act synergistically to increase human growth.

*the  
possibility  
for a  
synergistic  
development*

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